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Lifetime Recollections [AIEA#18]

Alexander N. Charters
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LIFETIME RECOLLECTIONS

by Alexander N. Charters

Edited Transcripts of Tape Recorded Recollections

Lyndsey B. Schemm, Editor
LIFETIME RECOLLECTIONS

Alexander N. Charters
Dean of University College 1952-1964

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2010
Preface

Many decades ago my colleagues and friends, including my wife Margaret, told me I should record some of my experiences before coming to Syracuse and University College. One day I sat down and dictated some recollections entirely from memory. Then over the years I would pick up the recorder and talk without notes, from memory, and recall some of my experiences as they occurred to me. Then over more years I would pick up the recorder and dictate a few more.

These recollections were without any chronological or other order. They were simply as they occurred to me. From time to time Jane Frost, my loyal and efficient secretary, transcribed some of the tapes. Then Linda Pitonzo, who so kindly and effectively assisted me to continue functioning in the field of adult and continuing education after my retirement, also assisted in the transcribing. Scott Shablak, who became Director of the Office of Professional Research and Development at the University, provided leadership in the field of adult education at Syracuse University. Scott thought that a copy of my recollections might be of interest to my family, friends and colleagues. He arranged for the transcription, editing, and publication of these volumes. Michelle Mondo completed the transcribing and Lyndsey Schemm did a stellar editing job that ran from Google search for distant sites to line edits of lengthy monologues. Although I did not reread the entire piece myself before editing, good colleagues Scott, and Mary T Welker, helped craft the final piece, and encouraged me throughout the process.

Please note that I have not yet recorded any personal experiences that directly focus on my encouraging, supportive, loving family, particularly my wife Margaret, my sister, and my mom and dad.

Alex Charters
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Early Days in Verdant Valley, Alberta

It was my recollections on the farm in Verdant Valley, Alberta, where I was born. One of my first memories is being...standing on the steam tractor that Dad had bought and we were out...I don't know where we were going or what we were doing but I remember being on it and being very impressed with this big machine that I was standing on. It was one of the first steam tractors to come there, to this area. And it was used not only to plow and do many other things but also at thrashing time it was connected to the thrasher. I remember one time when we were thrashing they let me go out and get in the grainery. And the wheat came through from the thrasher right into the grainery and I was in there and I can recall that it was a great sport to be there.

And I remember also at the time, maybe it was about the same time, I don't remember the years but I do know I left the farm when Dad left the farm, when I was about four years old. I remember being at the house, Mom had prepared dinner and, I guess it was lunch, but anyway, a meal at noon and she got a flag, a sheet. She used it as a flag to put up and that let the people know that it was time to come in from the fields to eat.

Out behind the house, it was typical of most all farms I suppose, there was a barn I remember in there and it had chickens...some chickens and a cow. And also outside of there, one time I remember a cowboy...a couple of cowboys came through and I guess Dad spoke to them. In any case, they took me with them out for a ride on the range and I thought that was great sport, except that they sat me straddle and I felt the pain on my crotch. In any case, it was a wonderful experience.

And also outside that same barn I recall branded cattle and each farmer in those days had to have a brand and that continues through to this day. And we had a brand that was called “Half Diamond over AC” and I can still remember that smell that came from when they branded some of the cattle there.
Another time we went out I guess in the car, because we did have a car in those days but it was one of the first, I think. We went out somewhere and the visiting minister was going through and I can remember him preaching and putting on a show on a...I think it was Sunday afternoon. In any case, all the people from around there came to hear him and it was quite a...quite a social event, is always what happened. And the service was held in the school house and it was there, just isolated out there and the only building near it was the outhouse that was out behind.

As time went on from the early days...in some of the early days are written by Aunt Margaret, Dad’s brother and by Dad. And we have those, some of them written and we have them on tape. And the children have a copy of those tapes and the early experiences from Crossfields down to Drumheller. It was in the early days when Grandpa went down there. This is well recorded, but Grandpa went down and became the first homesteader in Verdant Valley.

Out behind the house was a pump house. In the early days, of course, they didn’t have pumps. There was this pump and I have a recollection of Grandma Kern being there, but this I don’t know for sure and in some ways I never asked Dad or Mom what the story was. I do remember also when the houses had lightning rods, of course, and I was born some six years after they’d gone out homesteading. Dad had come in on homesteading and Mom had come out to visit. Aunt Annie, her sister, who had a home...Uncle Herb and Aunt Annie Morrow had a homestead nearby and Mom and Aunt Edith came out to visit them. And I’m not quite sure what year that was but, in any case, it must have been, I suppose, about 1910 but I don’t...it may have been a little later than that, I don’t know. I don’t know whether Mother stayed on. And they got married there but I don’t remember whether mom stayed on or whether she went back to Hagersville(?) where she had lived. She and Aunt Edith were certainly quite the young ladies to follow out from there on the train, by themselves and visit Aunt Annie, and that was good. And Mom met Dad, they got married; and Aunt Edith, who was with her, met Uncle Will, who was a telegrapher or an agent at Munson, which was nearby
and the end of the railroad. That railroad hadn’t gone into Drumheller yet. When they
did do it, Dad worked on the bridge across the Red Deer River.

I guess about the time before we left the farm, when I was about age four, we
had a car and we used to travel around in that car. But before we had the car, one
winter night, I remember going over to Grandpa and Grandma’s and we went by sleigh
with a team of horses. And I remember Mom gave me a bell to ring and even then I
remember I thought she was doing it for busy work for me. Very too seldom did my
parents ever give me busy work or anything to divert me. But I do remember that. It
was cold, in the middle of winter, very cold of course, but we had…Dad put lots of
clothes on Jean and I, my sister. But we did travel around some in the car and we used
to quickly go and see Grandpa and Grandma, which they were on also a homestead not
very far. Well, I suppose a couple of miles in those days, but seemingly not so far.

Another thing I remember about the thrashing was I saw a photograph later on
of Mom in overalls and standing beside a thrasher. And I found out that something
broke inside the thrasher and, of course, to be able to fix it was another thing because
they had to thrash the wheat. And the story goes, they’ve got Mom in these overalls
and she was very slender and Dad was a little huskier and all the men were much
huskier. But they apparently couldn’t get inside the thrasher to fix it and Mom
apparently went in and did it. They had this photograph and everybody was standing,
looking very happy when it happened. It seemed sort of inconceivable that Mom would
do a thing like that. She was very reticent, but…and I always thought it might be
questioned a great deal whether she would go inside a thrasher machine or not. But I
do recall from the many things, experiences, that these were really pioneering days and
there wasn’t anything. They had to do with the best they had, take lots of chances,
those sorts of things. But it was interesting to see them in those clothes by the
thrashing machine.

Mom and Dad were married in November of 1913 and Jean was born in August
of 1914, actually the day before World War I started. And we always accused her of
starting the war. But in any case, they were married and Jean was born and then two years later, in August, I was born. Jean and I used to fool around together ???, I don’t remember, but we had this Model T car which had the gas tank under the front seat and it was easy to take the front seat off. In some way or another, Jean and I got the...of course, it was her fault that led me to do this but we got the...well, some way or another we got the top off the gas tank and also, there was a bag of seed potatoes and, apparently, we opened the bag and filled the gas tank with these little seed potatoes. I don’t remember the incident at all but I certainly heard about it later on. I made it quite a job for Dad to take the tank off and get the car going again.

Memories from Drumheller

When Jean was about six, Mom and Dad decided to move into Drumheller so that Jean could go to school. I guess she must have been six. And, in any case, we moved to Drumheller. I remember being in a house that had an upstairs, I think, and we moved there and I’m sure there may be other reasons other than Jean going to school, I don’t know, but whatever it was, we were there. But she wasn’t...the school...the classes were full and she didn’t...wasn’t able to go and had to wait until the next year to attend. And I guess we moved into Drumheller and as time went on we both went to school in new buildings, two buildings. One building, the students in there were taught by Ms. Marr, and that was me, and Ms. Connock, who taught... I don’t remember much about the school experiences at all, except that I remember one time we went out to a farm at thrashing time and, of course, everything stopped out there for thrashing because this was a wheat growing area. In fact, on the lot...on the section next to Grandpa’s, when people moved in ? and they later met them, about a year later they grew wheat and was known as the wheat king of the world. And they implied that he was the wheat king. So this land was quite fertile for growing wheat. And we...in any case, everything stopped for thrashing and I remember because it created quite a lot of interest in a friendly way. Dad gave me an excuse to take to the teacher that read, “Please excuse Alex, he had to help his grandfather thrash.” And Jean got one
and it said, "Please excuse Jean, she had to help her grandmother cook for the thrashers." They were still...Grandpa and Grandma were still out on the farm and doing farm work, of course.

One other thing I remember about going to visit Grandpa and Grandma, we were in the house...they had a couple of...found the first real house out there, most of the shacks on the farm were shacks and not much to them. But they had this first house that Grandpa built. Some way or another, I got in the bedroom and got the door locked and they had to call Grandpa and they couldn't get it open. He had to go out and take the whole window frame out from the outside to let me out. I remember getting out and walking out, and Mom and Grandma were just sitting there. I don't remember anything much happening but I remember that I was glad to get out and so was everybody glad to get me out, I guess.

In Drumheller, we lived in a little house that had just being built, was right on...facing right on the railroad. And I remember that because Jean and I had a room back off the kitchen and then there was a little dining room, a living room, and a general room and another little bedroom where Mom and Dad slept. It was right opposite where the railroad went by and I can remember when I had scarlet fever, I guess it was...it seemed like in those days everybody got chicken pox, scarlet fever, and we used to talk about getting them over...we'd get them, the kids would get them and talk about getting them over. But I remember when I had scarlet fever and they put me in Mom and Dad’s bedroom and I could see out the window the trains going by. And I remember that and I remember while I was in bed one time I had a catalog...they produced big catalogs and they sent them out...I think this one was by Simpson Stores, or maybe Eaton. In any case, I can remember looking through it trying to get all the things necessary for a farm because these stores sold everything and sent them out by mail order. It's probably by freight as well because they were too heavy for the mail. And I remember ??? and all the stuff out of the catalogs.
I also had me active in Sunday School, particularly Mom, and I can remember without a certificate...I got a certificate for perfect attendance per year and Jean got a Bible...got a ? Bible for good attendance. She barely missed one. She always said we got it mixed up, that I should have...I only had good attendance and she had perfect attendance. But in any case, we had in those days a great deal of activities centered around the church. In spite of the fact that this was really a pioneer town and lots of people came in because they discovered gold, or coal, in that area, ??? which was known all over ??.. But it was also all the farmers coming in, thousands of people, to work these coal mines; it was kind of a rugged town, I gather. But there were lots of other things going down.

There were lodges and Dad belonged to the Masons and Mom to the Eastern Star. Even in those pioneering days it was...we really dressed up for occasions. I can remember Dad being in tails, he would...they put on various programs, one was Pinafore, which I later saw a photograph taken of that. Mom was part of the...I think it was put on by the Eastern Star, who put it on. There were just some in the community gathered together, but quite a thing. And I remember seeing Mom down there. She said, “No, I didn’t do any singing. I was just moving ropes around.” She was doing that, whether she was singing or not, I don’t know. But in any case, there was a lot of cultural activities and even ?? Chautauqua came in and did little prayers after it opened up. People really came in, in droves and it didn’t take long before there were a lot of various stores and various businesses, and doctors came in, and lawyers, and people around various cultural events. And I remember going up to the Mason’s lodge but...and also...oh, Chautauqua...traveling Chautauqua came through, too. And I remember going down there, which was outside, there was a tent. I guess there were chairs or probably just something with boards across it that people sat on, but I can remember people singing and standing up, singing away and guys giving the lectures and various other activities. It was interesting that there was this...the guy should become a member of the board of Chautauqua Institution in Chautauqua, New York. “I’ve got all of them stretched, sitting out there on the board in the prairies. I’ve seemed to become a member of the board.” I’m not sure there was a direct connection.
between the traveling Chautauqua and the other ones though. It seemed like a point of debate.

But in Drumheller, we lived not far from Grandpa and Grandma. Grandpa and Grandma came into town and built a house there, one of the first real houses it was, and we used to go over and see them quite regularly. And I recall once being in the house and it was a time when the crops...the crops didn’t grow well, it was a real problem. Didn’t have a good crop one year and I remember Grandma...we were sitting around and Grandma said, “Maybe Grandpa could...maybe Alex could get a job driving the ponies.” And I thought, “Oh, boy! That would be great!” Then I realized that her husband...Grandpa’s name was also Alex...Dad was actually Alexander Alan and I was Alexander Nathaniel, Nathaniel after Mom’s father. But the only time I think I ever remember them calling him Alex; I’m not quite sure what happened. In any case, everything seemed to work out reasonably well, I guess.

In Drumheller, there were lots of sporting events I didn’t take part in. Well, I guess I did because out in the backyard they put some sand out and borrowed a hose from Grandpa and filled it...and we...Jean and I used bob-skis and some way or another she got hit with a bob-ski, cut her under the chin. I remember going over to the doctor to fix it.

But I remember before...before that we had...there wasn’t any water, someone used to bring the water around in a wagon and filled something in the house. Then they decided to put a water works in and I remember them digging the ditches all by hand, of course, outside. And they were putting the waterworks in and the guy’s digging this and all of a sudden, I thought they just didn’t have any water, and Mom used to give us a bucket and we’d dig it out and give it to these guys. And I think they gave us a penny or a nickel or something to buy the water. And then I remember the water would come into town.

But they had a telephone. And I remember out on the farm they put the telephones in and there used to be a big box up on the wall. And they had stop them.
And then there used to be quite the lightning storms and stuff and I can remember one time looking at this...there was fire that came out of the speaker in some way or another...and I remember...not the speaker...yeah, whatever you talked into in those days. The speakers and the receivers were all in different arrangements. As a matter of fact, I remember the black one and...but we did have a phone in Drumheller. I don’t remember much about the phone, except one day we were sitting in there and the phone rang, and Dad had to go down to Calgary, or whatever he was going for. But he called Mom and I guess we had to go down. In any case, in a few minutes we were dressed and down at the station and off to Calgary. Mom was a great traveler. She was always available to go and take us kids with her. She’d get us dressed and off we’d go on very short notice. Is what the time when everything was going on. But we got on the train and down to Calgary and stayed in the ? Hotel. And, of course, I had a bathroom and a bathtub and that was great because we...and they got somebody to come in and sit with us and put us to bed and they went off to the theater. And I remember the next day we had a...Mom had a box of chocolates and Dad says, “Oh, some guy came into the theater, came down to our seats and gave it to your mother.” Mom would say, well, that she was kind of embarrassed about it and said, “Oh, no, it wasn’t like that at all. You’re Dad arranged it.” I guess he did.

I was speaking back earlier about sports. Sports developed ??? and everything. They did start a golf course and we walked down the railroad and we go down to the last...then we crossed the tracks and went down to the other side where they started a golf club. And then curling, they had to build ? for curling and for hockey. Then there was quite a big celebration. I don’t know. It must have been first of July or something because it’s Confederation Day in Canada, and so we were down there. They had a ball game and then there was just everybody played. But they had...it was called the Fats against the Leans and it was right about...we’re sitting there with Mom, and Dad was out there playing some position, I don’t know what. But we sat there and looked across the other side and there was a scoreboard out there. And we used to ring a bell if they got a run and they kept one side of the field way out to the other where the scoreboard was and put it on the board when there was a run scored.
I don’t think they did...I remember later on in Chilliwack it was the same sort of thing. There was a big board outside the railroad station and they used to telegraph the scores of games. And they’d come through and then they’d tell them if somebody had scored, or if some team had scored, and so they’d put this on the board outside. That’s how we kept up to date on sporting events and things back in those days.

Family History

Aunt Margaret, Dad’s sister, was married to Walter McCrimmon. As a matter of fact, out on the farm or out in that area of Verdant Valley, one year after Mom and Dad had been married, Aunt Margaret, she was called Auntie, and Uncle Walter were there and he was a teacher. He got a job at Rosedale in Alberta. I think it was about seven or eight miles from there and he taught school. And they built what was called Teacher, just near the school where the teachers...they had to have a place where the teachers stay. And they lived in this small ?? down there. We used to go down and see them once in a while. And they didn’t have a car; neither did Grandpa and Grandma. In any case, it was ?. I remember one time going down in the winter and we went down on the ice. I guess that was the easiest way to go. Of course there were roads but there wasn’t much to them. But in any case, we went down...I remember going down on the ice and Grandma was with us, because we were going down to Auntie’s for Christmas, I think it was. And looking ahead, Dad saw some water in the river that had thawed. We had to cross it or something, and so we went back and we went the other way. We had to go back and I remember Grandma saying, “Alan,” she said, “I thought we were going the other way.” And everybody thought it was kind of funny. But anyway, we did go. We did get back...we used to go down to Rosedale quite often to visit them. We always got together with family at the same time.

Family Get-Aways and Get-Togethers

We went away a couple of times in the summer; once out to Pine Lake and another time to Sylvan Lake. And those were up near Red Deer because we went out to
visit David, my wife...Margaret’s brother. Pine Lake and Sylvan Lake, there wasn’t much to them, much fixtures at all, but I guess we had tents. I don’t remember where we stayed. But in any case, it was quite the thing to go up there for a few days for summer vacation.

I remember another time when we went out for a drive on a Sunday afternoon and found some place on the railroad that I think was a B & B gang and I think Dad maybe was trying to get a job on the railroad. He was only interested in railroad and then ended up working railroads and was very happy in that situation. I remember going out there and in those days there wasn’t much roads. There were roads but the way they told the routes were on the telephone poles. If there were telephone poles, they’d be different colors, maybe red and blue; or red, white and blue, or some combination. That indicated the routes to where we were going. (Side ends)

This is Tape 7-2 of some continuation of some of my recollections in the earlier years of my life. In 1925, my mother and father decided to go to British Columbia, where they were going to meet Aunt Edith and Uncle Will. Uncle Will was the station master for Rosedale in British Columbia. And we went down to get on the train and the conductor asked us where we were going, and Dad said, “Rosedale.” And he said, “Oh, you’re going the wrong direction,” because there was a Rosedale in Alberta, which I’ve spoke about before these recordings. It was the opposite direction to where we would start out to go to Rosedale, BC. And the conductor said, “That’s a long way.” In any case, we got on the train and I don’t remember too much about it, except one morning where there was a great deal of discussion because as we went through the mountains, a rock came down apparently and went through one of the windows of the sleeping car. And this provoked some discussion of course, some interest. I don’t know much else about the trip, except there was a...there was three classes of train travel. One was colonial, which meant there was no place...they’d pull down things from the...at night, they’d pull down some...it looked like they were pulling down the...in any case, they’d ? them there and people could just get up and sleep there. Sheets or blankets or anything, most people brought them with them. And then there was the doors(?) class,
which is very famous in railroads because you could...there was a kitchen, like a small kitchen, at one end of the sleeping car and you could cook your own meals there and the porter helped you to keep the fire going and things. And all the people seemed to take turns or some way and do their bit of cooking there. They were going to be on the train usually for a couple of days, so there’s lots of time to pace things. And then at night they fixed them up so that we had sleep in the beds that they made up. It was just long enough for two people and they pulled the bed down and it took the place of the...where you sat during the day. Well, in any case, we got on the train and got out there and got out to British Columbia. Oh, another thing that I remember then was we got on the sleeping car and the porter was black. And I guess I kept looking at him or something and the porter said, “Well, you never saw one of these before, did you?” And I guess he was right; he was a very black man and I hadn’t seen one of them before. Well, we got to British Columbia and early morning on the train, we got to Rosedale. We were greeted there by Aunt Edith and Uncle Will, and Uncle Will was the station master. You might say that...remind ourselves...that Aunt Edith was the same sister of Mom’s who went with...they went out to Alberta to Gordon Valley, where they met another sister, Aunt Annie. ??? Aunt Annie was the first white woman in the area. And it ? Aunt Edith to get all the way out to Alberta by themselves when the train was really a kind of pioneering adventure.

In any case, we were met there. We got off the train and I guess we went up and had a bit of sleep before, like in the morning, but I’m sure there was so much conversation that there wasn’t much sleep. But we did stay there for a day or two and one of the things while we were visiting there was that Uncle Will had just gotten a new Ford car and this is one of the earliest cars, certainly one of the first ones in the area. And, as I’ve mentioned before, Dad knew how to drive, so he started to teach Aunt Edith how to drive. And that was kind of a pioneering thing, for a woman to be driving a car. But Aunt Edith used to drive around like that all the time. And while they were one of the first cars, as other cars came along she was, as I recall, the only woman that drove a car. But in any case, Dad taught her to drive the car. I don’t remember very much about what went on for the first couple of days, other than that.
But I was…but I remember two things--one was it was just in the days when woman were getting their dresses shortened. Mother was in the wrong dress, of course, but Aunt Edith had cut hers off and she’s the first one in the community to have her dress shortened. She also got it cut very short and this was a topic of conversation. But I remember while we were there in the first few days ?? also got hers cut off. And I remember...and also right around there, there was just the time when women were getting their hair cut short. They always had it long before I guess, I don’t know. That’s all I remember. But I remember Mom sitting in a chair at the kitchen table and Aunt Edith had a pair of scissors and she cut Mom’s hair off at a reasonable length, I guess, I don’t know. But anyway, it was regular length. And so mother was second or third I guess, to get her hair cut in Rosedale. They were quite the pioneering souls, I must say.

But in any case, after a few days we moved over to Grandma and Grandpa Kern’s place, Mom’s mother and father. They just had a very small, little place where Grandpa worked the farm. It was owned by Uncle Will, and he had some cows and milked them and then every day a fellow came along with a wagon and picked up the milk cans and took them over to the station, where they were shipped off to some...the Frazer Valley Milk Producers Association, where they were treated...because they made butter, and milk, and things in the city and ??.. The train went down first thing in the morning and farmers had to get out to the road and the train would stop very frequently in all the farmers’ places and pick up the milk and take it into Vancouver. And at night the train came back and dropped the cans off at the place where they were picked up. And the farmers came the next morning to get the empty cans and left the full ones there.

In any case, we moved across to Grandpa and Grandma’s place and I don’t remember too much about the stay actually with them. I wasn’t very old then. I was in grade three, but I do remember the first morning we were over there. Grandpa had a horse to work on the farm of course, who plowed, and he also had a stone boat, which was really just a flat thing that they attached onto it and the horse pulled it and that’s
the way you moved around, down to the store, or wherever you went. And I got on this thing and Grandpa took me. I remember hanging onto his leg because we were both standing up while we went somewhere.

**Days of the Depression**

In any case, Dad didn’t have a job but he finally got some work and worked on a job at Rand McNair’s, which was a mill that had started making shingles but moved over to making lumber. And Dad worked in that mill for, I don’t know, quite a while. And then the mill went broke and Dad was out of a job, but he seemed to get some work around some way or another. And this was...but he did get a...finally went to work in the railroad of the Canadian National as a section man, and I remember they started at something like twenty-five cents an hour and they had to work at that for three months before they got forty cents an hour. But in any case, he got a job and they laid people off on the railroad, too, because this was the beginning of the Depression. And so all through the Depression he had to move around from one section of the railroad to another one. But at least he did have a job, which was a great thing during the Depression.

It was somewhere along the line there too that there was no electric lights in that area. I remember Dad went out and he was one of the people that tried to get the farmers and the people to sign up so that they could get enough customers, they’d run lines, which they did and...but...and back up...

We got off the train and we got...Mom and Dad had packed...there were some great big boxes, at least they seemed very big to me, that they had put with all of their belongings and they were bringing them with them, and all they had left because ???.

They had sales and they sold off everything they had in the house just to get money to go out west, further west.
Moving to Rosedale, British Columbia

After a few days, or a week, Dad got a house down in Rosedale on McGrath Road and it hadn’t been occupied for some time but is distinct from practically everything else in the whole community, there was no...just a small lot to it. No farm and no place for a garden or anything but, in any case, they were able to get this house and they got some furniture together, not very much, but I remember we made...they got some gunny sacks, as they called them, which is what food came...food for the animals came in and they got those and in some way smashed them together and stuffed them with straw, and we took those down to this house and then we pulled it along on the road at night because Mother didn’t want people to know that we didn’t have any furniture, I guess. In any case, we got down...got the furniture down to the house and they’ve got a stove, a kitchen stove. I remember the stove very well because apparently it was a very good stove, as stoves go, but it was always a joy to Mom that we had a good place to cook. And it had a place where they heated hot water on the side, a reservoir, and also of course, it had an oven. And it burned wood and that was ?. But the stove also, as time went on, it got that sometimes in the winter when it got very cold, there was no sense of heating, but there was little stoves they bought, some of them quite large, that people put in the living room and they...and what they had to heat the house. But this kitchen stove, it generated a lot of heat. In fact, some people just come in, get there to get warm.

We did get this house and we moved down there and we lived there for many years, until I got through college and back. I guess that would have been a period of about ten years. That house...alongside the house there were a whole row of cherry trees and it was...in the summer, when we first got there, we’d pick the cherries and you got crates down at the fuel store, the “food for animals and weed store” I guess they called it, and we’d go down there and get crates and pack the...pick the cherries and we took the cherries down to the railroad station and shipped them off on consignment to Alberta. And in due time we got back whatever we got back from money that the consignees would pay for. And this was quite a little source of income in a way and in a
small community like that there wasn’t a good source of revenue, so we did pick that fruit. And sometimes Dad also had the ?, who had other things other than cherries, a little later pears and apples, he got grapes and had arranged with the farmer and he picked them, and sorted them, and put them in the crates and, again, shipped them off on consignment.

Right after we got to Rosedale, anyway, even before we got the house, Dad took us down by the grocery store, the general store, and bought us a pencil, Jean and I, and we took them to school. It’s a very progressive school district as a matter of fact. There wasn’t much there but the school. Rosedale Public School it’s called. They had classes to grade eight. There were four classrooms, two grades in each one and the school district just supplied all the books, called exercise books, which were folders of paper that we got to write on. They also supplied the textbooks for the first few years and then we...then, in grade four or five, we had to buy a geography book and that was...but the others were all, everything else was supplied in the school. And we went down in the morning and most of the kids had to walk to school long distance, so they brought lunch with them and they ate at the school. We were only maybe a quarter of a mile, maybe not that, from the school so we walked and we were able to go home at lunch. The other kids all stayed there, but we went home at lunch and then went back and played for quite a while in the playgrounds at school.

School in Rosedale was a very happy time for us. It absorbed, of course, a major part of our day. We were encouraged to go there and to learn, and Dad was one of the better educated people in the community. He had not only gone through high school but took one year of dental school and that put him well above most of the people in the community. Most farmers and people just stopped at grade eight and that’s all they had. Of course, the school teachers had a little more; they did high school and one year in ? school, and the minister had to have more than that. But I don’t think there was anybody else in our community that had as much education as Dad did. In any case, he was really an active member of the community in all ways and very supportive of the schools. And so, it was more their course. And the school, as I
mentioned, had two grades in each room and there were four teachers. And they got there...they lived quite a ways away but they came on a bus that made the rounds from Chilliwack out and around and stopped at Rosedale to pick up students and take the students in the high school in Chilliwack, which we will go into later.

In any case, that’s how the teachers got there, some of them, on time. And then later on, the principal there, H.H. Louther, I remember he had a car and he brought the teachers out each morning and he took them back at night. He was really quite a progressive and a great teacher. He would start teaching in the morning and we’d maybe teach...have one subject all day or maybe just for an hour or two. You never knew when you were going to stop but he...that subject would start another one. But I think the thing about it was that he...he never gave up, you couldn’t...you never could be excused for the bell or anything, he’d just...so you learned that you stayed with it until you got whatever he was doing and that we should be doing. And so that’s...and in that little school there were a number of very outstanding students.

In British Columbia, and most of the provinces in Canada, at the end of grade eight you would have sort of a turning point and you had to take government exams, write exams, that were set by the government and sent out to the schools and you had to write these exams. And papers went back and they had people there that graded them. And then the results were published in the newspaper later on. We had some news several weeks later, about a month later, that the government, the exams were published in the paper and you had to look there to see whether you had passed or not. But also, at grade eight there was this...schools could recommend people they had thought...that were good enough, they got recommended, they could...they didn’t have to take these exams. So some got recommended and some didn’t. Jean and I both got recommended and didn’t have to take the exams. But also, the very best students did take the exams because the papers were sent away to Victoria, which is the capital of British Columbia, to be graded and they announced the top people for the whole province and they were...they received recognition from the Lieutenant Governor of the Province. And from that little school, I remember three of the students got top grades
for the whole province, won the top grades--there was Charlie Ryder and Clair Cartnell, oh, and Homer Thompson--three of them from that little...different years when I was there. ??? but this was a great honor. It indicated the quality of really what went on in that school. I can remember he would really...this principal, he had class at seven and eight that I remember particularly. He used to drill us on that subject and maybe he’d switch it in an hour, it was...we never knew quite what was going on, except that we were really geared to learn. He was the type of fellow, he was quite an athlete and enjoyed him. We used to go outside...we had a very big school yard that actually had a lawn, about the only one in town, there was one or two others, and we used to go out there and play stick ball and baseball and all kinds of different games we’d play out there and he was much interested. He used to go out and play with the boys a game. Maybe we’d get out there after lunch and we might stay out there the whole afternoon and play. And it was just...we never knew quite what was going on. We used to...we thought we knew if he was on the winning team because he had divided up everything and he had very big teams. And if he was on the side...because really we used to think we’d stay out there. I don’t know if it had anything do with it or not but we used to have a lot of fun out there in the playground, that’s for sure. And it was a big lawn; we used to play football out there, soccer. It was a big place and some way or another they got a lawnmower. I don’t know where it came from, but we used to have to take time pushing the lawnmower to get the grass mowed. So that was another activity that went on that we didn’t have to go to classes for. We went out there and after a while they’d tell the rest of us to go out and mow the lawn. And we did and it was a very interesting experience and a lot of fun.

**Community Celebrations and Festivities**

In any case, it was all geared to help learn and there was a couple of big events in the year. One was at Christmas, we always had a big Christmas...it would involve the whole community, but centered around the school. They had a big Christmas party and the kids had to sing and had little drama productions and things they’d put on at this
time. There wasn’t any place much to meet in the early days and so I remember Walter McGrath had a garage and I remember they cleared everything out of the garage and got some boards for people to sit on and we had the Christmas concert there. And another thing was called May Day in the spring. I don’t remember the time in May but it was usually about the 24th of May, which is the queen’s birthday, and it was the queen’s birthday, if they didn’t give us a holiday we’d all run away. But anyway, we’re all part of the British empire, of course, and we…Queen Victoria was the queen that we recognized; her birthday was the 24th of May. She lived to be very old and this became really one of the standard big holidays across Canada because it was in the spring and it was the 24th of May. It was the first day we could go in swimming, swimming in the lake or whatever place there was to swim. And that was the first day it was warm. But that was a great time. In any case, in Rosedale we had this May Day that was just held outside on the school grounds and we used to dance around the May pole and it used to be at school out during the day to practice so we’d all be good, and the whole participated and the whole community. So it was a big event, a big event during the day. And then in the afternoon, it was about strawberry time. And we would used to go and bring...the farmers brought strawberries in, and cream, very rich agricultural area, and strawberries...we used to...we’d have to pick the strawberries and sell them and that was kind of work for us but we made a little bit of money, whatever little bit we could get. It was a very interesting activity. But I remember people would bring these strawberries with cream and they’d sell them ???. Sell them to people for, I think, fifteen cents. I can remember kind of thinking what a stupid arrangements it is that you’d bring all that stuff. You’d have to go out and pick the strawberries, bring them in, take them down to the school, and then have to pay to eat them. Of course, the kids didn’t get much to eat, but the parents did. It was a big social event and everybody came. It was typical in that community when this thing, May Day, we had events that we had during the day, in the afternoon...oh, and then it was typical in the area that everybody had to go and milk the cows. And there were a few of us who didn’t have cows to milk, but chickens and everything...we had to go home and do that and then come back. And in the evening was another party, it was a dance. I guess one of the popular things in
the community was to have a dance. And ?? it was called, so we had to practice to do the ??. Mom didn’t believe in dancing, neither did her sisters, but it came along and when Jean was in grade eight they elected the May Queen, which was a big thing and Jean got elected as May Queen, which was quite the thing in the school and town. In the evenings they had to...supposedly the May Queen led the dance and I remember without any discussion or anything, all of a sudden, we were to dance, allowed to dance; and we continued to dance after that.

And the same, I might say, was for card playing. We weren’t allowed to play cards. Mom didn’t want us to and it was that kind of thing, some of the people did and some didn’t. Dad was a card player, so was Uncle Will, and they used to go off and sometimes they’d have a card party in the community and they would go off and do that. Dad used to play solitaire at home once in a while and we were able to watch him and we got to learn all about it, but we weren’t allowed to touch the cards until all of a sudden...Aunt Edith had children about the same age as Jean and I, all of a sudden, without any discussion or anything, we started to play cards. Mom did too. I guess they just figured that that’s the way it was going to be, might as well do it and let the whole family participate. But it was...in any case, we had this big event in school, which was really a very great thing in the community and that, and as I mentioned the Christmas party, the two events where everybody really participated. And later on, we didn’t have a community...we had a community hall but it wasn’t very big and Uncle Will decided we ought to do it, so we got elected presidents of the community association. I guess it was something of a...they called it an athletic club, I think. And then we got involved and got everybody to participate. The farmers all brought...they had so many days of work by themselves or work with the horses to move the stuff around and get it to the hall over there and to dig it out, have the school...or have...they finally got a hall going and it was a great event for the community because we used to play sports there- -playing basketball and going to card parties and they had dances regularly.

Dances were kind of interesting because before the dance, one night weekly, they had a basketball game. And after the basketball game, people stayed on and other
people came, and after, they had a dance. But they had to put some kind of wax on the floor so you could dance and they just had a little band and two, or three, or four people and we danced...danced until two or three or maybe later at night. And then people had to go home and milk the cows again. And they’d go to sleep...we’d dance on Friday nights, so after they got the cows milked a lot of people would go back to sleep, back to bed and have a nap. In any case, the floor was slippery from the dance and so the activities, the next time there was a basketball game the floor was very slippery and they had to it and they used to take water out, I never quite figured it out, and put water on the floor and they made it so you could move around without sliding down too much, although there were probably those that did slide around. But those were great social events, the dancing. And the dances frequently were community-wide events and also people from other communities did it, so there’d be a dance every week. We had them maybe every...whenever we did and people from the various communities went to do it. Sometimes ??, there wasn’t much means of transportation in those days. Some people had cars and they’d load the cars down.

I remember coming back from ? one time, which was about twelve miles away, which we were in this car and we didn’t have any money to...there wasn’t much money in the community...we didn’t have money to do anything. We went to the dances that maybe cost twenty-five cents and you got a dinner...not a dinner but half-time through the dance we’d stop and have a lunch. And people brought the food and a great time. In any case, we were at this game and on the way home, there was about eight of us in this car, and the guy that was running the car said that he was running out of gas. And here everybody decided what they got and finally got enough money together, it was twenty cents, and the crew put the money in and then stopped at this place about one-thirty in the morning. They had a gas pump outside his house or store, or whatever it was, and we stopped and he finally woke up and we said, “We need some gas.” He said, “How much are you going to get?” And we said, “About a gallon.” He said, “I’m not going to get up to get you a gallon of gas.” So we went on. We got home all right on what gas we had but they were very interesting times, I must say.
The background, the school, much of this took place in the school. There was also a very active Parent Teacher Association, which Dad was president of for a couple of years and they did various things. They used to put on concerts and things to earn money and people from the community, some of them would sing and some of them would recite and all kinds of ???? . Usually the same people, time after time they got up there. They were really very good.

As I mentioned too, it was the Depression. It was very hard hit. This community wasn’t hit as hard as some because most of the farmers still produced milk and they were able to sell it in bulk and they all had gardens and very rich agriculture and fruit. So there was really enough to eat. So, as somebody once commented… (interrupt) …oh, as I mentioned, it was right in the midst of the Depression. (Side ends)
**Paper Route in Rosedale**

In Rosedale, in British Columbia, there were two main papers--the Vancouver Sun and the Vancouver Province, which were both produced in Vancouver. The morning edition they put on buses and various things to get them out to various places in the province, including Chilliwack and Rosedale. So the papers came in early afternoon and fortunately I was able to get a delivery for the Vancouver Sun. It was one of the few jobs that kids could do. I was in high school when I got it and I had to buy it from somebody, but I got a bicycle with it. It wasn’t in very good shape; one of the main pieces on it was broken and I had to wire it together. But I was fortunate to get it and I had a route. Actually, I went about ten miles to deliver twenty papers. Well, I had to buy the papers at a dollar ten [for] a hundred and then I charged the customers for a month, fifty cents. So after I paid for the papers, I had several that I collected for fifty cents. And so it was assuming there were thirty papers in the month, it would cost me about thirty-two or thirty-three cents, so I got...I guess I got about twenty cents for delivering them and that was pretty good. I had...let’s see, I had twenty customers and I went about...had to ride the bike about ten miles and this was when I got home from school, from high school. Bus about three o’clock, I went home and Mom usually had some ginger snaps for me and I started out on the bike route and I went this ten miles. It took quite a while because sometimes you had to get off the bike and walk a bit to put the paper where people wanted it. But it was...nevertheless, it was a really good thing and I had this bit of money which was enough to buy whatever I wanted to buy, I guess, including my clothes. So I felt kind of independent and I was grateful the customers were all very kind and I don’t think I ever lost any money at all, with the possible exception of one part of the month.

I had to deliver these papers. They came into a little sort of a restaurant or little place where they sold chocolate bars and stuff, and this was McNair. And papers came there and [were] put on the counter. And if I left one I didn’t use, I could...I could leave them there and she sometimes sold them for a nickel and she gave me the nickel if she
did. But I was just thinking, I never thought about this before, but I also brought a copy home which I had to pay for and it...so, I just realized now that cut down a little bit on the amount of money that I made from them. And, of course, sometimes I got an extra paper because I thought I could sell one and it would cost me a penny or so for it and if I sold it for a nickel, I had four cents profit. So sometimes it worked out. I’m not quite sure, but in any case, it was a great experience. But the papers came in there and she used to take them out and put them on the table with that and The Province, which her son delivered. And when I came...went home, after the bus, I’d come back and the papers were there and I took them all and put them in a bag, I guess, yeah, I had a bag. But I remember one of the things about it was that you could put your hands in the papers and the papers were warm, even though they came all the way from Vancouver. The papers were very good insulation, so I...

**Days of the Depression**

One of the headlines that I remember was...across the headlines of the paper was the stock market and that was the big crash that was one of the causes of the Depression. And the Depression, as I indicated previously, the Depression was really very rough, but it wasn’t as bad for us because we had a lot of...in the community, we had a lot of fruit and vegetables and so we were able to subsist fairly well. And Dad had a job most of the time, so that was...that was just fine. But I remember people coming in the train stop, people...hobos...they weren’t really hobos, they were just people out of work, and they would get off and sometimes come up and go to the various houses and farms and say they would do some work and for anything, for a meal. And I remember they came to our place. Mom didn’t have much work, but I don’t think she ever turned one away, gave him some food and then they’d go on someplace else, maybe go back and get on the train and go somewhere else. But the trains just hauled...piles of people getting on and off. Whatever they did, they thought it was better wherever they were going and I’m not sure it was, but in any case, they kept moving.
But people didn’t have very much direction it seemed to me, because I remember one time down on the corner of Rosedale there was what we called The Corners, two roads crossed. On one corner was the grocery store, Archibald’s Grocery Story and another one was Mrs. McNair, who had this rooming house. She was the wife of the fellow, one of two that owned the mill that went broke. And he didn’t have work either, he was out, so she started that place. On another corner was the school. It was a one-room place which was the original school and it was closed when they built the new school, which was the big school that had four rooms. And two on each floor, I guess, yeah, two on each floor. In any case, that was the school. It wasn’t used in the early days when I was there but later they needed to open it and so they just opened it.

In the meantime, one of the rooms was used as a manual training place where a teacher came around. A teacher came on the bus once a week and taught us manual training. We had a half day each. I guess there was…we had some in the morning and some in the afternoon, I guess. I remember I was in the morning; there must have been some in the afternoon, too. In any case, we were taught manual training and that was very helpful. I enjoyed it very much, made some items, which I still have here out on Cape Cod. But the items were—the guys made a t-wagon or something that could be used in the homes. And they were very good, too. In any case, that was the...oh, the one room that wasn’t used for manual training because that was left with the desks, or not desks, but work benches and stuff, but the other side was classroom and that as used as kind of a community hall and accommodated by all the people that were in town.

That was on the...oh, and then on the other corner was a garage by McGrath and he had a gas pump there as well as the other. And he was a...but anyway, I was going to say, I was talking about the people in the Depression and going someplace. One day I was standing there and a guy drove in on a car and they kind a bit a u-turn, so he was really going in the opposite direction. The head...but the car was headed when it was pulled up to the gas tank and the guy come along said, could he have a ride. And the fellow said, “Well, I’m not going that way. I’m really going the other way.” So then the fellow says, “It doesn’t make any difference to me. I’ll go wherever
you’re going.” And out of hopelessness of the people...was just astounding when they came around.

One of the things that I remember thinking was that these guys that moved around...as far as I know, there wasn’t much robbery. I don’t know anybody who had anything stolen. And I’m glad I didn’t. Maybe it was different in other parts of the city. I’m sure it was rough in some city where there used to be riots and things, but out there maybe it was somebody always kind of gave them a meal, maybe.

I remember also going down to the blacksmith shop. In those days they’d shoot horses as well. Cars hadn’t become that much that the horses were out of business, but we used to go down and there was Bellows and they used to let us...because kids worked at Bellows and they’d shoot the horses and did most everything that was necessary in the line of metal work, which was done there. One of the...it was run by Mr. Lobb, Larry was his son. And Larry got in the...started to do work with welding and things of that kind and actually developed a tremendous business there, and all the people from the government trucks and vehicles and things, as they broke down, they took them in there for him to fix. And he was really very good. But anyway, the blacksmith shop was an interesting place to go with horses and we used to just kind of wander in and out and enjoy ourselves, as we did everything else. We just walked around where any people were and they let us play or do whatever we wanted around there. We got a lot of information that way; what was going on with people. The farmers would come in and talk and visit and so that was at the blacksmith shop. But, let’s see.

**Chilliwack High School**

We also, when we got through grade eight, we could go to high school and...but to go to high school was seven miles away and some of the people drove bikes. But there was also the original school bus that started out in Chilliwack, where the high school was. It went around in this route and I mentioned them dropping the teachers
off at the elementary school and then on to, down to the four corners which is the center of town, two roads crossed, that was it and it was called The Corners, and the bus came there. And there were several of us who were able to go on to high school. Jean and I were able to go. Uncle Wallace sent us money. It cost three dollars and fifty cents a month. But he sent us the money to take the bus, so we were able to go on into Chilliwack to the high school. It was about a seven mile ride, maybe a little more than that because we had to go around out in some of the other places. I think we had to go by East Chilliwack to pick up some other students. In any case, when we got all done I guess there were about twenty on the bus. And we’d get to school and went to school all day and took the bus back home again in the evening. And as I mentioned, when we got home from school, went over and took the...did the paper route...oh, and then I had to take the wood in the house. We burnt wood. We had it sawed in the summer, the big logs sawed, and split it. They used about sixteen inch length and we burnt that in the kitchen stove. And then we also had a little stove in one of the other rooms and it also burned wood. So I had to bring that in the house after I got home and then we would have dinner. We really had a pretty busy day and I can remember that I used to get pretty tired, of course, and I can remember I went to bed at eight o’clock pretty regularly and had to get up early morning to get going again.

But Chilliwack High School was really a great place and it was a fine building, brick and stone, and wood, some wood. And we stayed there all day. We used to take a lunch with us. Jean made lunches for us, we took them to school. And there was a room where we could...those of us who brought lunches could go to this room and have lunch there and then, and some might walk down into the city of Chilliwack and look around in the stores and everything, which a lot of the kids did who brought lunches. That was interesting. We could have lunch there, but there was also a man, Richardson, who was the...ran the furnace...and at lunch time we used to go in there, a certain number of us, it was kind of a select group. I don’t know how anybody ever got selected for it, but in any case, we used to go in there and he’d visit and talk to us. He was a great guy. His son had won a Victoria Cross and he was a very kind man who’d give us lots of advice on how to behave at school and all kinds of things, and all kinds of
things. But some of us ate there some of the time and a lot of time we ate in the room. And then they decided once that they were going to have soup at noon, and so they...they had no trouble getting a lot of vegetables and they had someone who’d come down and cook up a pot of soup. And we could eat it. It costs us a penny for a cupful. If we could afford the penny, we got a cup of soup and...

But the kids used to enjoy the lunch hour going down to Chilliwack, which was quite a progressive little town. It even have some...some of the streets were paved even. And it was a lot of fun just to go around in the stores. We used to wander in and out, see everything. The shop keepers didn't bother us none. Not many of the kids bought much because they didn't have any money, but once in a while we'd buy something.

I had a bit of money and Mom used to give Jean a little bit. I remember she said to us, “Don’t spend it all the time,” but all the other kids would spend something for a nickel or a dime. I don’t know what you’d get, but we got maybe a little ice cream, or a chocolate bar, or something. And she said, “You could have it to spend.” Jean always had some. I don’t know how much she ever spent because the kids didn’t have much money to spend. And it was interesting to wander around the town and do it.

But the high school was a very academic sort of a place and highly disciplined. The boys were called by the first name, like I was Charters and the girls were always called by “Miss” something, like my sister Jean was called, “Miss Charters.” And I don’t know how long they continued that, but that was it. But we had a rather forward...I often though the kids at school, a lot of the guys, I never did know their first name because we just...we were all called by our last names. And the girls, they were called “Miss” and a lot of them I never did know their first names, although there wasn’t any mystery about it, I guess, but that was what you did, you just called them by “Miss Charters,” or “Miss Hughes,” or something else. And the boys...I often thought about that, because when I went out teaching school the kids didn’t like to be called by their
last name. They didn’t want to be called Dombrowski, or whatever their names were; they wanted to be called by their first names, Andy or Joe or whatever it was.

But I thoroughly enjoyed the school work and it was really fun. We had clubs like debating club, which I belonged to. And then there was a drama club. And we had a big auditorium too, and it was interesting that the people...some of the wealthier people in the community built this auditorium, which was really a lovely place and...but one of the rules was they said, was nobody could play cards and you couldn’t dance in it. Well, as time went on, when we were there, dancing became kind of...and so was card playing, but nobody wanted to go play cards in the school, I guess. But people used to like to dance, so we had...we organized or got a hall somewhere, hired a band, they all played a little bit and we’d go there to dance. They were like school dances but also sometimes community people, too. And some of the people, men and women in the community, sort of acted as organizers or sponsors or chaperones, as we used to call them. And so we’d have the dances. But the auditorium was a very great place; we used to have all kinds of events there.

I remember one time we set up a model parliament, a Canadian parliament, and we did a lot of rehearsing, and made speeches and everything. And I remember I was Speaker of the House and I was to give a prayer and a speech. I remember I got mixed up and I gave them at the wrong time, but it was interesting that nobody ever seemed to notice, not even the teachers. So I guess I was very impressive, or people weren’t paying much attention. But I thought that was kind of interesting to me.

But there were a lot of reasons to go. They played basketball in the gym and the auditorium was... It was great. They put on plays and various...even community activities, because schools were the centers of the...there used to be a number of people come through and give talks and the people came in from the country and city. And I can remember going down with some...with Uncle Will and Aunt Edith, and Mom and Dad. I remember one of...it was something to do with the Klu Klux Klan and I could never quite figure out what the Klu Klux...what it was all about, but it was a carry over
from the United States, of course. And I don’t know...I never...in those days I didn’t know which side, who, they were on. Although I remember Uncle Will and Dad were what they called Orangemen. It was a lodge and it was very, very popular. But it was...the Orangemen weren’t Catholics. Of course, there weren’t many Catholics anyway in, but in our community I remember only one Catholic, and that was Mrs. McGrath. She was wife of Walter McGrath, who owned the garage and the gas pump, and a whole bunch of other things. She was a Catholic. And she used to have one of the boys drive her down to church sometimes, to Chilliwack, to go to her church. But there wasn’t much Catholic...but in any case, I was talking about the...something about the Orangemen. Oh, they were...Uncle Will was very much an Orangeman. And at that time there was...the national anthem was “God Save the King,” or Queen, whichever happened to be on the thrown at that particular time, and they...and Uncle Will ? but there was a new one, a new thing come in, “O Canada,” which they were trying to appease the people from other countries other than England, Ireland, and Scotland who came in and wanted to sing “O Canada.” And that was popular in the Quebec area too, which was primarily Roman Catholic I guess. In any case, but Uncle Will wouldn’t stand when they played, “O Canada,” he just sat there and didn’t stand for the national anthem, which attracted a lot of attention, of course. But it became so common that he didn’t do that wherever the meetings were and he didn’t, that was the way it was.

**Family Memories**

Uncle Will became very active in the church. I had sort of a feeling that he wasn’t so much pro-United Church or Protestant as he was anti-Catholic, so he was very active in the church. And all of the events in the community, they were...and Aunt Edith were both very active. And they were very good to us. They had a car and they used to take us out to Cultus Lake, which was just a lake and they marked it off in lots, very narrow lots, and you could...people could go and put a tent on them. You had to rent them for a little bit of money a year and you could continue to rent them. Well, gradually the tents kind of gave way and people started to build on them and it became
quite a lovely place, many of them just shacks. But in any case, Uncle Will and Aunt Edith had one of these lots and put a house in it. And they used to take us out on some days, sometimes in the summer for a few days, and it was great. It was...they were very kind to us and very good. All eight of us would get in the car, a Model T, and away we’d go out there. I don’t know how we all got in. Well, and sometimes too, we took Grandma Kern, who was there, and she’d get in the car, too. And that was typical of the days. Of course they were open, you could hang out. It wasn’t until later that they had doors that had windows on them. So that was a big thing, especially when it was raining, which it did lots and lots of times in Rosedale, but we continued on to most events.

The only thing I can kind of remember that we couldn’t do in the rain and that was play baseball. Anything else, we sort of went ahead and did. (Side ends)

We were talking about Cultus Lake and we were saying that Aunt Edith...in fact, Aunt Edith and Uncle Will, who had the car, used to come around and take us all kinds of places. We always had the holidays with them. I remember at Christmas we went to Aunt Edith’s and everybody came there, and then on New Year’s they came to our place. That was the same arrangement we had when we were in Drumheller. We used to go to Auntie’s, and Grandpa and Grandma’s, and then on New Year’s they came to our place.

Oh, and then speaking about Grandma in Rosedale, BC, this is Grandma Kern, this was the people where Grandpa and Grandma, where we stayed when we first came here for a few days. But we used to go down and see them a lot. And I remember when we went down to see them, Grandma and I went off...Grandpa had a little room where he was and I used to go and visit with him. And he was kind of an interesting guy. He didn’t talk a lot but I used to go and just sit there with him. We did often ?? because he had to get up early, as the farmers did, at five o’clock and get the cows milked and get it in the can, the milk in the cans, and get them down to the railroad tracks where the milk train came to pick them up. But Aunt Edith were really very good
to...we enjoyed them; they were a lot of fun. They had two children, Evelyn and Mariel, about our age and so there was lots of fun...they were both girls. I was the only boy in the bunch and I don’t know what difference it made, but anyway, I enjoyed it.

Out in the country, everybody knew about everything and if anything happened, it got around very, very quickly. And, but then, especially in the winter, we used to go down to the garage where Walter McGrath had a big forty-five gallon can stove and he used to put wood in it, kept it going all the time. Farmers would come in for a while in the morning or the afternoon and just sit around and talk, and I used to go down there too, when I wasn’t in school of course. And it was interesting, they’d talk about all kinds...it became a regular education about a lot of things because they had their opinions about them. I can remember there that, this was back in the Depression years, 1934-37, ‘38, and we...he had a radio. Walter McGrath got a radio and he had it there, so there was a fire and we’d listen to the radio. And I remember hearing Roosevelt’s address. I remember him talking about fear, it was fear ?, it was fear itself. And there used to be a news broadcast, Walter Winchel, that we used to pick up as well. And sometimes from Calgary we used to hear what was called old time music. Now this was 1934 and we still had old time music, which we still had now, and I can remember a band from Calgary playing and hearing it on the radio, “The Red River Valley,” I remember particularly. In any case, that’s the way a lot of education took place, was around that. And also in the grocery store they had...in the grocery store they had a stove. But the more popular one was over in the garage.

I was mentioning Walter McGrath had a radio and I can remember when the first radio I heard was Uncle Will got a radio, it was a big thing, a couple of big boxes, sort of, and they had to get both of them tuned together and it was quite a thing. One of the first programs I ever...the first program on the radio I remember was R.B. Bennett was running for Prime Minister of Canada and Uncle Will and Dad were both very much conservative and they...in any case, Bennett came on the radio and so we were down there at Uncle Will’s place and we...I remember Bennett shouting out, “We will blast ourselves into the markets of the world!” That was my first thing about radio. But
when they came in, they became very popular all of a sudden and we were able to get one after a few years too, where some guy came along in a car, in the Depression, he had some stuff he was trying to sell. And some way we got a radio from him, I don’t know what it was. ???, I remember that. And so we were kind of in the swing of things with a radio. It was a cabinet, quite the thing.

And I remember Walter McGrath, too. He was very civic minded of a guy. He was half Indian or three-quarter Indian. In any case, he was very aggressive in doing new things and he had this garage, which made some money, and the gas pump of course, and he just was in there. And they had an ice cream parlor in front of their house for a while and he was just into all kinds of things. But in any case, he decided...we didn’t have any electric lights, of course, but he bought a Delco it was called, and he wired his house and the garage. And the church was only...the United Church was only a block or two...no, not a block or two, just very close, practically next store to him, and he...when he got his place wired, he wired the church too; he connected it to his Delco. So we had electric lights when we went to church and then didn’t have them when we were at home. As I mentioned previously I think, Dad was one of the people who went around, they got enough people to sign up so they ran the electric lights, came to town. Things seemed to happen very quickly. Maybe just...when radio came in, it seemed like all of a sudden we got one and everybody seemed to be getting them. And then there was electric lights, and all of a sudden, there they were.

**Church Life**

I was mentioning about the church. The church was also the center of much activity. People went on Sunday school in the morning, went to church in the afternoon. We were on a circuit with East Chilliwack, Sham and Rosedale. And one minister, when I was there, was Turpin, George Turpin. He was a great guy. He preached at East Chilliwack in the morning, went over to Sham and preached in the afternoon, then come down to Rosedale and preached in the afternoon. And they finally had a manse, which they bought right next door to the church. So the manse was in Rosedale, but he was a
busy guy going around attending all of these meetings. But the church was a very active place, had its own choir and had an organ, which they had to pump with their...the organist, Mrs. Higgins, had to pump with her feet. But on a special time they had a boy with her, and I never did, but the guys had to go in and pump the organ for the music to come out. And there was quite a lot of activities.

We used to go Sunday school. I got kind of fed up with Sunday...I don't know why, but I decided I didn't want to go to Sunday school. I knew I had to do something, so I decided I'd go to church in the evening. So I used to go over...go to church in the evening. And Dad wasn't particularly active; he wasn't much of a church man. He did things in the church and held some offices but he didn't go to regularly, until I started to go, and then he went over and he used to go every Sunday, regularly, until I got through high school, which was when I went on to university and he stopped. He was never active but Mother was much more devout and interested in the church than he was. But the church was a place where we always...whatever was there, weddings took place, when there was one, and funerals took place. And one I particularly remember was when Grandpa Kern died we were down...one morning a woman came up and said to Mom, we were still in bed, but she came up and said that she thought she ought to...Mom ought to get up, go down and visited Grandpa’s place. She didn't say very much, but I remember one thing. She said, “Lena,” which was my mother’s name, “you better have a cup of tea before you go down.” And Mom said, “No, I'll get one when I get down there,” which was about an eighth of a mile down the road, I guess. And the woman said, “Well, I'm not sure there will be any.” And that was left at that. So we went down and Grandpa had died in the night. The way they find out about it was that Aunt Edith lived, as I indicated before, not too...they owned some property right across from the railroad station, and they lived in the station and he was the station master. And she got a phone call she said from Bryant and said that he thought that there was a problem over at Grandpa and Grandma’s. And he said, “There is no fire.” Fires was one of the first things that people built in the morning and the smoke come out of the chimney. And he said there wasn't any smoke coming out, so Auntie went over, walked over, and Grandma was still in bed and she went in and Grandpa had died. And so I
remember the time about that. We all went back over to Aunt Edith's, Grandma and everybody, and I remember Grandma just giving me a watch and she said, "Grandpa wanted you to have his watch." Watches in those days were one of the things that men had. It was like practically their only kind of possession or anything of worth much. And when they died, they gave the watch to somebody and that was a great honor to get a watch from somebody; it indicated deep affection for the people.

I remember later on, Dad, some that he got from some of the people that had died. The people on the railroad had to have an accurate watch if you were foreman anyplace, because the trains ran on time, pretty much. But in any case, time was a very important thing on the railroad and Dad got some. I remember him getting his watch from Grandma. I remember Grandma coming over and she was in black, and she sat down in the kitchen, in the rocking chair. And from then on she wore black all the time; she was just in mourning, as they used to say. Or maybe they said it, but I guess we did, too.

But in any case, I remember the funeral. We went down to the...over to the church. I remember mother picking some flowers to take over, which she took over and put on the coffin. And Grandma didn't come to the funeral; she was over at Aunt Edith's. And you could see over to the road that went from Rosedale to Chilliwack and the funeral place was close to Chilliwack, so she went over there and watched...said she wanted to...she wanted to watch the hearse go by. So she did, but she didn't go to the church. I never knew why. But in any case, they had his funeral that was in the church and there were not too many, but there were...of course, an event in which there were great numbers in the little community.

**Early Days of Trains**

And of course, like anyplace else, there were tragedies. One was that...it was concerning a school bus. We had the school bus that drove around from Chilliwack, from school. We came home from school and our bus was driven by Mr. Cunningham,
who owned the bus, and it came into Rosedale. And there was another bus that went in another direction that he owned, and somebody else drove. Well, in any case, the other bus got hit by a train and one student was killed and some other wounded a bit. And when they got to Rosedale, they told them to call back and they called back and told them that the other bus had been hit by a train. And so he did that. But that was quite the thing because people got scared to ride the buses. It was fairly new; there weren’t any buses at all around. In any case, they were scared. And I remember on the bus we had, sometimes when we got to the railroad crossing we had to stop the bus, Mr. Cunningham would get out, walk across the train track, get back in the bus, then drive on. Some of the kids were just petrified that they were going to be hit by a train. I was not so much afraid of trains because Dad worked on the railroad and we got a pass; that was one of the things, we could go wherever we wanted on the train. We got a pass; you just had to write in to get in. And the railroads were very good about giving passes because [people] were out in isolated places, so they’d give them a pass so they could get down into...go wherever they wanted to go. But at least go somewhere. So we did. We had a pass and we used to go frequently down to Vancouver and places and this is a great event in our life and...Mom used to particularly enjoy it.

As I mentioned before, Dad used to kid the Kern women girls, there were seven of them. Grandpa Kern, whom I spoke about the funeral a few minutes ago, he and Grandma had seven girls, no boys. But these girls were very...much on the front end of things. We used to talk about them getting their skirts cut and their hair bobbed and they were...and we used to love to go places. We did one summer. I spoke about picking fruit and we took all the fruit down and put it on consignment and kept...somebody, I don’t know, kept the money that we got on consignment. That would give us money and we went down to Buffalo, where Mom had some of these other sisters, so we went down there and visited with them for a while. And we also went to Hagarsville, no not...Hamilton, where Mom I guess was born and lived, and visited there for a day or two and in Toronto, where we had the train connection to go from there to Buffalo. Oh, also while we were down here we had passes and we went over to New Haven, where Uncle Wallace was...he was a college professor, very well
known in the field. But in any case, he was visiting there, visiting professor at Yale in the summer. So we went down and we went over to visit him. And he was there with Aunt Jessie and a couple of the kids. And so we had a few days with them. And then we had to go back to New York to get the train back to Buffalo, and then from Buffalo we went back home. But in any case, going down to New York, and he came down with us from New Haven, he gave us a wonderful tour of New York City, all the places that we’d heard about, things...Coney Island, and the Empire State Building, and 42nd Street, and he just spent most of the day just driving us around...not driving us around, he took us on buses and...mostly by buses, I guess, or subways. Of course, we could just get the subway. But we did go up to the Empire State Building and up there...now this would have been about '34, I guess, they had the first tele...I didn’t know what it was or it didn’t come, but we were in one room and right next door they projected a screen and that was the beginning of television, I guess. But that was a wonderful time and we had these passes, which were great.

And I remember Dad, after I got to college, got a foreman’s job in Albrita, which is up near Jasper. That was a good job because the train stopped there, which they didn’t along lots of the railroads there. So the train stopped and they gave the foreman a house and so they built houses for the section foreman with bunk houses for the section men. And also the station masters had lived in the house usually, in the station, while they worked. So he was up there.

But I was talking about passes, but they gave lots of passes...and I got a weekend pass from there down to Vancouver and back. I spent all my time on the train. I could do while riding around on this pass. It was quite true but it took quite a while. But in any case, the railroads were very generous. And they also had medical plans. You paid into the medical fund so you could visit the doctor, which we did when we were in Rosedale very frequently, ?? . And especially on Saturday nights because there was a guy who ran a car down to Chilliwack for twenty-five cents...I guess twenty-five cents both ways and go down there. But the doctor, Dr. Moore, used to be in the office, in his office on Saturday nights, and lots of people went to Chilliwack on Saturday
night, that was a big night, and he’d stay open. I remember one time I had a problem with my throat and we called him and he came out. He had to drive about seven miles. But in any case, he came out and gave me some ?. And I had diphtheria and he gave me this…I was one of the first people that had gotten this diphtheria vaccine. But in any case, it took a long time to get rid of it and I had it for...we were out of school for about three months, in quarantine in our house in Rosedale, a long time. It was bad enough for me, I was kind of sick, but for Jean it was terrible and Mom had to stay there and, of course, Dad couldn’t...nobody could come in and out and it was kind of a long, drawn out thing. And finally they couldn’t get rid of it so they...there was two doctors, I guess another doctor in Chilliwack too, but two of them came out and in the house, they put me on a bed and one of them gave some anesthetic I guess, and the other one...they took my tonsils out and that way I was able to get rid of the diphtheria bugs that were lodged in there. But in any case, they had benefits too. And the passes and benefits were two great things to get people to work on the railroads. All along the line there were sub-stations but they were frequently far in-between and people were just out there working. It was whey freights that brought food in to the people along the lines because whey freights stopped wherever they needed to stop, on the crossroads, or road, or most anyplace. But that was...life on the railroad was kind of fun; Dad enjoyed it very much. But he had to move around quite a bit from one place to another and get back and forth every day, it was...in addition to doing the hard work on the railroad. And, of course, as soon as I got out of high school, I...he told me to go up to an ? up in ? River which was a few hundred miles up in Ontario. We went up by train of course; he got a job working up there. He got a job in the cook car. Dad knew the foreman that was going to be organizing this group and he gave me a job in the cook car. It isn’t that I wasn’t able to do the hard work, which it wasn’t, this thing...railroads and...the rails, steel rails, lifting them, they were putting new rails down and driving spikes, so I got a job there and worked there for the summer and did very well. They paid people twenty-five cents an hour, no overtime, but worked twelve or fourteen hours every day, so made quite a little bit of money and took it back down and was able to use that to get some clothes to go down to UBC. But the railroads are
certainly an important and very part of our life. Dad...they used to end up at the end of the day...started out and ended up at the... (Can’t hear) ...after school I had the paper route and.... (Can’t hear)

We used to go down and visit Uncle Will quite a bit; he was the station manager. Trains came in, they stopped, and there was just a lot going on at the station. It was the only means of transportation, there were no buses and there were very few cars, so this was connected to the outside world by going down and visiting there and especially all the people...lots of people, in the evening, used to go down...the milk train came at seven or eight o’clock, so people used to go down to the railroad station, the train came and stopped and one thing or another, so it was a big event in the evening. (Tape ends)
Rosedale Continued

This is a continuation of the experiences in Rosedale.

I wanted to say something about the church. I may have said this before, but maybe not. But in any case, the church was a very vigorous...not a vigorous place but a place where lots of things took place. Special times of the year we had music, like at Christmas and other times. When there was something going on at the church the...they had to have a boy go in and pump the organ. Mrs. Higgins was the organist and she was a great person but I guess if it went on too long she got tired pumping. In any case, somebody went in and pumped the organ for all these events. And I used to go to Sunday school, too. And I got tired of going for some reason or another and I knew I had to do something so I decided to go to church, which I did, and that was in the evening at 7:30. The minister had three churches--one at East Chilliwack, one at Sham, and one at Rosedale. And he preached in East Chilliwack in the morning, in the afternoon at Sham, and then in the evening in Rosedale. And he had to...he did a round of those three, practically identical services, I suppose. At least he preached the same because sometimes we'd hear from people who were at one of the churches where he was lambasting off of something and we knew that we were going to get it in the evening.

I remember one time there was...he had all of the young people into his house in...I guess in Sham because that's where the manse was, so he had them over there one night and a lot of people objected to him having them dancing. And so he gave a sermon on it. I don't remember we were prime to get it at Rosedale. We went down...I didn't think there was too much to it, except that his point was that, "Look, young people are going to dance and we might as well accept it." As I had spoken before, we didn't have dances and some people objected. Of course, some people had ???. But some people didn't. But anyway, he gave us a sermon and we got in Rosedale and everything calmed down; there wasn't anything much ado about it, I don't think. I guess ???. But in any case, there was... (Tape off)
In any case, let’s see, we were...I think I was talking about that I...anyway, I had to stop going to Sunday school and I had to do something, so I went to church. So I went faithfully every Sunday night to church and the thing about it was I remember I started to go at night and Dad was not a church-goer particularly. He went for various things and was on some of the boards, but he was not really a church man. He started to go when I did and he went every Sunday night too, and I...I kind of respected him for that; I thought it was a nice idea. The point was, we didn’t even sit together, I don’t think. But in any case, the church was still a very important thing in the community. And on it was the church bell. And I recall that there was something wrong with Mrs. Pick. Mrs. Pick’s daughter-in-law run away, mentally disturbed I guess, or something. Anyway, she ran away and they had everybody go out and look for her. And when they found her they rang the church bell and that meant that everybody that was out looking in various places could come home. It was a very unfortunate thing, as a matter of fact, because she came back but then she ran away again and drowned in the little slew that went by our place, a couple hundred yards from where we lived and...the church bell was used for fires, too. Whenever we had a fire, the church bell rang and everybody knew there was something going on and it didn’t take long for everybody to find out to do whatever they had to do to go look for people, or fight the fire.

The church was also a place where they had weddings and funerals. I remember when Grandpa died, we were...Jean and I were in with Mom in her bed and some old...Mrs. Huddleston came and said to Mom, maybe she ought to go down...because they were at her parent’s place and so Mom knew there was something bothering her of course. And they got up and Mrs. Huddleston said, “Maybe we ought to put the fire on and have a cup of tea.” And Mom said, “Oh, no. We’ll have one when we get down there.” And Mrs. Huddleston said, “I don’t think they have a fire.” And I was surprised somebody was out...we got down there and Grandpa had died in the night and Grandma would be still in bed, but she was up and around and Aunt Edith was there. The way they found Grandpa was that George Bryant, a farmer nearby, called Aunt Edith and said that they thought there was something the matter there because there wasn’t any fire...no fire. There wasn’t any smoke coming out of the chimney, so
there wasn’t any fire. One of the things that people did when they first got up in the morning was put a fire on. And he knew there was something the matter, so Aunt Edith went over and found Grandpa died; and Grandpa was about eighty years old, I think. In any case, went there and then we went back over to Aunt Edith’s place and I was in the house and Grandma came in and said, “Grandpa wanted you to have his watch.” So I got it. One of the things about those days, men didn’t have anything much to leave. They had very little, but they all had a watch. And that was a very important thing and they left their watch to somebody very close to them. So it was a real great honor that Grandpa would leave me his watch.

The railroad people had watches, too, but they used them for time keeping then. And when somebody died they left their watch to somebody and I remember some of the people on the railroad, even though they were grown up, left Dad their watch. In fact, I have one here right now. No, I guess I gave it...I got all of the watches from Grandpa and Grandma...no, not Grandpa and Grandma...from Mom and Dad and one from Grandpa, and one from the railroad. And I’ve got them running and gave one to each of the children; I guess they still have them. The watch was an important item in people’s lives and the one thing they had of value.

Well, in any case, I got the watch and Grandma was in black and from then on...she put on black clothes that morning and I never saw her in anything but black after. She went into mourning. But after a day or two, of course, they had a funeral at the church and I can remember Mom going out and picking some flowers and took them over and put them on the coffin in the church. I guess there was a florist somewhere, but there were lots of flowers sent so she took some flowers home. I remember Grandma didn’t go to the funeral but where Aunt Edith...the station was, you can see across the road to Chilliwack and it was on that road that the cemetery was on; Lowell Mountain it was called, a little hill near Chilliwack. And Grandma said she’d see it. So apparently she sat where she could see the road and watched for the hearse to go by.
Family Memories

Grandpa and Grandma had seven girls, no boys, and Grandma used to always want to go and see the girls. Grandpa used to grow some vegetables and Grandma used to take them around and sell them to people. I always thought it was the oddest thing to be selling vegetables to people in Rosedale when everybody had a garden and things. But apparently they didn't or maybe some of the farmer guys didn't grow the vegetables the way that they liked it and went and bought them. But I remember Grandma used to get enough money to go down east. She had...her girls were in Buffalo and Grandma used to say to me, she said, “Alec, I just want to see the girls once more.” Oh, that was a familiar thing for several years. But she did go and see the others. Aunt Annie was still in Drumheller, but Aunt Nora, Aunt Ethel, and Aunt Bertie were still around the Buffalo area.

But one year we went down there, too. We decided upon picking fruit...we picked enough fruit and saved the money that came on consignment to get enough to go down; we had a pass of course, to get enough money to go down and see the girls, which we did. We took the train into Toronto and then took a train down to Buffalo and they met us there, and we’d visit for a couple of weeks down there, had a great time, and then...while we were there we got a pass to go over to New Haven, Connecticut, go down to New York and up there and spend a few days in New Haven, where Uncle Wallace was teaching, teaching at Yale. And we went back into...went back into New York and Uncle Wallace came with us. He gave us a wonderful day there; we saw everything I think--Forty Second Street and the top of the Empire State Building. While we were on top of the Empire State Building, they had a machine in one room, which the Rockefeller Building and they had it running. And then we could see it in the other room. This was the beginning of television and back then, that was about 1934, it was the early days of that, very early. But also, while we were in New York we went out to Coney Island and the Empire State Tower, the Statue of Liberty and, oh, Jesus, we went on the subway and everything. Then we got on the train at night and went back to Buffalo and back out to BC.
But Grandma was a very strong person; she lived for many years after that. Most of the time...she used to want to live in her own home and she kept moving in there and then back over for Aunt Edith and then back to there. And they had...for a while, they had a neighbor’s kid come in and stayed all night with her, slept there, so Grandma could stay in her own home. And everybody was agreeable to it, but there used to be a great deal of concern about it, but people sort of went along with her wishes to live independently. She did. She was a great reader. Of course, we still had some lamps in those days. I had spoken earlier about when we got electricity.

I was talking about the church...oh, one thing I wanted to say that Walter McGrath, who owned the garage where we had the Christmas parties, cleaned everything out and had the Christmas party. He was a great guy. He was always doing some new things, too. He got a Delco, which was a small little electric lamp. It had electric lights and this was a small machine that made electricity and he wired his garage and his house. And he also got the idea to wire the church, which was just a few feet down the road, next house over, next house or two. And he wired the church and this was a great thing. So one of the first places...and it seemed very fitting that the church should be the first place to have electric lights, after Walter McGrath’s place. He was a great guy and he had a place...he was part Indian...he was, I don’t know, half or three-quarters Indian but he married this girl who was a Roman Catholic and there weren’t any other Roman Catholics, I don’t think, around. There might have been but they didn’t show up. Anyway, she was a Roman Catholic and they had these three boys--Ben, Wilfred, and Harry--and they...she used to get one of them to drive her down to church in Chilliwack, the Roman Catholic church, on Sunday morning sometimes. But the boys all went...maybe there were some other...but they all went to Sunday school at the United Church which was their...there’s a little Anglican church right behind our place, which all of a sudden sort of became reactivated. A couple of women went down there and cleaned up the church and they started to hold regular services. And but mostly they went...if they went anywhere, went to the United Church where we did.
Once in a while there was a calamity. I mentioned about the church bells and the woman jumping off the bridge into the water and was found drowned.

**School Age Memories**

But one time, also, the school bus used to leave Chilliwack after school, drive out to the country and back through Rosedale?? School and then back into Chilliwack. We came out on the bus. We got there and there was a telephone in Mrs. McNair’s house, her establishment, and she told Mr. Cunningham that he should call back somewhere. And we were all around; everybody knew everything that was going on in town, of course. And he called back and they told him that the other school bus that went out west from Chilliwack had been hit by a bus. And we found out later that one girl had died and some others were injured. But the bus used to go and people were petrified of the fact that some of the kids [didn’t want] to ride on the bus, but they had to do it sooner or later. And they made whatever arrangements they could. And I remember a couple of places we picked up kids, came to the railroad track and they stopped. Mr. Cunningham the bus driver got out, went across the track, and looked up and down and saw it was all clear, got back in the bus and we went on again. But it was a real calamity that something like that happened. It sort of pulled all of the kids together but it was really a terrible thing, but the community all mustered around and gradually things got back to normal after a year or two.

But there’s also kind of pranks kids used to play in those days. I remember when it got cold…and where we lived it got cold, but not freezing. But in any case, we had a snow storm and got an inch or two of snow and even some ice and we got out of school to go skating. But also when it got cold sometimes we would get to school early and there was a thermometer in the school. It was just in the principal’s classroom and used to hang inside. And when we thought it was about time he was coming, we used to take the thermometer and hold it out the window so that the temperature would go down. And he’d get to school and sometimes, I don’t know what we did, I think once we got out of school because it was so cold. We did have a furnace in the school, one
of a few places that had furnaces. We had a furnace. And another time “DHH” as we called him drove his car and there was lots of rain and the schoolyard was a lot of mud. We did have a great lawn though, or part of it, but anyway there was lots of mud and he got out there and seemed to be getting stuck so all of us thought, “Well, we’ll help and we’ll push.” Well, we figured out he’s...when he was going forward, we’d all push back and then he’d try it the other way and the car kept going down. Finally he went over to Tommy the Jap’s...Tom ? lived next door to the school. He had a big...he had a farm there and he went over and got a team of horses and brought them back. By that time we’d push the car out on the road. And, I don’t know, he was pretty understanding, though. There were times when something happened and he really didn’t...although he was a real disciplinarian at times he just didn’t do anything. I remember a time when there was a wreck down at the milt. A train went off the tracks. A switch was left open or something, and this was early morning. It may have been the milk train, I don’t know. In any case, we went...all us kids went down the tracks to where it was. Of course, we never saw a wreck before in our life. And we had a great time; we were there all morning. They had a crane trying to get the engine out and it was a big to-do. We got back to school about noon and we were eating lunch, as we did...we were eating outside with the principal, out in the wood shed, and I remember nobody ever really told him what had happened but they talked about the wreck. But he never did anything about it. He just let it go, and I guess this was an experience that we had. He was a great guy. But this was just as in any town, I guess. People played jokes or tried to fool people and one thing or another, but it was all fun and all part of day and day life.

It seems to me I’ve talked about some of this before. One of the other things that I mentioned was the blacksmith shop in Rosedale. There was...they still had horses, of course, and farmers would bring the horses into the blacksmith shop to get shod, get their shoes on, horseshoes, and we used to go down there as kids and be around and they had bellows and they used to let us pump the bellows to get the irons hot so they could put the shoes on the horses. It was kind of an interesting thing and it was just about the time that they were giving up on horses for transportation; they kept
them for plows. But in any case, the fellow Mr. Roberts was the blacksmith and he lived
quite a ways away and he used to come in on his wagon to...he had a farm out there
and he came in on his wagon. And on Sundays for church, Sunday school, he had the
wagon and he used to put boards across. He had two or three girls, and Laurie, and
some other people, they’d come in, they sat on these boards to come into church. But
he was the blacksmith. And then they had a son, Laurie, who was really pretty smart
and he got some welding equipment and started to weld when the trucks, as they came
in, broke down. He developed a very big business with the government. They used to
bring the...they used to bring the trucks and equipment in to get them fixed by Laurie.
He developed, I understand after I left, a very big business and did very well.

This is sort of the end of some of the recollections and memories, things at
Rosedale. It was a happy life. Our family were very happy. We didn’t have much. I
don’t remember ever having a telephone in Rosedale, but we had lots of love and lots of
fun. Dad had a great sense of humor and Mom was a very staid and wonderful person
who never got very excited about much but did everything she had to do around the
farm--feeding the chickens and bringing in the house the chicks because it was too cold
outside. We had hundreds of chickens and we had to feed them and clean them and
later on gather the eggs and take them down the store. There were lots of chores to be
done around the farming community.

Cook Car to College

I had mentioned earlier that I got a job at...Dad arranged for me to get a job up
at Blue River on an extra gang so for the summer I got up there on a pass and spoke to
the foreman, who Dad knew, and he said, “Well, we’re not hiring until tomorrow.” But
he said, “You can go and eat in the food car.” And I didn’t think too much about that
but what it meant really was that I was going to get a job or they wouldn’t put me in
the cook car. In any case, the next day they lined up everybody and they hired...there
was piles of people. It was in the midst of the Depression and lots of men looking for
work. And they hired them and I was left standing there, and I said to the foreman,
“Don’t I get a job?” And he said, “Oh, yes. You go work in the cook car.” He said, “You can’t handle this heavy work out here.” So I went over to the cook car and reported to the...so I went in and reported to the cook, whose name was Jack, and there were some other people there. There was an assistant cook and two waiters. And he just took me in and I was sort of an extra, do odd jobs or whatever I did. In any case, I went in and the first couple of days I monkeyed around doing various things. I think it was the second day, there was a big pot about...there were probably a hundred men working and there was a lot of food. But there was a big pot almost two feet high and it had some peas in it and he said, “Go strain those peas.” And so I strained the peas. And a little while later he said to me, “Well, throw out those peas.” And I said, “Well, I just strained them and I threw out the juice.” He said, “What did you do? That was the soup!” And so there was no soup for that day and that was a major problem because that was a basic food for lunch that particular day. And then the next day he said to me, “Come over here and watch me.” So he was making pies and he had to make a lot of pies. I don’t know how many, maybe thirty a day, and he showed me how to do it. He said, “Do you see what you’re doing?” And I said, “Well, yes.” And the next day he went over and said, “Now I want you to make the crust for these pies; you saw me yesterday.” And I wasn’t very sure what the heck he did the day before but in any case I fooled around; he helped me and he got right in. And the next day he said, “Come over here again.” So I went over again and I had to make the crust for the pies and also put some apples or whatever was going to be stuffed inside the pie. And so I did that and got them ready, and put them in the oven and cooked them. The next day he said, “Go make the pies,” and I had to do it all by myself and he was overseeing. He said, “Boy, that was quite a thing to make those pies.” And so I did that some other days and I just did whatever else there was to do--wash pots and pans and...on another day I got in...I had to get up about six to get over there because the men went out and worked for a little bit and then they came back and had breakfast, and went out again. And they worked twelve, fourteen hours a day. And then they went out and then they’d come back in.
Incidentally, well, not so incidentally, but I got paid by the hour and I had long hours, even longer than the other guys. And so if anybody, I found out that if anybody was out working at all they put me on the payrolls. So I did pretty well; I had a lot of hours, twenty-five cents an hour, no overtime but...most people weren’t getting that in the Depression. It was...another time he told me to clean the floor out of the kitchen and I just looked outside and I saw a big hose that was there, there on the siding, and there was a big hose out there so I stuck the hose in and...the cook went off for a rest in the middle of the morning but I was left to do whatever was there. So I got the hose and I stuck it in the end of the car and really done a fair job of cleaning that cook car out. But what I didn’t realize was that all the flour bins, and sugar bins, and other bins went right down to the floor. And so I...I didn’t think about it at the time, but I got them wet. And so we had ??? was in there. And one of my jobs was to keep those bins filled and I certainly did and they never got down to where the water had affected them, as far as I know. But it was a very interesting experience.

There were two other...there was two waiters, a cook, and an assistant cook, and then me. And I was just an extra. They were all on the payroll of the dining, the food business, and...but they all lived right in...there was a unit of a whole bunch of bunk cars and then a couple where they fed them in and then one with the kitchen, and another one where the food was stored and where they slept. So it was quite a little bunch of things there and I...but I wasn’t on the regular staff so I had to sleep in the bunk car. These bunk cars were just two bunks all made up two-high--just boards, nothing else, and people. Fortunately Mom had given me a blanket before I left. I guess she knew what was going on from Dad’s experiences and made me a blanket, so I at least had a blanket, otherwise we just slept on the boards and we got up in the morning. In any case, I had kind of enjoyed it as a matter of fact and the cook was really good to me. He didn’t get...he and the assistant cook didn’t get along for some reason or another and I used to do some of his work. It was an older fellow and he had glasses that pinched on the nose and they kept falling off when he was cooking in the heat and the sweat from the smoking and being over the stoves and everything...so anyhow, we got along very well and he was...
In any case, as we got along toward the end of the...toward the end of...I guess it was August or end of September...in any case, I got a letter from Dad saying if I was going to the university I better get home. So I got home and Uncle Wallace had agreed to pay me a hundred and fifty dollars which would cover tuition and a lot of other things. I think the tuition was only fifty dollars or something in those days. And then Mom and Dad paid my room and they had gone on down...apparently...well, in the spring I had gone to UBC to look around ??, which Uncle Wallace had introduced me to. So, in any case, I packed up and went home. And then I got back to Rosedale and I went into Chilliwack and...we bought some clothes to go to college and I didn’t have very much and it was very appropriate to get a suit, and shirt and tie, and various other items just so I look complete. In other words, it cost quite a bit of money. And so I had it all packed to go down to college and I...in the spring I had gone down and visited C.B. Wood. It would be near Uncle Wallace. Uncle Wallace drove up to him and I went down and visited with him; he was very kind. He served as a mentor to me nearly all through my college days. He was a great guy. He did many things for me. Once in a while he’d have me over to his apartment and have dinner. He had another...he always had a student living with him who I guess helped him cook and clean and do whatever he did. C.B. was a bachelor but he was very kind. But at various times he’d take me down to the symphony downtown and just did all kinds of...he was one of really truly great scholars. Every time I’d ask him what he was reading, he’d say, “Well, I’m reading the Bible.” And he said, “I’m reading it in Greek...” Greek and Latin, I think he said. To see what the differences were. But he was a sign of a great scholar who did this as a general hobby. But he was always there when I needed him and later on when I became president of the class...education...teacher training ’39, he became the honorary president of the class and that was great. So I thought it was kind of fitting. In any case, I finally ended up going down to Vancouver. Mom and Dad had gone down ahead and got me a room in this boarding house. And there weren’t any residents but...well, yeah, there was one where the Union Theological College had built a big building, so that was the United Church of Canada, and they were going to have a theological college there. But it hadn’t been open yet and so some students stayed
there. It was very expensive or at least relatively more than...what we did in this boarding house, I had to pay twenty-five dollars a month and got food...I took a bag lunch and went...there was a cafeteria on the campus and we used to go in there. And they’d let us sit at the table even though we brought our own lunch.

So, in any case, I got down to Vancouver and I had to take the streetcar to go out to the university. Somebody told me the streetcar number so I went down and got it. I had all my luggage. In those days the baggage people used to deliver the luggage to the hotel or wherever you were going so my luggage went on...I got on the streetcar and ended up way out in East Vancouver. What I didn’t realize was that streetcars had numbers on and they went one direction up to the end of the line and the other direction... (Side ends)

**UBC**

When I arrived at Vancouver and took the streetcar out, I went the wrong way. In any case, I did get out to...finally got out to UBC, went up to the place to report and I went to school. I didn’t know...I got out to the university and got myself registered. Well, one of the problems was that Uncle Wallace was going to send me a hundred and fifty dollars but it hadn’t gotten there so I had to go back down to the railroad station and send him a telegram and say, “Will you please send me the money?” So he did in due time and...

One of the first events that was there was...for us, we had to wear a cap and the girls had to wear a sign on their back with their name and their phone number. And this was part of the fun and we enjoyed...one of the first events was, well, that they were going to put on a snake parade down in Vancouver, downtown, and we went down in streetcars. And this was simply all the students forming a line hand to hand and they were going to the long way, but it tied up all the streetcars and everything else because nobody could move and break the line. And that was something that was done every year and nothing much seemed to happen except for after a couple of hours it all broke
up and things got back to normal. I guess the police were used to it; they were around and made some gestures but really nothing very serious had happened.

I got registered and got into classes and started to do all of this. It was a wonderful experience. And we had...I remember the chairman of the physics department taught the beginning physics course. The chairman of the economics department taught economics. The chairman of the English department happened to teach the section ??.. There were several sections of that. And I don't remember what else I took. I took...oh, Mathematics. He was a great guy; he had a great sense of humor and later went up and became president of the university. The chair of the physics department went on and became, later on, president of the new university, Simon Fraser University. These were great teachers. We just benefited together because they had so much wisdom and took time to explain things. I remember once when we were going to take one of our first examinations and one of the girls said to him, “Dr. S, do you think it’s better to stay up at night and study or is better to go to bed and get a good sleep?” And I remember his answer. He said, “Well, when I go into an examination, I’d like to ??.” It was an interesting right answer to that question. But in any case, all the way through college I apparently enjoyed the classes and they were very rigorous. Most of the...or at least a lot of the professors had come from Europe and had gone to Oxford and Cambridge and came up into the colonies and out to Canada in dominions to teach. Oh, one of other teachers was a French teacher, French I. We had already had a couple of years of French in high school and had to take French and it was Ms. Lucas. She was quite an attractive young person and she used to talk about her experiences in Paris at the Sorbonne where she studied and the various experiences that she had while in Paris. It was really an honor...well, maybe the other subject may have been psychology. I remember she had worked with Thorndike, I guess it was, and she used to talk about her experiences with Thorndike the psychologist. One of the things about it was that he was married and had a son and somebody said...where did you...she was talking about her son and somebody said, “Where did you get the name ‘Digger’?” She said, “Well, we decided that we’d let him go for a couple of years and then he could choose his own name.” And so he chose the
name “Digger” and I guess he did that...lived with that all the rest of his life. But they were a great bunch of teachers, very rigorous and...classes were somewhat formal. Of course we wore a shirt and tie or some kind of a sweater. And I got one ???, thirty-eight, and wore that. It got so I didn't like it very much. But in any case, they were kind of formal classes. We'd get there and if the professors didn't show up in ten minutes...they were always late, but if they didn't get there in ten minutes the rule was that we could take off, so times they didn't, but most of the time they got there about nine minutes after so we had to stay.

**UBC Extracurricular Activities**

I got involved in quite a few student activities. When I was in high school, or at that age, we used to play basketball and I was a really good player. And I went down to turn out at UBC and went out and with the people there. I just wasn't in the same class at all. And so I decided not to turn out for basketball, but later on I did. The senior basketball team was...they had...the sports, they were all run by students or a student government and they used to have a manager and assistant managers for all of sports. It was the job of the manager to arrange the schedule, go to the league meetings and actually get some cash and ? for home games and sell tickets and ???. I went on as associate manager I guess you would call it, or assistant manager, and then became senior manager and that was a lot of fun. I also got a big block letter for the senior manager and you got it the year you were senior manager, so we would have to wear it around. It was quite an honor to get a letter and I thoroughly enjoyed that. I also got involved in some of the clubs. I got interested in the International Relations Club and I became its president. And I remember one time we got word that there was going to be a meeting in Moscow of the people from the International Relations Club and I...and we were all excited about it, but I was able to get a pass to go down there...get a pass to go, but what we found out was...before I got the pass I found out that it wasn't in Moscow in Russia, it was in Idaho and it was one of the universities--Washington State I guess it was. In any case, I went down there. I remember I got
on...I went down and I had some money, not very much but all I had, and I remember I went in to buy a paper for a nickel. I had this bill and I got a whole bunch of silver dollars back and here I was loaded with those things; I had never seen a silver dollar. But in any case, I went down there but by that time we were just getting...we'll talk about the journey in just a minute...but getting ready to join...we had a local fraternity going to the international, so I got down there and I stayed at the fraternity house. And they were monster places; it was called the Beta Hotel. Beta Beta Phi was the fraternity and it was a big place where the students stayed. And the other university in the next state was only about eight, ten miles over, so they drove me over to the fraternity house over there. These were tremendous things and I was much impressed with the fraternity houses, but I was also impressed with the meetings. So this was really a very interesting first time I'd been to any kind of a big meeting like that where people came in for the delegates. And this I was able to enjoy, that trip, and I enjoyed the work in the International Relations Club. In Vancouver there weren't any much rooms or anything. The women...they had a women's association for the university and there was...and a lot of them came from Shaughnessy Heights it was called, and these were big residential, very swoosh places, very expensive. And for many of the events of the clubs and things at the university these women would invite the students to go out and have the meetings in their home and they always supplied some very nice food which was great for us of course having just living in the boarding house. But those were lovely experiences, going out to these homes. It sort of gave me an idea about how you might like to live someday. But I meant to say that we stayed in boarding houses and these were very nice homes out near the university, usually just off the endowment land. And it was during the Depression and many of the people had lost their jobs and so they took in students as borders. And these were very fine people in really very nice homes, but the men and women both used to work, cleaned the place, cooked the meals and that's the way it was. And I stayed in various ones of those places to the university. But when I first went down there to the university, this barber who was from Chilliwack had gone on ahead. His family owned the Chilliwack Progress, which was the weekly newspaper, and as soon as I got there he took me over to...well, it turned out to
be a fraternity house; I wasn’t quite sure where I was, but I wasn’t in any position to 
join a fraternity in those days so I just kind of left. But later on I...John Shaw, also from 
Chilliwack, took me around to a fraternity called Sigma Alpha Phi. This was a local 
fraternity and it...so I was able to join that and it wasn’t very expensive either because I 
didn’t have much money. But in any case, I did get rushed and they invited me to join. 
And that was one interesting experience. I went through the ritual of becoming a 
member and I really thought that was quite nice and I was glad to join that. I enjoyed 
the fellows that went into the fraternity with me. Three or four of us later on, even 
when we got to Rosedale...or got to...got to Syracuse, three of them--Bob Parkinson, 
Keith Porter and John Shaw--used to come down and visit Syracuse, go to a football 
game and we had the weekend together, which was fun. And their daughters were 
from the same sorority at BC, they all began...not daughters, wives, and so we used to 
have a great time. But I enjoyed my time in the fraternity and became a house 
manager on various things; it was really quite an experience for me. And I graduated in 
history and English and then I took another year of teacher training and I was trained to 
go into the various levels of schools and I didn’t get very much experience. We went 
out a few days...we went out to an elementary school for a couple of days and they just 
put us in the classroom and let us go; the teacher was in there. And we did the same 
with junior high, at least I did. Different people went to different...I went to a junior 
high, which was a new one, The ??? in Vancouver and that was, I guess, the first or 
maybe the only one at that time, the only one in the province at that time. I remember 
spending a couple of days at a high school and I went over to North Vancouver. That 
high school was noted because they had a student government that had trials and 
they...the students punished the other students for things that they did in high school. 
It was kind of a novel idea and I was lucky I got assigned over there. And there were 
other things for a day or two, too. When the university, ? university, they gave a 
big...the government gave the university a big plot of land, many, many acres out...and 
it was called endowment land and they sold some of the land where people could build 
houses that they wanted and the university got the money. So they had this 
endowment and they also...there was a school there run directly by the province and
there was really one of the top schools in the province and I got assigned to go out there for a couple of days, but that was our experiences in practice teaching. I remember when I went out to the junior high they told me to teach about the steam engine, so I taught the steam engine. When I got through I had a lot of questions that the students asked me so I went back and asked the teacher about some things. So the next day I went back and taught it again. And then the teacher came in. He decided to teach it so he took over the class, and then that put a different variation. But it wasn’t very highly supervised; we were just on our own to go and do some teaching.

We had a very active group of students there and they elected me president of the class, which I felt was a real honor. And we had various activities and just to get together at the end of the year, we took a vote and went over to Bowen Island for a picnic, sort of the end of the year.

Oh, when I graduated from art and history, I…we had elections. We left it permanent members of the class: president, secretary, and there was one that was called arts and science representative; I got elected to that. It didn’t amount to very much. I don’t think we had many meetings, but it was certainly an honor to have that. That was March ’38.

**Summer Activities**

During the summer I went out and worked on railroad gangs and I had started ?? on an extra gang, laying steel. And then the other summers I worked on a section gang along the railroad; there was about seven miles…every seven miles was the section, what they called a section, where they had a section foreman and a couple of permanent people. During the winter each one did all of the maintenance work and in the summer they hired additional people and I was able to get on one of those, get a job there; Dad had spoken to somebody. And I moved to various section gangs in the province wherever there happened to be an opening and I worked on seniority, so…but you could go what’s called “bump” somebody…if you got out of a job, you could bump
somebody who had less seniority. So obviously in the beginning I didn’t have much seniority. I was glad to get a job, but I was able to keep working most of the summers.

One summer Dad sent me down to Frontier College. That was an organization and it still exists. I keep in touch with...where we had people who...they applied for a job at Frontier College and upward across Canada. It started...the headquarters were in Toronto. I went and interviewed and the idea was that you’d go out...they would get you a job in a logging camp or a railroad gang or anyplace and the college would…and that gave you a job and you just lived there and worked there like all the other people. And then in the evening they gave us some materials...we were taught how to read and certain basics of mathematics. And I got accepted to go and I went over...got assigned over to Franklin River in Vancouver on this big logging plant. And I was assigned...I was the spark chaser. They had a lot of cables and they ran through a lot of them on the ground and they ? over rocks and sparks come and that would set fire to the vegetation or the leaves or whatever it was, and these would catch fire and my job was to be up there and if there was any sparks, to get some water and just try to put them out. But this was an interesting experience I would get out there. And I had to hike about...stayed in a camp and then I had to hike out and I got assigned to the ???, the back ?? of the ?? on the side of the mountain and they had a line where they lifted logs and they’d go down on the line. But I had a job up there. I had to get up a couple of thousand feet just to go to work in the morning. So I did that in the summer. But then they got danger of fire so they closed the camp. So my experience just went for a while in the summer, the experience at Frontier, which is a great thing to ? these people...I just lived in the bunkhouse with all the other people and ate in the food areas. They had excellent ? out on the...in the logging camps because there wasn’t much...there wasn’t anything for people to do in the evening and then also they just lived there, so they always gave great food, which was planned and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I enjoyed the experience of being there. I started to help some of these people for a short while to learn how to read and to learn some arithmetic. They got paid by the amount of logs that they cut. They’d saw the logs and then they got paid for the amount of wood and they were interested in computing how much it was because that was how they got
paid. There was a fellow who went around and measured them all but they were interested and, I suppose, wondered whether the guy was cheating them or not, but they had a lot of motivation to learn. These were people; most of them at that time were immigrants, a lot of them from Sweden, nicknamed Swede. In fact, I had a nickname “Swede” when I was in college, too, because I was blonde and blue-eyed. I didn’t have any relation to Sweden. One time when we were in the log camp though, we were going down on the boat. They had a night out. They went down on the boat down to town and the guys enjoyed themselves in various ways. And they...I had this nickname “Swede” and some guy came up to me and said, “If you’re a Swede, talk Swedish,” and I said, “Well, I don’t know any Swedish.” And he said, “Well, why are you called Swede?” And it got to be quite a thing. Finally some of the guys said, “Leave him alone, he doesn’t know our language. Leave him alone.” And so I was a vision to being thrown overboard by this guy.

But I am just thinking about the experiences of going around from one section gang to another. At each section they had a foreman and they had a house for the foreman to live and they weren’t very elaborate affairs at all, but it was a place for him to live. And they also had bunkhouses where the other people could live, so ?? and then in the bunkhouses there’s a stove, a pot-bellied stove in the middle of the room and that’s what we used to cook on. I didn’t have much luck with the cooking and had all sorts of...I could make sandwiches, so we ate a lot of sandwiches. We stayed there. These were isolated places, not much there at all except maybe one other guy in the bunkhouses. But it was a way of making some money and one way or another get through college with considerable sacrifice for Mom and Dad to pay for my room and board, it cost twenty-five dollars a month, and we went from May...no, not from May, from late September through to May. It was a short year at the university. The thing at the university, we had some examinations. They used to give us quizzes about Christmas and...and then...but they weren’t anything very official, but they used them...they dropped some people from them and we used to say, “Well, we get a BAC degree,” it meant bounced at Christmas. We always kind of, at Christmas, that they might be bounced at Christmas but I really never knew anybody that did. But in any
case, at the end of the year in May we had examinations in each subject and these were written, highly supervised examinations. And we had various courses, usually five, but if you...they put all the courses together and if you weren't satisfactory they bounced you and did for the full year. The exams were by subject but it meant that if you failed you had to take the whole program all over again if you wanted to go. It wasn't just until we got along. By the time I got graduated there was some indication that you could pass or fail a course and still stay in the university and go on the next year. That was a very rigorous thing.

During the summers I was at the university, with the exception of the summer I worked at Frontier College. I worked on section gangs wherever one was available and I had whatever job was available and I worked various places—Rosedale, Laidlaw, Sham, West Langley, and even went up to Frasier Canyon, up to Ashcroft, and worked up there for a while. And then also one summer up near Alberta. So I'd just go wherever there was a job. I'd take a little food with me and cook it on the stove and at each section gang, which were about seven miles apart, there was either a station, which may or may not be used as a station, and there was...if it wasn't used as a station the section foreman could live in it. And in any case, either one of them, there was bunk cars that could be used for the section men. So there was always a place, wherever I was, the cooking arrangements was simply a pot-bellied stove in the middle of the bunkhouse and much as I recall, I didn't use very much. I just seemed to use a lot of sandwiches and cooked eggs. I remember one time Mom gave me some rice to cook and I took that up and put it in some water and I didn't know it expanded, and gosh, I had rice all over the bunkhouse. But there wasn't much to do at night after I retired. I used to read, of course, whatever happened to be available and there was always lots because I can take them with me. But it was a lonely life, just as a section man. Sometimes there was another section man also staying in the bunkhouse, but I didn't have too much in common with them. They were honorable men, frequently immigrants, who'd come over and were living there and they would work and send some money back to their families in hope that someday they'd bring them over to Canada, I guess. One thing I became increasingly aware of and that was that I didn't want to continue my life as a
section man. But obviously I was in a situation where I was going to have to do that. It was an honorable occasion, hard work, and good...just to be a good citizen, but I had other things that I would prefer to do.

More about Life at UBC

While I was at UBC, I was also an active member of the SCM it was called, Student Christian Movement, which was a very large organization that was active and had...were affiliated in all of the college and universities across Canada. Obviously it was, by its name, it was a Christian thing but also it was very active in including Roman Catholics, and especially at solid Roman Catholic universities. But it was vigorous; they had lots of discussion of current issues, social events. It was really a very fine organization on campus. One year, I think it was about 1938 maybe, the SCM organized a conference in Winnipeg that had representatives from all of the Canadian colleges and universities. They met there over Christmas and there was delegates from each of the universities. I was fortunate to be one to go there and it was a very fine conference and an opportunity to meet students from all the universities. And they did it with students who were in the Catholic universities as well. At that time in Canada there was somewhat a division between the Roman Catholics and then the Protestant...between the Roman Catholics and all of the other denominations and a good deal of feeling about it that extended over into the political set up of the country as well. But this was a conference that met there for a few days over Christmas in Winnipeg and it was thoroughly enjoyable and very productive in terms of the various discussions we had, and also an opportunity to bring Catholic students and the Protestant students together. I remember one of the things that happened while I was there is walking across Portage Prairie Street in Winnipeg, which is supposed to be the widest street in the world or widest somewhere or another. In any case, it was right in the middle of winter and the sole came loose on my shoe. Well, this was a major problem because, A, I didn’t have a second pair of shoes and, B, I didn’t have very much money to buy a new pair. But I did have enough to go down...I spent as I recall,
just a dollar or two or three to get a new pair of shoes. But that wasn’t exactly the place to be without shoes in the middle of winter. But anyway, I survived that, as we survived most other things. Again, this was still in the middle of the Depression.

While at UBC I did some dating. I went to most of the major functions, like each of the classes had a party, a formal event as it was, and frequently major events were down The Hotel Syracuse, Persian Terrace, where they had a famous orchestra, something or other, and this western gentleman…Mark Kenny and his Western Gentlemen. These were formal events where we had a program to dance. I was very fortunate that I got to know a fellow, Bob Davidson, who was a member of our fraternity, and his family were fairly well-off and they had a car and Bob used to take me and my date to these various events. Also, the fraternity also had a formal event and so did some of the sororities, in which case sometimes we got invited to one of them. I didn’t do much dating other than at these formal events. I don’t think I ever took anybody to a movie or anything like that. But we used to date somewhere around. We’d go over in the afternoon to the cafeteria at the university. We’d have afternoon tea, which consisted of tea and crumpets and it cost fifteen cents, and preferably we’d take a date down there. But I never had any serious thoughts of getting married at that time because I wanted…I knew I wanted to probably go on to graduate school. And also it was just a time when war was on our minds and we were being realized that there was going to be a World War II. It didn’t actually happen while we were on the campus.

After I got through and got graduated and finished my teacher training program, I was around Vancouver; I’m not quite sure what I was doing and how I had enough money to live there, but in any case, I was there and I went out and I was staying with Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Vining. He was a math teacher in Vancouver and had been a classmate of Uncle Walt’s, and that’s how I got to know him. He had a fine house on Third Avenue down looking over the bay and he let me stay there; he had a nice room down in the basement. He was a great gardener and it was a pretty, very pretty garden, a flower garden. And I was there and...
One of the things they were doing was right after graduation, send out applications for jobs. I’m not quite sure where I sent them. I guess wherever somebody thought there was a job. I’d thought I’d go look in junior high schools. But in any case, wherever I’d applied, I didn’t hear very much. I didn’t realize that one afternoon at Dr. Vining’s I got a phone call. It was somebody in Fernie who offered me a job teaching English and physical education. I don’t really remember applying there but I must have, or the word got around. Somehow they knew it. I found out later that Fernie had gone into receivership, as many towns did, and it was being administered by somebody appointed by the provincial government. And I got this phone call from, actually from Victoria, somebody who was in charge of the receivership and said they needed somebody to teach there. I was sort of surprised to get one, like an offer, and I kind of was hesitating for a minute. And the fellow said, “Isn’t that enough money?” And I guess I said, “Yeah,” or something, I don’t know. But anyway he said...he had offered me twelve hundred dollars. (Tape ends)
**Life after UBC**

While in Vancouver before I got...just after I got after college, I mentioned about applying for jobs in various places. One of the things that...everybody who graduated went down to Vancouver School Board and applied there because they were...paid the best money but also it was in the city and a very fine place...a very fine place to work. The alternative was to get out in some of the little one-room schools in various places or small high schools in isolated parts of the province. So, in any case, people wanted to apply to Vancouver. It really wasn’t that the other places were necessarily that bad but this was the place to go. In any case, as indicated, I went down to Fernie and enjoyed there. But I went down to Vancouver School Board and McCorkendale was the principal, or superintendent, and he talked to me a bit and said I ought to go on to graduate school, and go on to the University of Chicago. And somewhere he had known my Uncle Walter, known of him, because Uncle Walter was a very famous person in research and Kurt Kilmer got involved in the early days, graduated from the University of Chicago, ??? and had various positions and got involved in many things. Well, in any case, Mr. McCorkendale said to me that I ought to plan to go on to graduate school and go on to the University of Chicago. And he said, “We don’t take anybody in the Vancouver schools until they’ve had two years experience.” And so I said, “Well, I guess I should go out and go to a junior/senior high school or go to an elementary school.” I forget how it was; I said I’d get a job in an elementary school maybe and he said, “No, get a job in a junior/senior high school. They pay more money.” He said, in any case, “If you come into the Vancouver school system, we’re going to start you in the elementary school and then you move on to junior...people move on to junior high school and senior high school.” So with that, I left Vancouver and went up...I went up to Fernie.

I took the train to Fernie out of Vancouver, the CVR I went on, what was called The Kettle Valley Railroad to Fernie. The first time I’ve been to Fernie, of course, and I got off the train and I...I don’t know what I did. I guess I went and asked somebody...I
suppose I went down to the office of the school system. Mr. Connock was the commissioner working for the provincial government as the city was in receivership. In any case, they suggested that I go and stay with...get a room with Mrs. ...oh, gosh, I've forgotten her name. Anyway, her husband had been a doctor and died early and she had a daughter there. So in any case, she had some people that she took in for rooms. So I went and saw her and she seemed very nice, a very fine person, had a daughter and I met the lady and it seemed fine, except I said I would like to have some breakfast. Well, they finally agreed that they would give me breakfast, and that was fine because I didn't want to go all day without something to eat; I didn't know what was going to happen. Well, I got...so I got a place to stay a couple of days before school started and somebody mentioned also that there was a woman who had people come in for noon-day meal, for lunch, Mrs. Golightly, and so I went there to find out about that. And she was another extremely lovely person who was taking in borders. This was sort of at the tail end of the Depression and some of the men...well, Mrs. Corson didn't have a husband. Her husband had been a doctor and he died, and Ms. Golightly, her husband was there, too, but he did some work as a carpenter. A lot of people were out of work. Fernie had been a great coal mining town and the mines closed and many people were still out of work. Some of them got relocated but many of the people didn’t have work and...in any case, I arranged to have meals that Mrs. Golightly also turned out...I was with a group of teachers who had lunch there every day and we walked over from the school. It wasn’t very far, and she served wonderful meals. And it seemed to me that she bought food that was just out of proportion to what we were paying. She would have strawberries in the middle of winter; it seemed like a lot of money. And I said to her one day, “You know, Mrs. Golightly, you spent all this money on this food and we can...we don’t need it.” And she said, “Well,” she said, “I like...that’s one thing I can do in life. I know I’m a good cook and by feeding you people, you teachers, I feel I’m doing a good thing and I get a good feel of satisfaction out of it and I don’t need to make a lot of money. So I just like to feed you very well and give you good meals.” I thought that was very noble of her; she was a nice person. Some of the teachers actually stayed in her house; it wasn’t a very big place.
But all in all, I arranged for that, for meals, for breakfast, for lunch, and for dinner and I had breakfast at Mrs. Corson’s, stayed there and that was a very happy arrangement as far as living concern, and it was that way for a couple of years.

The school situation was very fine, too, and it was a big school, a brick building, and on the first floor was the elementary school, on the second floor was the junior/senior high school, and there was another building across the street where they had shops for home economics, and a manual training shop, and a small gymnasium. The principal was Angus McPhee and he was a big, tall Scotsman, very much a disciplinarian. A very fine gentleman other than that…or not other than that, he was a very fine gentleman. My job was to teach grade nine English and I had one of the homeroom classes. And the other class I was to teach, physical education and health, and I had no idea about physical education; we didn’t have physical education when I went to high school. I never even heard of it when I was taking teacher training class. But in any case, I had the classes and I rather enjoyed them. I made a rule when I first got there that people had to…the boys had to wear shorts to classes, and they could bring them to school and then they changed [into] them in some rooms, a room off of the gymnasium. So I taught all of the junior/senior high school boys and there was a woman who did the physical education for the girls.

I didn’t know what should be in the physical education classes, and nobody told me, but I knew a few exercises and I used to use part of the period for that in each of the classes and then had them play some indoor sports, like basketball in the gym. The weather was very bad of course in the winter, and in the summer I took them outdoors and played out there. I just played soccer or baseball, mostly soccer because they only had a soccer ball; didn’t have any baseball equipment.

I remember I also taught English and there was a wonderful book I found out, *English Narrative Poems*. Nobody told me what the curriculum was for school. I didn’t know what to do but I just taught some health that I thought was appropriate and also the English. I taught grade nine English and there were two classes of it, more than
one period a week, so I did that. But there was a wonderful book, *English Narrative Poetry*, and I thought that was wonderful. And that was, I think assigned; somebody told me that was assigned. And we...so we read that. But I remember teaching these narrative poems and I didn’t know how to grade the people at all. And I remember going to the principal one time and I said, “You know, I don’t know how to evaluate this poetry and prose, grade nine, how do I...I don’t know how to...I don’t know whether they’re learning anything or not.” And this tall Scotsman said, “Go ahead and just have them...have them enjoy it.” He said, “Nobody knows how to evaluate that.” So I had a good time. We used to get a few recordings, too, which were very new in those days and play those. It was...we really enjoyed it. This was primarily...Fernie was primarily an Italian town. The men had worked in the mines. So we enjoyed that. I used to give them writing assignments and spelling...we had a lot of spelling and I brought up the idea of not only teaching them how to spell, I would give them the words and tell them how to spell them and they had to write them out, and then I had them exchange with another student and the other student had to grade them also in spelling. So it was another way, I figured, of reinforcing the spelling. And all that seemed to work out pretty well, so I enjoyed the classes.

One thing I do remember, though, that the first grade eights...grades one to eight, the Roman Catholics had parochial schools and they...the students went there, most of them. It was a very strong Roman Catholic town and they went to school there and then came over to the high school...the junior/senior high school, grade nine. And I remember when the people were students, when they first turned in assignments, they wrote at the bottom JMJ and...I don’t know, various initials. And I said, “Who...which one of you is JMJ?” I remember clearly asking. Finally one of them said, “Well, it means Joseph, Mary and Jesus.” And in the Catholic schools they had to...they used those words for some of them to...I don’t know, in various combination of words they used...letters they used. And I finally got used to that and that was all right. Eventually they stopped using it, students stopped using it.
War Declared

On the physical education side...well, first I might just say that about that time I got there the whole country had been preoccupied with war. War had been declared just a few weeks after I got in Fernie and there was all the invasion in the whole country, including the town, got involved in this in one way or another. And in the music classes the kids sang patriotic songs and current songs, and it had to do with the war; that come out of the war. And everything was just preoccupied with the war. And I became involved in it, too, because I...I didn’t know whether to join or not and that time there was no conscription in Canada but a lot of people volunteered and I thought about it a lot and, in fact, suggested one time to people and they said, “No, you’re better off not to volunteer, to stay and do the work in the schools with the boys.” And from grade eight up, they were to take some military training and so we had the boys out and they paraded. I never knew whether it was very effective or not but, again, it was the ??? of war and they were very conscious of it, kids were. Another thing that happened, they’d sell victory bonds and once a week the kids brought the money and put it in a fund and bought certificates of some kind when they got enough to keep track of it. And there was a competition of all the classes and my homeroom won it for practically every week, I think. We used to pay so much, so they’d give how much it was going to take to run the thing. I don’t know whether the teachers thought about it or not, but anyway, we’d take the money they gave, and they’d maybe bring ten, fifteen cents, or a quarter and buy...well, they got enough to buy a victory bond of a few dollars. But plenty of them made a bunch of money in the national budget. But again, it was this preoccupation with war; it had already been declared war with Germany and they were overrunning Europe at that time. Since Canada was part of the British Empire we had a great thing with Britain and used to listen to the BBC, British Broadcasting Corporation, and hear speeches out of London, which seemed to be the headquarters for the war. And all of the empire was involved and Britain was head of it and so it was great involvement that way. Then at the end of the first year, that was...we went there in fall of 1939 and the next summer I went down to Vancouver and thought I should take a physical education course, which I did, at UBC. I never found it very useful when
I was teaching but, in any case, I took it because I thought I should prepare myself. And I also went over to Victoria and took a couple of courses there that were offered by the Department of Education and the provincial government. And one was a golf course and so I took some golf lessons and got to know something about golf. And also, for physical education I had a life saving certificate, even though there wasn't any pool in Fernie, but I went over and took the courses. I remember I went up to the Empress Hotel, a beautiful place, and they had a lovely pool, heated pool, to take the examination. And one of the tests was they threw a black piece of hose, garden hose, in the water and then we had to dive down and get it, and they timed you, and well, I couldn't find it. I dove two or three times and I couldn't find it. And the guy giving the test got a little fed up with this and so he called over somebody and said, “You know, there's a hose down there and this guy can't find it.” So the guy dove down there and he couldn't find it either. So finally we did locate it and there were black lines on the pool, not very wide, and this was a black piece of hose. But somehow that thing got on the black line and it was hard to distinguish it. But anyway, we got it and I did pass it and got a life saving certificate; it was issued by The Royal Life Saving Society of Canada, but originally had been in Britain, of course. So I got those things during the summer.

And before the summer, somewhere they got in touch with me to take a military course in the summer at Hills Range it was called, outside of Victoria, BC, which was on Vancouver Island. And so there was three or four of us who went there and got in the training course for the military, mostly marching and basic recruits; I guess they were the reserves and I don't know how I got there, except that it was...I found out that we were a group that they had selected from the schools to help us learn...and we were called cadets later on, but I didn't know that when I was taking it. And this was part of a training program, to train the physical education teachers how to give part of the classes to military training. Well, anyway, I took the course and I guess I passed, I don't know. But it was kind of amazing that I was there and took this with the regular other Army recruits. And a few of us, we figured out, were all regulated... (Tape off)
There was a lot more emphasis on physical education in military training after your first year, in the second year. And I remember there was some program in the movie house downtown...the school was all to go down to some patriotic event or something and so we [were] to march the cadets down. These were just kids. There was no uniform. I had to give them some training, so we had them line up outside and they marched down and I did a very good job. In fact, the principal thought it was a very good job, too, because he said, "It was certainly a lot better than I thought it was going to be." And I’m sure he was kind of concerned; he was principal of schools and it was a school building, as I had indicated.

### Coaching, Counseling, and Courses

One of the other things that I did as...part of my job was to do some coaching and there was the girls'...and the coach for the boys' basketball, which was one of the big sports, was by the teacher who was teaching shop work and his name was Brewster. I didn't...obviously I wasn't going to coach the boys but decided I should coach the girls. And I don't know why the girls' physical education teacher didn't...well, in any case, it doesn't make any difference. I coached the girls and it turned out I did very well. They had...I used to coach them...we had practice one or two nights a week. We went along very well except once some of the girls said to me, "So and so' plays on the team, goes on the trips and everything but she never comes to practice." And I remember saying to them, "Well, she has to work. She has a paper route and she has to go and deliver these papers and so we just have to excuse her; it isn't her fault she can't come to practice. She can't be two places." But, in any case, there wasn't a real big issue about it but the same two girls came to the game and she said, "Coach, you're always telling me I should be in practice." She didn't practice being in shape. And she said, "I want you to know," this is just a half an hour before the game, she says, "I want you to know I just went out and ran twelve blocks, so I'm in good condition."

They had an arrangement in school there and in a number of other schools some distance away--Cranbrook, and Trail, and Preston--other schools similar to the one we
were in, in Fernie. And the way that...there weren't leagues, we just exchanged games and we would take the...I remember several weekends we got the kids together and Friday afternoon maybe leave school a little early. We had some cars to drive them and we drove the teams to...the boys and girls...drove them to one of these towns. We'd get there and play a game and stay overnight with the students in the other schools. And this was an interesting arrangement. We'd play a game; the girls would play. Then the boys would play, and after the game they had a party and there was a dance. And so all the kids stayed and had a dance and stayed overnight. The boys would stay with the boys on the other team and the girls with the girls on the other team and the next morning we'd get up and usually go on to another school and they'd do the same thing Saturday night and then come back Sunday. Sometimes we'd only do one game on the weekend. But it was a very great arrangement. The kids certainly approved of it, but I coached the girls' team and I thought I was sort of responsible for the other teams, too. I remember one time we were going to have a track meet in Trail and we had these four boys, and they were really great runners, and I didn't know what to do so I got the community to come in and do some coaching with them. And later on we went to a Trail meet...to a meeting, to a track meeting in Trail and I remember I let the kids out of the car and...I didn't have a car. I didn't use a car then. Somebody had a car and I let these kids out and I said to them, "Meet you here tomorrow morning; I'll give you your lightning rods." And, golly, I thought it was just a joke but the next morning I happened to be going by there and there were the kids, standing on the corner. I said, "What are you doing?" They said, "We're waiting for coach; we're waiting for lightning rods." And, well...but anyway...but they went on, gee, they set all kinds of...they won everything in sight that year. But I didn't know how to coach them enough to coach them, so I got somebody else. And the same applied to hockey. Hockey was a big sport there; everybody knew hockey except me. And I was the teacher so I was kind of responsible for this team, but we had somebody else we got to do the coaching who ??? for practice; it was at five o'clock in the morning. They just had used the rinks around the clock and so I thought...but, gosh, I used to get up at five in the morning and walk from Corson's place down to the ice rink and watch them practice. It was cold. But we
had a pretty good team and I kind of enjoyed the whole activity. The kids enjoyed the sports in the school and of course they got a trip once in a while, and that was good; that was fine. I enjoyed the activities. At noon I’d go out and kind of supervise the grounds or wherever the boys were, ? the lunch hour trying to just be around with them. It was…it was very, very fine.

I remember there was the grade twelve kids, that I got the idea that I’d give them some sports or some activities that they could use after they left high school. So one of the things I did in the spring was bring them to the golf course to let the kids come out and play golf during their physical education period and that was teaching, what it was like…the clubs were like, and things, what golf was like, to have this experience so when they got out they might want to play golf and join a club. In any case, I introduced them to some of these community events. I was just as involved in the other activities in the school. We had assemblies every once in while, some kind of a program. I remember one time I was invited to...?? the general of Canada died and there was to be a program about that in all the schools. The principal asked me to give a talk about ??, which I did. I enjoyed it; it seemed to go very well. Every once in a while there would be...they had a government inspector who came around and visited the school and each of the teachers and made a report about each one. And, of course, I had that I...I don’t remember too much about what kind of report I got, but one thing they said [was] that my counseling was weak. I didn’t even know I was supposed to be counseling anybody, but apparently I was and that’s the way it was. They gave these reports for each one and the teachers could use them to apply in another school; they usually ask for them when you apply for other schools.

As it turned out, I went back to Vancouver, which I’ll comment about a little later. The report wasn’t even there, so they didn’t ask for it. So that was a break, I guess, but...they...I remember meeting with the inspector, though, and later on, not then, but later on I met him at a school meeting...another school, not that, or whatever, it was some of the teachers or somebody got together and I remember the guy’s name was Joe Brown and I remember talking with him. Just after I got the job in Vancouver,
I was downtown and then went into this...the Georgia Hotel, who served beer, the only
time I was in there, but in any case I met the superintendent...or the inspector came in
and had a drink in his room...I don’t think he even had a drink, I don’t know what you
could get there...well, it was beer I guess. They’d only serve beer. ???. In any case, I
didn’t have a drink of anything until that time we started drinking. But I remember I
met this inspector again at the school meeting and, again, the teachers and people
would sit in the hotel in the place where you could get beer and we were just sitting
there talking, but I don’t think I had a beer there either. ???. But he said to me, he
says, “Charters, you’re going to be a good guy. You’re going to do well.” But he said,
“Just don’t drink too much.” Here I met him at the only time I’d had two drinks; the
only time I met him. The only time I ever met him was when he went around in the
classrooms. But I was thinking you have to be careful how you generalize about
situations and people. That was the best example I have of being careful about
generalizing about people in a short visit.

I was much interested in a number of things in Fernie and I thought...I went
down and I took a first aid course. They were a big thing in that town, and I hadn’t had
any first aid, ???. But there were a number of social events and...like Bobby Burns Night
and...and we’d be sitting around curling...learning to curl, got on the curling team and
hadn’t known anything about curling. I don’t remember anything about it since we left
Drumheller and Mom and Dad used to go down curling, on curling night. There
was a teachers’ union and I joined that and went to a couple of meetings, which weren’t very
well attended by the teachers, but they only had one or two there in addition to me.
And I was kind of involved in this because Dad had been a union member and his
secretary were ?? union ???. I also went to church and volunteered to teach a Sunday
school class for a while and that wasn’t very successful because I didn’t know very
much, didn’t really know where to go to get help but, in any case, it worked out all right.

The classes went along very well and health, I never knew very much about
health or what I was supposed to be teaching but there was something that I found out,
you’re supposed to...I remember one thing that’s kind of stuck with me was that...what
was the dermis and the epidermis. And I was teaching about that and I could never remember which was on the top or the bottom--the dermis or the epidermis. So I taught and then I got involved in those others and I didn’t know which it was, so I said to the students, “Well, let’s have a vote and see which one is on top.” So we’d take a vote and then I’d go, and for the next class, look it up and remember which was which and saying to the class, “You know, voting is all right but it isn’t always the correct decision comes from everybody getting to the ? and vote.” So I said, “Now look, we voted on this and that was...we voted wrong and so you have to be careful when you vote to make sure that you...that you know what you’re voting on and that voting doesn’t always get your final correct answer.” (Laughs) I remember that; I don’t know what made me think of it now. In any case, that was many of my experiences while at Fernie and I thoroughly enjoyed it there and the sense that we’re doing something.

**Memories of Life during War**

The other thing was that, in a way, I was kind of involved in the war and I hadn’t had much experience with war or about war. I can remember when I was a boy in Drumheller and sick in bed in mother’s room and a train went by one day and it had cannons on it. And I asked what all these cannons were doing. It was after World War II and these cannons were put on trains and each one of them was given to a local community where they had to send it back as sort of a memorial to World War II veterans. So that was my first experience with war. I was a child; I don’t remember any discussions about war at all. Only one thing I remember and I can hear Mother saying to me, “???” or something. And anyway, she gave me a kiss or I didn’t want to kiss her, I don’t know what it was, but I remember her saying, “Well, all the soldiers always give their mothers kisses when they go away to war.” And that was the first time I ever...she didn’t say, “When they go away to war,” she just said, “The soldiers do it when they go away.” She didn’t say “to war” but I got the connection. I can remember hearing the war or recalling it then. And as I remember, ?? on the First of July 1927, there was a big to-do, the sixtieth anniversary of Canada’s independence.
There was a parade and I remember these soldiers in the parade and they had been veterans. But they had their uniforms they had left from the war, they were all tattered and kind of a mess, I thought. But I remember them there, but being so very patriotic and everything, at the same time thinking about the way the clothes got to be when you were in war and kind of very...I’m not very...not really anti-war, but I just didn’t know about it back then, didn’t have much experience with it. And at UBC there was the COTC, the Canadian Officer Training Core that college kids could take and become officers and some of the fellows in our fraternity were members. There was always a big occasion. They had a dance once a year. Other people were invited but I can remember it was quite a social event for these guys, going to this dance. And they went in their uniforms; it was a pretty impressive thing going there, but I can remember people being very impressed. But in any case, we kept being reminded of war, all this period that I was in Fernie and involved in some ways. (Side ends)

**Summers while at Fernie**

I was talking about Fernie. In the summer, school got out again and we were getting ready to go back to Vancouver, down to Vancouver; that’s where we usually went for the summer break. I say usually because we did it one summer before, but in any case, this summer. And I remember as we were going, we had to go in and fondly say goodbye to the commissioner and as we picked up our check, final check, he...the teacher said to us that, “The commissioner would like to speak to you a minute.” So we went in and ??? and said, “I’d like to have you be back again next fall.” I thought this was rather odd that he’d do that, it was a friendly gesture, but I still don’t...what I found out was that if he didn’t have you in and say, “Hope to have you back,” it sort of implied that you weren’t going...that they weren’t going to invite you back again. But I don’t know about...I remember him saying that. So I went down to Vancouver and one of the first things I did when I got to Vancouver was go in and see the Vancouver Superintendent of Schools because he had said to me the last time I visited with him, he said, “Come back in, in two years.” So I went in and the superintendent was busy, but
the assistant superintendent was in charge of the elementary schools and he sort of just intercepted; I was motioned into his office. I went into the office and I said, “Two years ago, Mr. McCorkendale said to come back in two years.” And he said, “Oh yes,” he said, “I have your application right here on my desk.” And he didn’t say anything more about it, just that he had it on the desk and ???. And I finally got…the superintendent came over and said…again, said to me, “Well, look…you still must remember to go to the University of Chicago, Charters.” He said, “You’ve got to…you ought to do that.” So I didn’t…I didn’t hear anything more about it.

I want to just share all that I did that summer but, again, the military got in touch with me and wanted me to go out to Calgary, out in Alberta, to Sarcee and this was, again, a group of…not again, but there was about six of us from BC and about six from each of the western provinces, other western provinces, who were there to do this training. And, again, I guess it was part of training cadet officers. And so anyway, I was up in Sarcee which is a field near Calgary, a very famous Army training camp, and we went through that in the summer. And while I was there I got some word somehow, I don’t know how, from the commissioner in Fernie, who said, “I see in the paper you’re going to be in Vancouver. I assume you’re resigning from our…are we to assume you’re resigning from Fernie?” Well, somehow I got in touch with him by far, in fact it wasn’t very far from Calgary, but I got in touch with him and told him why I had an application in there and I didn’t see him, but they never…they didn’t tell me that I had a job yet. But in any case, I guess I did have one, but I took this military training and then went into the Vancouver school system, in the elementary school where I was assigned, to Lord Nelson. They didn’t have…cadet training is only grades one through eight, but I’d later get a job teaching there.
So that summer I was around in Vancouver and I had to get a place to stay. There were a lot of boarding houses that people could just stay in, but my sister Jean had known a fellow who, with three others, had an apartment and they...and one of the four had left so they were going to have somebody else come in, I guess. And Jean got in touch with him and I went out to see him and so they agreed to take me, and they were a great bunch of guys as a matter of fact, and who later became an officer in the Army, Doug Hangman, who became an officer in the Navy, and Tom Pink, I don't know what Tom did, whether he went into the military or not. And one other, Bill Linton, who makes...I guess that's just all four of us. In any case, it was a very nice, small apartment and two of us fellows roomed in each bedroom and there was a little living room, and a small kitchen, and they had engaged a Chinese cook, Tom, who did the cooking, did the laundry and he was a very efficient-like fellow. And we had a happy time there together. Again, the pressure of the war was on us and we were all thinking about what we were going to do when you had to...we had to, not necessarily by force, but just felt certain that we should be involved some way in the military. So we had an apartment there for a year and...over a year, but soon I got involved in, went down and got into COTC, the Canadian Officer Training Corps in the Army. I thought if I was going to do something, I might as well just be an officer and that was the thing to do. And I went out to...I remember going out to UBC and seeing Dr. Shrum, who I had known, who was a member of the same fraternity as I was and...but also he was the professor who taught me physics at the university. He was the colonel in charge of the COTC. So I went in and wondered if I could get into it. There was a medical doctor there, and he gave me a quick once over and, as it happens, they were out parading on the parade ground; within a half an hour, I was out on the parade ground, a member of the COTC. We also had parades once in a while, but we had classes in the evening and I remember once or twice a week. Anyway, I got myself a uniform and...the only distinction about the uniform was there was a little white piece that we had on the cap which indicated that an officer is in training.

I didn't think very much of the lectures. They kept talking about how many guys had guns in the battalion and what was the composition of the battalion. They kept
changing it, it seemed, like every week. And there were other things. But I wasn’t at all impressed with what we were doing. And I remember another time we were out in a little field trip, out right on campus practically, and we were crawling around on the ground. I never did quite figure out the purpose of it and accordingly wasn’t very enthusiastic about it. In any case, I stayed with it and all this time I was teaching school. I got this job at Fernie...or got the job in the Vancouver School District, went out to the school, Lord Nelson, it was a school. The principal was a teacher who had been from England originally and teaching and he was very kind, and all the teachers were, and together were very good; they all were experienced teachers, except me. I had only had two years. But we had a good time. And I also had...I was teaching mostly physical education and some other classes; physical education for boys, that is. And so I did that. And I remember we used to...the teachers...there was a teachers’ room. The principal used to go off somewhere to a restaurant for his lunch. There was another teacher, Mr. Devereaux, who stayed in his classroom and the three or four people who brought lunch went into and ate in that classroom. So I’d go up and eat with the teachers. I didn’t bring a lunch with me. I finally got a place across the street from the school where I’d go and they’d make me up a sandwich for fifteen cents and that was my lunch. And I used to eat with the teachers. They were very friendly, smart, a good group of people, but all of them? except me that ate lunch there. I enjoyed...we all had a quick lunch and go out on the playground with the boys. The playground, there was cinders, block cinders and they used to go...we had a great time out there playing and they used to fall down and get scratched and stuff. I used to take them in and try to patch them up a little. I finally got the school nurse to leave her office open so I could take the kids in there and put a little bit of iodine on them and put a band-aid or...I’m not sure we had band-aids in those days, but whatever we did to patch them up. And nothing very seriously would happen. I spent time there. And so all this time at school we...and we were conscious of the war, of course, and otherwise conscious of it and it was...things keep...again, I was going to the COTC lectures.

One day I was down...walking down in Stanley Park and walked by this place, HMCS Discovery. That was the Navy and I thought, hmm, maybe I’ll join the Navy. So
I went up and talked to a fellow in there to see what it was about like. I just told him I’d like to join the Navy and he said, “What do you want to do?” I said, “Oh, I don’t know, be a signalman I guess.” I didn’t know what anybody did in the Navy but obviously there’s going to be signals given somewhere, whatever service. I talked to him quite a bit and he asked me what...he said, “Well, I think you ought to go in and see an officer.” So I said, “Fine,” and so I went in and saw this officer, talked to him for quite a bit, and he said, “Well, what do you want to do?” And I said, “Oh, be a signalman.” And he said, “Oh, ???” And I said, “Well, that’s fine with me, ???.” He had a laugh. He burst out laughing and said that, “Maybe you ought to fill out this application.”

I took the application home and looked it over and spent a lot of time filling it out. In the meantime, I found out that what was happening was that they took applications and periodically they would... (Tape ends)
COTC Recollections

…and I took it home and I obviously spent some time trying to find out what was the routine in the Navy and I found out that they take a certain number of candidates and then send them to Halifax to be trained. And I found out that this was not an easy task to get accepted in the Navy as a sub-lieutenant and I worked long…I found out that there were…that sometime they would call you for an interview and you didn’t know when that might be because they interviewed and accepted a class, but then they sent you off in groups of five, or six, or eight, or some number to Halifax for a three month training program. And so you waited around until whatever number was accepted in the pool and they sent a few off every three months, and so it could be a considerable period of time before you really got into training. And when I…also, I didn’t know how many…now it was before they interviewed, before they got a new class, so there was nothing I could do. I just waited…started to wait around. I spent considerable time filling out the application very carefully and got a number of recommendations and sent them off. And then it was just a case of waiting. And while I was waiting for several months I was busy going to COTC and teaching at Lord Nelson and doing all of the other things that I was doing in Vancouver. And all of us, and everything, we were preoccupied with the war and I was in the COTC and an application into the Navy and I didn’t think about the two being overlap, but in any case, that’s what went on. And then I got a call to appear for…to appear at HMSC Discovery for an interview. I went down to the interview and sat there and waited until they were going to call my turn and, sure enough, they did call the turn and I went into this room and, I’ll never forget, it was just a bare room with one chair and a cigarette ashtray alongside of it and up in front of us was four people, four officers of the rank of captain. And so they started off asking me all kinds of questions and I can remember…one thing I did do, though, I was very conscious of the fact that this was a comfortable chair and an ashtray and I didn’t know what to do, so I used to smoke a lot, but I thought, “Boy, this is not the time to smoke.” So I didn’t smoke and I sat very upright in the chair, in this lounge chair, and they just asked me all kinds of questions. It seemed like I had to say “no” to most
every question they asked me. I played quite a few, a bit of quite a few sports at times and then they pulled out and said, “Have you ever played water polo?” So I had to say, “No.” And I don’t know, they said, “You were born on the prairie. Can you run a thrashing machine?” And again I had to say, “No.” I just didn’t know what was going on really, but they all did a list in front of them and they just looked and I guess were looking for things to see whether...what you would say if you didn’t have that certain experience. But in any case, that’s what it was. And I remember just about the end they said, after saying all this, I think they realized I was a bit ?, I guess that’s what they wanted me to do, but I remember them saying to me, “Well, why do you want to join the Navy then?” And I said, “I’m really not sure, but I sure do want to join.” And they all started laughing. That was the end of the interview. And when I got out of the interview, let me see what...the fellows all out there, they were all the guys who had been through it and it seemed like hundreds of guys were out there waiting to be interviewed. And some of them said, “Gee, that was a very comfortable situation, you’d sit back and relax and smoke,” a few of these guys. And I thought, “Boy, that’s the opposite of what I did.” And so I was kind of concerned that maybe I should have been a little more cheerful and this, but...and so I wondered, “Will I even pass this thing?” And well, I just said that we got through and I waited around for a long time. And I remember one Saturday night I was down visiting Jean and Angus was over there, a fellow she later married, and we were just in there and the phone rang at Jean’s, my sister’s place, and somebody got on the phone and said, “We understand you applied for a position to the Royal Canadian Volunteer Reserve.” And I said, “Yes, sir.” And they said, “You’ve been accepted, report for duty at HMCS Discovery, Monday at seven o’clock.”

I never quite...I never did understand how they found me there at Jean’s place, but they apparently had their scouts out. Maybe they called the apartment and somebody told them I was down at my sister’s place. I don’t know, but anyway they did and so the next Monday I reported down there. And they did a lot of things the first night. They gave us some money and told us to buy a uniform and where to go to get it done, which tailor and told us where to get somebody for a life insurance policy, which I
thought was a little unusual to go off to the Navy and taking out life insurance, but we did...everything was very specific. And then I found out from then on that there was never any hesitation in what you were supposed to do in the Navy. And so I did that and then we reported back, I guess, Thursday again and twice a week we went down there for training. And it was very...highly disciplined and very strict, everything, and to say the least I was much impressed with the discipline, but you did it and there wasn’t any question about it. And I remember one time they had a pole out in the...the base was right on the water, Burrard Inlet, and there was...some way or another there was a bunch of poles fastened together around and a big inside and we...I remember one night we were down there and one of the guys did something and they said to him, “Go down and walk that pole.” Well, the pole was out on the water floating around and he had to get on it and walk along. Well, I don’t know if it was slippery or not but you sure couldn’t stick on it. In any case, this guy, one of our buddies, fell off and the officer said, “What’s so funny about that? All of you go down and walk it.” We all walked around that thing, all dressed in uniform, and we all fell off of course. And then we got out and continued on with the training. But it was an interesting thing to me that the discipline was very strict and yet when you got into the gun room, or when you got to shore I meant, it was all very sociable, you were called gentlemen. But it’s one thing that I lived with all through service, sometimes you’re a gentleman and sometimes you’re a naval officer. But I enjoyed the training down there. It was very good. I didn’t know anything about the ship, or one part of a ship or another, but they had us learn a lot of it pretty fast. And every three months one of the group would take off to go to Halifax to be trained. I think there were about six or eight at a time [that] went, I just forget. But anyway, they went and the rest of us kept on going and doing whatever we were supposed to do and waiting our turn to go. I didn’t go the first two times, but I think I was in the third group that went and I can’t quite remember how many of us there were. There couldn’t have been any more than about thirty of us, I guess. Not too many anyway. They said about two hundred got interviewed and then they brought, I don’t know, there was twenty or thirty of us there. Anyway, we were there
and they kept peeling off, sending them to Halifax. And I just didn’t...kept teaching school and...teaching school and doing the COTC.

**Summer Recollections**

And then the summer came along. This would be the summer of ‘42 I guess, and we got off from teaching school and I was around and this preoccupation with the war got through and I thought, well, I had to get a job working at something. So I went out to the airport. I heard they were hiring guys out there, so I went out there and I got a job on just a work gang. It turned out we...so it turned out that...so a couple of other guys were waiting around to do something and we got a...and one of them had a car so he was able to drive me out where I was living on Twelfth Avenue in Vancouver, out to Sea Island where the airport was. And that worked out pretty well and it certainly was a big help to me, to get out there. We had to get out there about seven in the morning, start to work and worked all day. And that job was kind of grim. We had to...it rained a lot, of course, in Vancouver and we were down there working up to our knees in water and mud. And it seemed like it happened all the time and that’s what we were doing. They had some pumps that were apparently supposed to be pumping the water out but...and it worked some of the time, but we had a job keeping them going, but...I remember the superintendent came along one day and he said I was to be responsible getting the pump started in the morning and get the water going out. Well, I did it but I had a heck of a job keeping those pumps going and (laughs) one morning, it was a long quite a ways and I hadn’t got them working and he come along and jumped down there and got it going, we did. But it was...we got it going and off to work we’d go again in all of this mud and cold. And one day he came along and said, he hollered down to me, I was down there in the mud and the water and he called me up and he said, “How would you like to be a foreman?” And I said, “Gee, that would be...yes, yes please, thank you. I would like to be a foreman.” So I got out of there and I remember, “Come with me,” and he said, “I’ll pay you...” We were getting forty cents an hour. He said, “I’ll pay you...” I think he said sixty-five an hour. Well, that
was a big increase of course. That was good but I wasn’t too worried about the money; I was happier to get out of that mud. And so he took me over and had a gang of about fifteen guys. We were standing there in front of a barn and he said to me, he said, “Get your crew and tear that barn down.” Well, I didn’t know where you start, at the bottom or the top or how you go about it, and there were the guys standing around and he said to one of the guys standing there, “Come with me,” and he went up on the roof with this guy and started to take the shingles off. And the rest of the gang, I guess, knew what to do but anyway started to take the barn down. And we finally got the barn down. But it was right after he told me I was going to get sixty-five cents an hour and he came back over and he said, “I’m going to do better.” I hadn’t even started to work even. He said, “It’s going to be seventy-five cents an hour.” And I thought, “Well, that’s fine.” I never knew quite why he upped the ante. I think he must have gone back to the payroll office or something and they said, “Well, foremen get seventy-five cents an hour,” so he came back and told me that. But we worked there pretty much all summer doing that. We built a fence around the airport, this was the Vancouver Airport, and it was just being...major construction going on to get it to operation.

This was in the summer of ’41 and Canada had already gone in the war in 1939 and so things were ... construction was really under way and I worked on there. I can remember one Saturday morning he said, “Why don’t you take the day off and go to the races.” We had been working seven days a week, about eight hours a day and I said, “Well, what races?” And he said, “The horse races.” So I went out to the race and I think he thought that maybe after all this time, I hadn’t had any time off at all, but maybe I needed time off. So I went out to the races and I didn’t notice any difference in my paycheck; I think he paid me for the time that I was out there. But I remember going out to the races and that was something. I got out there and I bought these little pieces of paper that had winning horses on them. You paid a dollar for them or something. I didn’t think about races, though. I went over and bought a ticket for this race thing because I didn’t even know the name of the horses or how to find out about them even. So anyway, I bet two dollars on a horse and I won. And people obviously thought, “Well, that’s pretty good,” and they...we went back...people went back over to
the gate and I kept winning and the horses, I didn't know anything about them at all. I just kept betting and I won. Every time I bet two dollars, sometimes I’d pay four or five, not very much anyway, but I won most of the races and I had this group of people kind of following me around seeing which one I was betting on and some of them bet on the same one. It was really a hilarious time. But anyway, that was my introduction to horse racing, which it was a very enjoyable afternoon and fun. And in any case, I kept working along out there and earning some money and one thing or another. In the meantime, twice a week I’d go to training down to HMS Discovery. I found out that Walter Robinson, who I had gone to college with but didn’t know too well, was going down and he lived fairly near where I did and so the fellow that had a car, Smith, they used to pick me up and take me down to the race track...or down to the naval base where we did training. And so it was...between the naval training and that job, I was certainly busy all summer.

**Halifax, Nova Scotia**

When I left Lord Nelson School, where I had been teaching, everybody said goodbye to me and thought I’d be off to Halifax, and so did I, but the time didn’t come so I went back...I went into teaching school again for another couple of months before I got called. And I think I got called about October. So life went on again. I kept going down to training a couple of nights a week and finally they told...advised me that I was going to go to Halifax. So I did at very short notice and...but I didn’t have much to do to get ready but go down and get on the train. They gave us a ticket, went down to the CPR and got on the train and went across the country. And I remember I stopped in Montreal. You had to change trains in Montreal to go to the Maritimes and I got off there and I went up to one of the fellows that was in the apartment with me, Doug Grant. His father was in Montreal and he gave me his phone number so I called him and they had me out to dinner. And, of course, I would...well, the other thing in Montreal, too, that I did, I was with Walt Robinson and we went down to visit his sister, who was training to be a medical doctor; I think she was at McGill University. In
any case, she saw us and she was busy doing various things and said she’d join us for
dinner, just to stand around and walk around and see the place. And I remember we
were walking around and we went in this room and there was this...some sheets over
some of the beds and Walter said, “I wonder what’s under those,” and I said, “I don’t
know, let’s see.” So we lifted them up and they were corpses that the students were
working on. We got those covered up pretty fast and went out and had dinner with
Walty’s sister, and that was pretty good food. So in any case, we got off the train in
Halifax and were duly met and taken up to...one of the things that was interesting, we
were taken down and being sworn in as an officer. We got all through and I said to the
fellow, the officer in charge there, I said, “I’m already in the COTC,” and he said,
“What?” I said, “Well, I was in the COTC.” And he said, “We’ll take care of that; we’ll
get you out of there.” And that was one of the first occasions that I had that the Navy
was always rated as the senior service and it worked that way and whatever you did, if
you were officers of equivalent rank, you always went first. In any case, since the Navy
is the senior service, he called over and...or did whatever he did and got me out. But I
remember seeing the COTC papers later on. I had a copy of some of them and I found
out that the same day that I was sworn into the Navy, I was discharged from the Army,
the COTC. In any case, we got off the train in Halifax and were met and taken up to
HMCS Kings and that...King was a college and they took over the whole college, the
dormitories and everything, for this group of officer training people. And we got
assigned rooms and told pretty specifically what we were to do and what we...not much
what we weren’t going to do. They pretty much just told us what to do. And from them
on, the daily routine was that we got up at the crack of dawn and went out and had
physical education, even in the middle of winter we did some outside, and it was cold
and we’d come back and we had breakfast, went in and sat down, and we were served
breakfast by the kitchen staff, so it was all very nice that way. And we had fine food.
But in any case, we had breakfast, then went out and we had to take signals back with
us. They had a light on a pole out in the...a pole out in the college that they put to the
“parade ground” it was called in the Navy, and they flashed this light and the code was
in Morse Code. And you were in groups of twos; one read it and the other fellow wrote
it down. And we had to go out to that every day until we passed it. And it was just one speed. As soon as you passed it, you got out. And if you were around too long, they made you go back...if you didn't pass soon enough, you had to go back in the afternoon, later on, and do it again. But we had the signal and then there were buses, usually buses, but not always. Sometimes the classes were in Kings and we went to classes all morning and had breaks and at noon we had lunch and kept on going. We had a busy schedule filled completely up from the time we got up, got back in the afternoon...oh, and if we didn't pass the signal in the morning, we had to go out and take it in the afternoon until we did pass it. So there was quite a strong incentive to pass that thing and...I don't know how long it took, but great motivation. So in any case, we passed that. In the afternoon we got through and we were either there or got bused back to Kings. We had a very few minutes, it seemed like, until we were to go over and have dinner. No, wait a minute, we had some time before dinner...yeah, there was some time before dinner, we could go over in what was called the gun room; it was for officers in training. The regular officers were in...we were in the gun room. That was very...you could buy drinks if you wanted them. I never bothered much, but we...and then we had dinner and after dinner we went usually for some kind of a lecture. Frequently, it was the commanding officer who got up and told us all kinds of things, kinds of things of social behavior and everything. And we got that, got through that, and we went back to our...I don't know whether we had a lecture or we...in any case, we had to go back to the resident and we had to...we had to make our beds, I guess. No, no. We had to do that before we had breakfast. We had to make our own beds. They made us do it for two weeks and then they came around and inspected them to make sure it was all right, and after two weeks they had...some of the ? came in and people made the bed for us, which was very nice of course. And, oh, every evening...it was sometime or another we got back in the room. We had to stay there for two hours at our desk, not to go sleeping but just be at our desk and study. There was two of us in a room and then the adjacent room, or connecting room, there was a place where we slept. So in any case, we had to stay there and they were very strict about that. And every once in a while an officer would come barging into the room and see where you
were. If you weren’t there, of course, you got some kind of discipline, did that. But I remember one time he came barging in the room and he said to me, “What would you do if there was a blackout?” I said, “I’d pull the main switch if it was called for a blackout.” Yeah, I said, “Well, I’d pull the main switch.” He said, “Where’s the main switch?” Of course, I had no idea where the main switch of the college was. He said, “Go out and find it and report to me in my cabin.” So I spent hours trying to find out where that main switch was. I went back to his cabin; I think he was asleep. I think he was kind of annoyed that I did. But anyway, I did what I was told to do. But they were…they’d just stop you anyplace and ask you questions and make you do things. Of course, all the time we were…we had to run from one place to the other and it was certainly very strict and highly disciplined, but very…very kind in a sort of way. You knew you were doing this…you knew why they were doing it to you. But in any case, we did that and I was there for three months. When I…after I got there, Bill Linton who was one of the guys in the apartment with me, had been to Halifax. He had been engaged to some girl there and told me to look her up if I did…well, when I got free on Sunday afternoon or some time, I used to call her up and she’d invite me up to her house and then we’d…once in a while on Saturday nights we frequently were free and we were allowed to go out. But the only place they’d let us go was into the hotels and they had dances on Saturday night and so we used to go down to these dances and that was about the only place that was legal for us to go; we couldn’t go into the other place. Halifax was of course a tremendous, big Navy base in Canada and so there was all kinds of rating and everything there. But Petie was very kind to me and we used to go out and after the war, or maybe during the war…in any case, he married Petie and we saw quite a bit of them in Halifax. We still see them once a while when they come down to visit us or we go up there to see them.

And I remember one time, oh, that same year, we were going to have...they told us we could have Christmas Day off and one more day, two days off, and...well, it couldn’t have been...we could have two days off either at Christmas or New Year’s, and I was away from home so I just volunteered to take New Year’s because I couldn’t get home to the family anyway. But some of the people, in two days, could get home and
visit their family at Christmas. And I got New Year’s off and I remember Walty was in the same group and we were together a lot during the war. And we went up to Cornwallis Inn to spend New Year’s. And there wasn’t...it wasn’t tremendously exciting, but it was different; Cornwallis Inn was a very fine hotel. But generally there wasn’t too much social life...there was no social life in the...other than that, nothing organized by the Navy. There wasn’t any movies, there wasn’t any entertain...there was some physical education and they had competitions among group who played basketball or something like that, but not what you may call social life, as I recall. There wasn’t any time for it, in any case. So we spent our time going through the training day after day and that was very stimulating and exciting and we had...we were really encouraged to learn vest and it gives great motivation to do something more. The other thing we found out, that since we went in as officers, if something happened and we didn’t pass we thought they’d demote us to seamen. Well, they didn’t do that; you were just automatically discharged. You couldn’t go back to seaman because you didn’t start there. But whatever the rule was...but I don’t ever remember anybody not passing. It was really a great bunch of guys. Oh, one thing I should have mentioned was that when we went to this class to Halifax there was a certain number from each of the other provinces, came at the same time for each division, started out at the beginning of the war A division and then went through all the alphabet and then D and then double AA and we were DD division; we were known as that. But each division was made up of a certain number from each of the provinces.

One thing we do, I guess, we had church every Sunday. At least we all got out on the parade ground. And this was the Church of England’s service, which was the official Church of England, of the Royal Navy and which Royal Canadian was highly related. At least we were. And so they used to get out there on the parade ground and they’d say, “Fall out the non-conformists,” and tell us where to go. I don’t know if there was ever a Jew there or not but, in any case, various denominations...there was one, the United Church, Protestants I guess it was, the United Church of Canada, and you could fall out, drop out, and run over to wherever this Protestant minister was having a service. Well, that was usually quite a ways away and the Sundays, as time went on,
there were less and less non-conformists. We just stayed there and went through the services of the Anglican Church that had been specially devised by the Royal Navy. But I had forgotten about that. Then we were free for the afternoon for a while. Every Sunday afternoon we’d go out and do something; didn’t seem like a heck of a lot to do. There wasn’t very much...some of the guys used to get a cab and go down and have breakfast at the hotel. There were at least two hotels we were permitted to visit.

We were certainly highly motivated and in our class there was a very good situation, not too much discipline there. There was one rule, though, that we were...that they said you...you can get up and go out of class and go and have a smoke if you want. But one thing you don’t do is stay in class and go to sleep. So once in a while somebody would get up and go out and have a smoke or whatever and come back in. But...some of the time we went from Kings, which was up in the city of Halifax, the suburbs, we went down there, down to the naval base, ? is right down on the water and they had a lot of our classes down there. And we used to go down on the bus. They had buses for us, and bus back. And we were called Jeeps. Ninety-Day Wonders as they were called, as we were called. They...we used to sing on the bus going down and sing coming back. I never thought much of the songs. They were kind of a little cornier than I like. But in any case, that sort of let off tension, anyway a little bit, back and forth on the buses down to the Navy base.

**Royal Navy Adventures**

We went through this for three months and we were obviously in pretty good health. I don’t remember anybody hardly being out and there wasn’t anyone that didn’t show up, but I guess there were, but not very many. We were in pretty good physical shape and emotionally, so it was a happy group of guys. And then we kept going until we got to the end of the course, and on the final night the commanding officer came in and talked to us and they had a list of where we were being assigned for duty, which ship. And even the bases were called ships and ours was like HMCS Kings. And so we went through and the night we graduated we all got assigned...and we went through
the list and everybody’s assignment, the commanding officer got through, just about through, he said, “And we have six volunteers for the Royal Navy,” and I was one of the six volunteers over to the Royal Navy and found out that we were to go the next morning to New York City where we were ? in the hotel to await when the ship might be ready down in New Orleans. These turned out to be new ships and LST’s. In any case, we took the train down to New York City and then took a cab up to the Barbizon Plaza Hotel, where we stayed for a couple of weeks. That was a lovely thing. We got...of course, we got our salary. At the time we got a very generous living allowance for meals and incidentals and stuff. And we got up to the hotel and we were, of course, given instructions again. He said three things, “One is, you go down to the registration desk and register for a room. Second thing, you could go someplace and get a draw for your living expenses while you’re there.” Oh, and then he said, “You can go up to X floor to where there’s...” (Side ends)

I was just saying, we got down to New York City and got a...we were in the hotel or it was in the plaza where we were getting registered. As soon as we got into the hotel, we were reported to the officer there...that was there in the lobby. I guess they were expecting us and some other people. And Barbizon Plaza Hotel was the place in New York where the Royal Navy had sort of their headquarters, I guess, for receiving officers and men. Although, the men weren’t there while they waited [for] ships, for the building of ships and sent down there to wherever they were going to be sent. I found out that the ratings were out at another base outside of New Jersey somewhere and we were just waiting there. Well, in any case, we got in the hotel and this was my first encounter or meeting of Royal Navy personnel. They were very cordial. We just walked in and the man in charge told us to do things. He said, “One is, you go down to the hotel desk and register. The second thing is to go somewhere,” I forget where, “to get some money.” And the third thing was that there was a ?? club upstairs and we could go up and be greeted. Well, we didn’t have any trouble getting registered. The second thing was we got some money because we had to pay for our meals and whatever other expenses we had there. So we got some money and we got checked in and went up to this ? club. Up there we met...there were a bunch of girls there who were...came out
from various places in New York City and we met them and it was all very cordial and we had a good time. And we were to go up there and it was also a place where we could get tickets free to various activities in New York City. We were to frequent that place almost every day and...so in any case, we went up after meeting these people. We didn't know what to do. We had to go to have dinner so we went out and walked around there and found a place where we could eat. We found out that you didn't want to eat too much in the Barbizon Plaza Hotel because it was very expensive. But in any case, Waltý Robertson was with me again. He's the fellow that I went into training with down in HMCS Discovery two nights a week. And then we got sent in the same group to Halifax and we were in the same division, DD division, and then we came down on the train together, with others of course, and we were there together.

I forgot to mention about the train trip down from Halifax...no, not from Halifax, from...no forget that.

The next morning we went down to the lobby and talked with the officers there. They told us that we just had to stay there until we were going to be sent...they said to New Orleans. We didn't know exactly what we were going to New Orleans for except to get ships that had been commissioned. In a few days we were told that it was...they were LST's--landing ships for invasion purposes--but we were to stay in the hotel until noon because that was about five or six in the afternoon in England and that's when the orders came from Britain over to what we might have to do or when we might be going someplace. So we had to stay in the hotel room until noon. The Barbizon Plaza had some places in the door, a flap on the door, and in there every morning they put in a container that had some hot tea or coffee, I guess, hot tea in a thermos, some rolls and butter and jam. And we were able to enjoy that very much. And also, we got to know some of the maids there and sometimes they'd slip a couple in the door for us, so we had a pretty good sized breakfast.

Walty and I talked to the people in the ?? club and they arranged for us to get theater tickets and various things; so every day we planned to go somewhere, see some
sights, or go to a play or some other musical event. It was really a very happy time, as we stayed there over the summer. But one of the first things we did, after a day or two we are told to go to a lecture and that’s when they had told us about the...discovered radar and also gyro compasses. And so this was, of course, a very big event in warfare to be able to spot ships without...other than just by sight. And the gyro compass, it’s the magnetic compass, was a device that was very accurate and easy to read. I remember in Halifax one time we were told that we...about how to spot the distance of a ship from us and I said there must be some other way. Somebody ought to be able to figure out some other way than just looking out and guessing how far it was and putting your finger in the air to see how strong the wind was, a whole bunch of things. I said there must be another way of doing this. Well, in...so I was kind of watched by the officers; it seemed like they were kind of following me. But in retrospect, I think it was about the time that they got word that there was radar and they wondered if somewhere I, this is all speculation, if they thought some way or another I had found out about this and that there had been a leak somewhere in the system. Of course, that wasn’t the case at all. But nevertheless, it was...there was...the thing was, in Halifax while we were training, we were allowed to speak up and say whatever we liked in the classes and there was just a great deal of freedom. In fact, we were told that whatever we could...we just would get up and go out and have a smoke if we wanted, do what we want, but we’re not allowed to sleep in the classroom. And so, but in any case, we found out about radar in New York and the gyro compass. Unfortunately, this is looking ahead, we were not able to...we didn’t have radar on our ship and, in fact, we weren’t allowed to listen to the radio, the wireless, because if we did turn on the receiver the enemy might be able to spot us in some way.

In any case, in New York City we had a great time, went to lots of activities and met some girls, quite a few, and we used to invite some of them out, got tickets, and go out on dates with them. There were two of them, the Melville sisters, who were particularly kind to us. They had a lovely place on Fifth Avenue I remember, that went from one floor to another, big wide staircase. It must have been about eight to ten feet wide that went up right in the apartment on Fifth Avenue. I found out later that their
father was the owner of a big shoe factory. But in any case, and they asked us out, wanted to know one weekend if we could go out with them, out to the country, and we said, “Sure.” Of course, we had to make sure that we got permission from the people in charge of us at the desk of the Royal Navy. But they told us to go down to Penn Station and what track to go on and go out to the end and there was the train, and there was a car and it was to be a private...they had a private car. The father was part of a group that had a private car that ran into New York City. So we went down and got there and the man that was in charge of, the porter or whatever he was, was waiting for us. He got us, he put us on-board, and we went out and were greeted at the station by these girls and they took us up to their wonderful place. And it turned out later on, that was the campus for...they had given the property to SUNY and SUNY had a...started a college there. They drove us to the house and somebody came and took our bags and put them up in the room for us and the girls suggested we go out for a drive. And we went out for a drive. We were going down to the...said we’d go down bowling. And they...so we...we were going along pretty well and everything was fine, and we had an accident. And so one of the girls went in and phoned and somebody came with another car, gave it to them, and we went on down to the bowling alley and around. Apparently the Melville’s had given a lot of money to the town and later on gave more to establish the college because we went to things, like in the bowling alley, and they didn’t have to pay; everybody just gave them free reign in the town. But it was a lovely weekend out there and the mother was a very formal person, dressed in a long gown for dinner. It was very enjoyable and what it did do was just indicate the great hospitality that civilians had for...to give to people in the service and in our case particularly, for visiting officers from other countries. The experience with them also let me know what great things that wealth can bring--beautiful apartment in the city, and travel by private coach or arrangement, and a beautiful place out of the city--it was really...opened me up to a new side of things.

Another time we got offered tickets to the Philharmonic and we said, “Well, we guess we might as well go see what music is.” We had never been to anything like that before. And we went and we sat in one of the boxes and at intermission the lady that
obviously had bought the box asked us if we’d like to go down to meet the conductor. She said, “He’s my husband.” So we went down and met the conductor; that was just great. But we went to all kinds of theater.

One day we went out to the planetarium and I got really interested in the experience of the planetarium; I had never been in one before. In fact, I didn’t know they even existed. But while I was there I bought some books about stars and I could just…no particular reason buying them, just I was interested. But, as it turned out, later on when we were at sea I could use them to spot the stars at night.

I’m not sure how long we stayed in New York City, but it was a couple of weeks and we really had a great time there. And also, at one of the dances I met somebody, Mary Proud, who was in New York City and she was a professional singer. In fact, she did the solos I think at Riverside Church and she was just a lovely person that we knew. It turned out that after a bunch of kidding around, that she was also from Vancouver. Her father was one of the better known physicians there. So we met her and we were able to visit with her a few times later on when we were going back to New York.

Well, after we were around New York City it didn’t seem like we were doing anything very constructive to fight the war and so we saw a sign in the area where the Navy was and it said they were looking for volunteers for the Royal Indian Navy. And I remember Walty and I said, “Well, we’ll go down and volunteer for that.” We got into this war somehow or another and I…and so we did. There was an arrangement with the Royal Navy—they were the RN, and the Canadians were the RCN, and the Indians were the RIN, New Zealanders were RNZN. In any case, we thought we’d go down and volunteer. In the Navy, we volunteered for everything. I think I can remember saying that it was always…everybody volunteered for the Navy; it was not conscripted. And if anything, if you didn’t like it the expression was, “Well, what did you volunteer for?” We did and, as I said, when we got sent from Halifax down to the RN, the night the assignments were being made after graduation, they said, “We have six volunteers for the Royal Navy.” In any case, we were assigned for the Royal Indian Navy, so we went
in to see an officer and wondered if we could volunteer for the Royal Indian Navy. I remember he said to us, he said, “Look, you’re never going to have it as good as this for the rest of the war. So you might as well just sit and enjoy it,” and how right he was. We didn’t know we were going to be assigned to invasion ships, of all things. But after, I remember him thinking we were a little whacky for wanting to volunteer for that when we [would] leave this fine time in New York City.

Well, after a couple of weeks, there of just a lot of fun and sightseeing. We really learned a lot. We were told to go down and get on the train to...just to get on the train. So we got down there. We found out we were going to New Orleans and the officers were there. There was us and a number of other people that were going to be assigned to ships in New Orleans and we all went down there. And the ratings were also on-board. I remember a couple of guys went to count them and they counted a couple of times and said they couldn’t...they didn’t get the right numbers. It was kind of serious in a way because you didn’t want to lose any sailors, or anybody. In any case, they were short so two of the officers decided they’d count. So they went through the whole train and came back and they were two short, too; missed it by two. And finally sitting around, they forgot to count themselves. So anyway, we got the whole thing counted and we went down to New Orleans on this train, and we didn’t have any sleepers. We just had to stay up, in any case, which wasn’t unusual for our experiences--to have to stay up on the train or even be up all night. But I remember going through one place, Chattanooga, and a bunch of girls out on the platform giving us what they said, Chattanooga Choo-Choo’s, little candies. We did, but we enjoyed looking at them anyway, looking at the girls, and chewing these candies. And we finally got down to New Orleans, got taken over to the river to the naval base over there and proceeded directly to go on-board the, in our case, LST 63, Landing Ship Tank 63. And we went down and got on-board the ship and I didn’t know it then but it was to sail for...I didn’t realize it then, but I was to stay on it for some fifteen minutes, that it was really quite unusual for someone to spend their whole Navy time assigned to a ship, a sea-going ship. They were all called ships or...
**On-board the LST**

One of the first things that I was told to do when I got on-board ship, which was...which meant we were assigned to do anything by the officers. And they said to me, “You better go ashore and gets some liquor.” So I didn’t know where I was going or anything. Neither did they. So, in any case, I was going to go ashore and they said to me, “Well, wait a minute. We’ll get a couple of ratings to go with you,” because it was not permissible for a Royal Navy officer to be carrying anything. You just had your gloves and you carried those, and small items, but otherwise you weren’t supposed to be doing anything like that. So they gave me a couple of ratings. We wandered around and got some liquor someplace or another and brought it back on-board. I remember one of the specific things to get was gin. So we got gin around on-board and the stewards took it and put it in the wardroom of the ship. And I found out that the officers...well, I guess I knew that before...the officers could have liquor in the wardroom, but the ratings, people below officer, were not allowed to have any liquor on-board. But they were given a rum ration every day. And not only did I get the liquor on-board, but they told me that I was to be, something or other, anyway...I had to keep track of the drinks that were served to them by the stewards in the wardroom. And this became quite a problem for me because I didn’t know anything about liquor much. I knew a little bit but I didn’t know anything about...well, not very much about it at all. And, well, it got a little complicated because they had...you had to keep track of what you spent for the liquor and then each person, each officer, when he got a drink served by the stewards had to sign a little piece of paper. And then these were all given to me to keep track of for each officer and you’re assigned a certain amount of money for each one. Well, that was complicated enough to make that but also the money was English money and this was my first experience of handling British currency. So I had to, sort of in my own way, translate the amount of money in pounds, shilling, and pence into dollars and cents. But I was able to, in any case, keep track of it and later on told each one of the officers how much they owed and then they paid me. One further complication, though, was that each officer apparently was only allowed to spend a certain amount of money on liquor. And so the arrangement was that people bought
whatever they liked and then for some of them who drank more, were up to this limit, you’d have to charge one of the other accounts. ?? and they used to…I had to transfer the expenses if I was buying the drinks but I had to work with the other officers then, to get the money from them as well. Well, it was an interesting experience, my introduction to the wardroom and introduction to the ? of liquor, and an introduction to the currency of Britain.

We had the ship but they kept bringing supplies and food and everything on-board to equip the ship and all of the stuff that came on-board, if you were an officer of the day, and I was frequently because I was the most junior officer, I had to sign for all of this material that came on-board, this food and ammunition and everything you could imagine it takes to equip a ship. And it was kind of interesting to me but I brought it on-board, but we had ratings there that took it and put it wherever it’s supposed to go on ship, but it was kind of interesting to me to see the amounts of material that were there. And, of course, we had to get enough on-board, too, because they wanted...because we were going to England where food was short. So they filled all the refrigerators and storage spaces with food and supplies of various kinds, in addition to, of course, all the materials related to the operation of the ship.

As these people brought the supplies down, sometimes near meal times at noon, I used to invite them to come in and the person in charge, the officer in charge of bringing the supplies there, if they would like to come in and have a meal. And they kept saying no, and then one day I was signing the stuff and the guy that had been down several times bringing stuff and he said, “Well, yeah, I will,” he said, “because I’m just glad you signed off.” I said, “Well, what did I sign off?” He said, “You just signed for the ship for our base to the Royal Navy,” and it was a simple piece of paper. I didn’t know what all of it was about but, in any case, it never did develop into any problem at all, of course, but...but it indicated that everybody that was working was about the business of war, and doing their part, and being very sincere and hard-working about doing it. It was...but we were there and...oh, another thing that happened was that we were...each of the officers were given an allowance and they said
it was to buy tropical gear. The officers, of course, had to buy their own uniforms, but they were given money for it, allowances for it. And so they gave us an allowance to go and buy tropical gear. I wasn’t quite sure what tropical gear was, but it indicated that wherever we were going to go, we were going to go to the tropics. And that turned out to be exactly right. I went ashore to get some shorts and we knew we were going, some of the guys just got us money, but I didn’t know what the gear was, but I went around shopping in a couple of places in New Orleans. Bought some...a pair of white basketball shorts, I didn’t know what the heck tropical gear was. Well, they were sort of shorts down to your knees for summer, white, and I got these but I was wandering around and I just happened to see the commanding officer of the ?, Commander Ledyard Helpman. And he had the nickname “Ruddy Helpless.” But I saw him and he stopped and greeted us, as I’m trying to find tropical gear. I wasn’t too sincere about it because I didn’t want to spend the money, but he said, “Well, I’ll tell you where you go, subbie...” I was a sub-lieutenant, we were nicknamed subbies...he told me where to go. So I had to go down and buy some shirts, and jackets, and socks, and stuff that were tropical gear. So we got equipped but it was kind of interesting to find out where our destination was going to be. One other thing, when we got on-board this LST, I remember one time when I was in Halifax there was one of these in the harbor, one of the very first ones, and it was...it was the first one...we were down and I remember being on-board it and I thought it was kind of impressive. I liked the idea that it was one of the first LST’s. I don’t think it was ? but I don’t think it have a number even, but I don’t know. But anyway, when we were in training we had to go down and visit ships and various things as part of our...and I got on this thing. I don’t think it had...I don’t remember what the name was even. I didn’t know it was an LST, but as soon as I got on-board I recognized that I had been on one in Halifax. So this LST was one of the earliest ones, there were sixty-three, because there were many of them that...well, they just were experimental and never got built. So this was certainly one of the first ones that was built and there were a few of us there, and other LST’s and these Canadian volunteers, each one of us was sent to a different ship. We were to be in New Orleans for quite a while equipping the ship and getting it going and it helped to get introduced
to life in the Royal Navy. One of the things was, I never knew the expression that they had for certain things and they used to tell stories and I didn’t think they were very funny at all because I didn’t understand. Really, there were just subtle differences in the words. I remember a couple of them was, they kept talking about pulling the chain and that was the equivalent of flushing the toilet in England. There was a box above the toilet that had the chain, and you pulled the chain and that let the water come down and flush the toilet. And there was many other expressions like that, that were common terms that they used in jokes and other things. And I just didn’t know what it was all about, and then also the question of currency.

One of the things that we did in New Orleans when we were loading the ship, we had a lot of refrigerators and freezers and stuff on-board because we had to carry a lot of food. As it turned out, to feed the Army personnel or other persons that were on-board traveling, we had to feed them. And I took a couple of ratings; we thought it would be nice to get some bananas. They hadn’t heard of them and certainly there weren’t any in Britain during the war, so we got a bunch of bananas and put them on-board to take over so the guys could take them home in England. The sequel to that was that when we got to England, we went to get the bananas and we didn’t know that they had got put in a freezer and, of course, the bananas were frozen and they weren’t any good, but it was a great disappointment to us.

We went on a bit of sightseeing around New Orleans but we didn’t have much time because we were really busy getting the ship ready for sea and learning how everything operated. And all the electrical stuff was in American terms and the crews had to learn these new terms and how to use the equipment. It was really quite an experience for us all. But we did get set and got...finally, we seemed to be ready to go and we did sail from New Orleans and I’m not sure of the date. As a matter of fact, we didn’t keep very close tabs on dates or where we were going in the Navy. It seemed to be the principle that if people didn’t know, they couldn’t tell. And I think that was true because many times we sailed places and most of the time none of the sailors knew where we were going and much of the time only the officers knew where we were
going. And at times we had the material locked in the safe and after we sailed a certain
distance or certain amount of time, we could open the safe and get instructions where
to proceed further. This didn’t happen too often but it was no great desire on my part,
and maybe not on the part of others, to record or keep a log of what we were doing.
There was, of course, the ship’s log which did keep a record of where we had been, but
had not record of where we were going, of course.

We didn’t know we were going to New York and we did sail and proceeded to do
that. It wasn’t long until we were out before there was trouble with the rudder and the
electrical equipment had broken down and so we had to put men down with block and
tackle to move the rudder as was desired. This was a laborious task and...but it seemed
to be acceptable to the men on-board, the men who had to work the equipment
to...because they had the vision. I guess we did know that we were going to England.
Of course, all of the ship’s company, with the exception of a couple of us officers, were
all from England and so they were anxious to go home and they kind of agreed or
accepted the fact that we would keep proceeding until we got to New York where the
equipment could be fixed and we could proceed on. I don’t remember anything very
spectacular about the trip from New York. It was my first time at sea for any time and
so I was really kind of anxious and...not anxious in the discouraged sense but I guess
more interested in what we were doing and, as we proceed. And, of course, I had to go
up and stand watch and...one of the things I did was that everybody was kidding me
about getting seasick and, as a matter of fact, I didn’t get seasick. It wasn’t really that
rough getting up from the trip, but nevertheless, some people did and I managed to
survive all the way to New York. When we got to New York we were given some
evening...there’s a few evenings of leave and I remember one night I was going up and
I told the commanding officer that...as a matter of fact, it was one of the things when
you wanted to proceed to go ashore, as an officer you went and requested permission
from the captain, commanding officer or captain. A commanding officer is a man who
heads the ships; the captain technically in the Navy is a rank. But I did go in to say that
I was going ashore and was going to phone a person that I knew. And he said to me,
“Does she have a sister?” Well, I went ashore and phoned Mary and she was
fortunately free that evening and I said, “The commanding officer wonders if you have a friend.” And she said, “Well, my sister is here.” So it was kind of an interesting thing. We went ashore and had a great time. I remember we went down to some pub and Victor Borgase, the great pianist and humorist, was playing in the club or whatever it was. It seemed to me it was Number One Fifth Avenue, but I wasn’t for sure at all. We were very ? in New York getting ready to ? and very soon we went to Boston. While we were in Boston, they were able to send the troops ashore for a bit and I remember I got...I was...well, anyway, I was called somewhere or another by the ratings and I had to go down and see a fellow that was kind of covered with oil a bit and he had fallen in the harbor. And I got down there, I said, “What in the world happened to you?” He said, “Well, I was walking along on the pier and I walked off the end. I didn’t think...I thought the pier was a lot longer.” It was kind of an interesting situation; I had suspected he had been partaking of something but it was very serious. That was my first and only experience of having something in my proximity to a man overboard. We sailed from...oh, while we were in Boston we got loaded up with all the bulk heads and everything, reloaded with materials to take to Britain. There was this great series of bulk heads, port and star, they were there for soldiers when we went on base, a place for them to sleep and these were... (Tape ends)


**LST Recollections**

I was never very sure where we were, but the captain had to take sights of the Sexton and then once a day all the ships had to put signals up of where we they were—latitude and longitude—and the compare them. As I mentioned, the time in York, where it came in, so it wasn’t the case of somebody at the Navy ship’s dock knowing where we were; they had radar to do it. But they didn’t—we weren’t allowed to have…not allowed, we didn’t have any radar, in any case, so we had to rely on that. But they finally posted where we were and there was no danger of getting lost, in any case, because we had the ships guiding the convoy. I suppose that if all the other ships were sunk, boy, we would have to be on our own and know where we were. But fortunately, we didn’t have any experiences or any attacks by the submarines going to England.

During all of this journey across the Atlantic I had to not only learn life at sea, but I also learned the terms for the English speaking people, who weren’t that much different, but in many ways it was kind of a subtle difference. Aboard ship it was to become pretty typical. There was…the commanding officer was an Englishman and the…in our case, he come over from the Merchant Navy. And then the other officers were all English except for one who was from South Africa. And this was to be the experience, was that there was for the next, or all the time at sea, that the commanding officer was always an Englishman. But several of the officers on-board were from the colonies, like Australia, New Zealand and various parts of the empire.

**The Blackout in England**

Even though we were in convoy and knew where we were, it was an interesting experience when they look outside at land and, I think that was Land’s End. In any case, they came in and went around, sailed Ireland and went into Liverpool, where we docked. This was my first time in England and while we were there we were given the...I think it was two days leave and I went from there ashore and had my first
experience with blackout. There were, of course, no lights on-board at all and I’d say that our ship, too, was completely blacked out because there were no port holes. They were to be used on invasions and ? as we would call them later, but there was no lights visible from our ship at all. And we had double layers of curtains on the doors and no port holes and, of course, no running lights. So at night it was pitch black at sea. But as we went into Liverpool, in any case, we...everything was black when we got ashore the first night; it was kind of amazing. I went down to the railroad station and here was all the trains and everything but, really, the whole station was blacked out. I had to learn quickly then how to maneuver around in the dark. And the trains ran and we went and got on them and it was really an amazing experience to operate in the dark. I went from there and got in touch with a girl that I knew from Chilliwack that was a nurse in Vancouver and I knew her and then she went over to...went as a nurse in the Army and I found which base she was on, phoned her, and went down to see her for a bit and then on into London. And, of course, this was great thrill to me to have all my life hear about Piccadilly Circus, Leister Square, and everything else so I was thoroughly...I enjoyed that experience in London. And I went in and got food and found my way around, in general, with the subway and the taxi. But I was just there very briefly and went back up to join the ship and get on-board again at Liverpool. Right after that we...they had unloaded all of the cargo and stuff that we brought over from America and we sailed up to Gourock, up in Scotland, and we went through some maneuvers and things and did get ashore for a little bit and into Glasgow, which was right nearby and, again, I had more experience of being in a place that was totally at war and, of course, went to ? for blackout at night. There were rations and things available for people on furlough and we could go into a restaurant and get some food, and we’d eat it. We weren’t long in Glasgow or Gourock before we got orders to go to some place and we were there with some...the other LST’s that had come along, a few of them, and we were invited to come on...or not invited, we went ashore because the commander in chief of the...was revealing the captains and one officer from each of the ships that were forming convoy to go down to Africa. And I was fortunate that the commanding officer invited me to go with him. And I can remember standing in line, where ? was going
along, each one, and they introduced the commanding officer and I remember the commanding officer making a point of saying, “And this is our Canadian sub-lieutenant.”

**Life Aboard the Ship**

While there, we were getting more clues about what was going to happen to us and one was that the Calgary Tanks, we loaded them and found out that we were headed down to the Mediterranean, taking them down there. Increasingly, I was assigned to load the ship, that is to tell the people, Army personnel that were coming on-board, where to put the tanks, where to put the...they had got the idea that since I was a Canadian I would be able to explain this more fully to the Canadian people and the Canadian troops. And I did pretty well and I enjoyed loading the ship, but...and this was to continue on, even down in the Mediterranean where we had mostly American troops we were loading and unloading and I was asked to do that. It was also kind of amazing to the American people that I could talk more like them. They said...they used to keep inquiring of me, “What are you doing here? You seem to be able to talk but you don't sound like an Englishman.”

So we brought the tanks in and there was chains to anchor them down so they wouldn’t...at sea they wouldn’t have any leeway at least, so they’d get loose down there. They had to be fastened down and every day ????. And then there was the upper deck and the troops came in...the upper deck came in aboard ship and there was a big lift there, elevator, to take them from the, what we called, tank deck up to the main deck, which was out in the open, and took all the support trucks up there and fastened them on-board so they wouldn’t come lose and crash. I might just say, this fastening down of equipment was a very serious thing because at sea if there was the slightest bit of leeway they would gradually spring lose and have a problem with all this equipment around on decks or, even worse, going overboard or crashing into the side. So that was one of the responsibilities I developed, was to make sure that all this equipment was properly ? down and when the troops were on-board, when the equipment was on-board, to get Army personnel to keep tightening the chains and things each day.
With all these men on-board, they had to be given accommodations. They were in places along the side of the ship that were connected but yet each cabin or ? was separated from the others. But the thing was, we had all these men who operated all of this equipment prepared to...everything that was necessary to land and they had to be one of these...and also, they had to be fed. The ship was equipped to take care of that, of course, and food. As I mentioned, we were loaded with food. But this was a big problem itself, meaning all the crews of the Calgary Tanks and other units, too, feeding them three meals a day, as well as all the ship’s ?. But the ship was built for that purpose and so we just...we...I remember the sailors used to get a little disturbed because...the soldiers would get a little disturbed because they were down below deck where there was only electric lights, no port holes, they couldn’t see out. They didn’t know where they were. And here they were at sea and it particularly got a little disturbing when we got to sea and it got rough. They used to get seasick and there wasn’t really much we could do about it and nothing much they could do about it. But at various times they were allowed to come up on deck during the day and they were glad to see some light, but they were also disturbed by the fact that the ship rolled a great deal and they got...well, they’d fall down and gradually they got so they’d hang onto something as they moved along, the ship’s railings or something, but they were kind of disturbed. They thought the ship was going to tip over and they were obviously disturbed by the ship ride, which they had never been mostly on before, except that they did come over...they must have come over from Canada on troop ships of some kind, but this was a unique experience for them. And also, they were going to prepare to run off the ship and go into battle, so they were, I must say, anxious in many ways. But we moved down toward the Mediterranean, went through the Straits of Gibraltar, which I had heard about before. I must say I was more prepared for this than a lot of people who went overseas because being a member of Canada from the British Empire we had studied a lot of geography of all of the British Empire and the history of the Empire, which was pretty much a global international thing. And we knew all the countries, like Gibraltar wasn’t any surprise. We’d heard about it being a fortification for the British Army and...
When we joined the ship in New Orleans, we had a commanding officer by the name of Brown who had been a Royal Navy type; that is, he’d come out of the Royal Navy. The first lieutenant was a merchant seaman who was taken over by the Navy to man some of the ships. He was a merchant man and he knew a lot about the running of the ship and being a good sailor, but he had none of the, sort of, the background, the experience of being a Navy commander. Not that it made that much difference in a way, except he did not seem to have the same finesse as some of the other officers. Then when we got to England, the commanding officer was taken ashore. I think he had a heart problem it seemed like, and I think he was taken ashore and we got a new commanding officer who was also a merchant shipman, who knew the sea but, again, was disfamiliar with some of the operations of the Navy. And it was these two men that came down, this commanding officer and first lieutenant, as we went down to the Mediterranean.

Life aboard the ship was pretty routine; we had a lot to do. Every person had an assignment. We kept watches of the… the seamen had watches, the Royal Navy watches, which meant the dog watches, which meant that their hours on duty changed a bit from one watch to the other, because of what was called the dog watches. Most watches were four hours but the dog watches were two, so that meant a rotation in the hours you’re on duty. For some reason, I don’t know what, the officers were put onto what were called fixed watches. That, apparently, was the routine in the merchant marine. So it meant that we had four hours on and then eight hours off. But in my case, I got the midnight watch. It was twelve until four in the morning and then I had to watch again from noon until four in the afternoon. And that continued, really, through my time on LST 63. And incidentally, well, not so incidentally, something happened again when I got on another LST and we again went to fixed watches. We got down and went through the Straits of Gibraltar, going over somewhere, we weren’t quite sure when…I don’t know whether the commanding officer knew or not, but we didn’t… as far as I knew, nobody else aboard ship knew where we were going. The fixed watches that I had mentioned had pretty much been the set routine day after day. When we weren’t on watch, usually in the morning when we got off at four o’clock, I
could go and have a bit of sleep, but in the morning is when we did the work of the ship. We had to get the lines all ready and just everything to do with the general maintenance of the ship. And while I didn’t have that much to do, I needed to be out and about because no seamen reported to me when I wasn’t on duty. When we were off duty we had to eat, of course, and we spent a lot of time reading. We were fortunate to have quite a bit of material and everyplace I went I brought up literature, such as England and New York and London and Scotland; I brought up material. And then, also, my Aunt Edith and Uncle Wallace sent me materials from the small bookstore that was up there in Glen Lake where they had moved when they retired. And they were interested in supporting this bookstore, I think, but also they had them send materials from time to time to me, packages of material, and they gave me the...I guess it was a Sunday issue of the New York Tribune, maybe. Anyway, they had a lot of reading material. We were able to have that to read. So we did pretty well, but actually everybody was very busy working the ship and very little time off. We didn’t have any films on-board, nobody got those. We did have a fellow, we called him Daffy, he was Navy/Army/Airforce Institute and his job on-board ship was to give materials out to all the seamen and the officers. As far as I could see that was his job, so he seemed to do pretty well on the ship that I was on. But again, there was no radio. We were absolutely silent so we never knew what was going on from day to day.

In the Midst of Battle: Navy Runs

As we went through the Mediterranean, in any case, we pulled outside the harbor in Naples and this was on July...let’s see, July...it was July 20, 1943. We pulled into...outside the harbor and we were instructed, I guess, to proceed to go in to land the Calgary Tanks. Just as we were proceeding pretty close to the docks, the German Air Force came over and dropped a couple of bombs, right close, about twenty...I’d say forty feet from us on the port side. We scrambled to get under cover and when it was all over, I found out that I was under one of the ammunition trucks. (Laughs) Well, in any case, we got out of that and the two bombs that were dropped near us, missed us.
That was my first experience with enemy action. Nothing much happened, but it was certainly a clear indication of what war was like. We pulled in and docked in the harbor and unloaded the Calgary Tanks. They were a happy lot to get to shore; they didn’t know what was going on because they were always down below. And there wasn’t anything much we could tell, they were down below and were seasick part of the time. It was kind of miserable so when we opened the bow doors and lowered the rim it was no trouble to get them to run their tanks off and, one thing or another, they went off to shore. I remember I was able to...since I was down when they went off...I was able to actually get ashore for a little bit but not very long and actually it wasn’t leave, it was just that I was on land, that’s all, outside the ramp and the bow doors. We immediately pulled out of there, and this was at Syracuse and Sicily. We pulled out of there and were sent to South Africa and we loaded up and continued to run as fast as we could. It didn’t take long to come back and we’d go over and loaded, and we loaded as soon as we could, came back and, by and large, went into Syracuse on a regular trip. As soon as we could load we went back to Sicily and then we unloaded in Sicily and we went back and got another load. And this kept up for a considerable period of time; in fact, for several months. And while we were in North Africa we went into Tunis, and Tripoli, and various ports there. We didn’t get ashore at all practically and kept on that run very regularly. It was very routine; every night I had watches at twelve to four. And that was usually when we sailed from various parts so we could get to our destination at dawn or thereabouts. And while I was on the bridge in the Mediterranean, I was fortunate. I had those books that I got at the planetarium about stars and I got so that I watched the stars. It got so that I could...practically knew when they were all going to come up and when they were going to set again. It was kind of a relief from what was going on, but it did help me to spend the night rather than just sitting there looking out. We were, of course, looking for enemy ships but we very seldom saw one.

One time when we were back in North Africa, we found out, usually from the people ashore, that we were going to a different destination. We were going to go and hit the beaches at Salerno and I remember that was all very clear. We had in some way been warned that some of the German 88’s might be guarding the beaches and so we
were a little apprehensive. In any case, we got there at dawn but in some way or another we got mixed signals from the shore. Instead of going exactly where we were supposed to, we went into another place. There were...and we were fortunate because instead of hitting...the German 88’s hitting us broadside or just in the head, I guess head on, they were firing us from broadside. But we did get in and land on the beaches, unloaded the troops. And I had mentioned that the troops we landed, one of them were British troops out of North Africa; they were starting the invasion of Continental Europe. And so we...the concentration was to get troops out of North Africa and get them over to Italy and presumably other places, but there were the troops proceeded to go up north in Italy. Well, that date, D-Day in Sicily was July 20, 1943 and Salerno was October 20, ‘43, so we trawled the troops again back and forth from Italy...or from North Africa...or from Tripoli, Tunis, ?, a bunch of different ports there and put them in...

Again, one of my jobs was, when we were in port, was to unload...to load the ship, so that took quite a bit of time and there wasn’t much free time before we got ready and sailed again. And when we got to the destination it was usually after my watch from twelve to four, midnight, and so I had...I was down and spent most of the time working the unloading of the ship. The troops themselves did most of the work and were under their own commanding officers who directed the loading and unloading. It was rather a considerable liaison with the person in charge and myself. I might say that I don’t think I did all of the loading and unloading but it seems to me I did most of it, and I guess I did because there wasn’t anything else to do on-board ship at that time.

So after D-Day at Anzio, or at Salerno, we kept running back and forth bringing troops, of course, to Italy. And then we...then we got an order to go to Naples and we got to Naples, which was not far north of the Anzio Beach. And there were a bunch of ships gathered there at the harbor and we were preparing...it was in preparation for the landing at Anzio, because we didn’t know where we were going, but we knew something was happening. While we were in the harbor at Anzio we were told we could have a
couple of hours leave. And I remember nobody on-board ship seemed very anxious to
go but I went ashore, in any case. Right near there was Pompeii, so I went up and had
a look at the ruins of Pompeii which I found very interesting and went back and got on-
board the ship. And they had told us that we were going to have a practice run to go to
Anzio and we were going to practice on the beach of Salerno, landing and...because
most of the ships that were there had D-Day experiences and, I don’t know what
happened, but the commanding officer...we didn’t go on that for some reason. I guess
he just refused to go and nobody knew the difference much; they were so busy doing
other things. But in any case, we finally went in and got loaded at Naples. We sailed
that night and got up the next...arrived up there at Anzio the next morning at dawn and
we were sent in to unload our troops that we had. We were also the...they also had two
ships--one command ship for the invasion and the second was a follow up command,
which was all equipped so if the first one got sunk, the second one took over. We were
the second in command and we had no particular reason to be the command ship. But
I remember going in there. I remember very clearly that they got ashore and they
wanted to...the troops wanted to proceed further inland but they were apparently told
that they couldn’t proceed beyond what they had planned on being for the first day.
That proved to be an unfortunate mistake because the commander who was in charge
of the German area there on land went somewhere for a wedding or something...of
course, like everybody else, they tried to keep a normal kind of life as much as
possible...and he was away and our troops didn’t have any trouble proceeding. But
anyway, they had to stop, and they stopped and then it was a really miserable day that
we switched on the radio, because we thought we couldn’t, the second in command...in
any case, we turned the radio on and they were reporting from somewhere of the
invasion in Anzio and the Mediterranean under blue Italian sky. And we were...whoever
was giving the signal, he either was misleading or not. But in any case, it wasn’t very
accurate. That reminded me of Churchill when he was talking to the newsman one
time. He apparently said, “You can say whatever you like, all you people, but don’t all
say the same thing.” So this may have been an example of when we heard something
that’s not the same thing. But anyway, we got out of Anzio and went back down to
Naples to ? and ?, they were small places, went down there and loaded troops and went back again up to Anzio the next day, or the day in between, and again we ran a shuttle service between there and the ?. Well, actually, we got into the dock in Anzio and we were able to pull alongside and unload on the dock, although the bow was up on the beach shore. Because that’s the only way we could unload it, was unload the troops on land. And I remember going up there and all the time we were there we were under enemy fire from the shore. The troops were not able to proceed inward; the Germans just stopped them. But it was really a...a real slaughter in that place. We had to haul wounded back and put them in the bunks where the Army people that we had taken in, slept. They were very badly wounded. In any case, we ran that run for several months again, just up and back. Sometimes when we were on the mainland ? and ? we were able to get some leaves for a night and I remember what to do, there wasn't much to do anyplace. Sure, I always used to go and drink wine at night, but I had to watch at midnight so I’d get back on-board, I…I didn't drink much anyway, but I certainly didn’t drink that. I didn’t want to be on the bridge when something happened and the sailors say, “Oh, well, he was drunk anyway.” And so I never gave that option. When I was in Naples, I remember I used to go up...they kept the opera going when the Italians were there and then the German occupation and then the allied occupation, they kept Opera House open. It seemed like I went up there and the nights that I went there, I just was looking for something to do to get out of the active war business. So they ran two of them together--Cavalleria Rusticana and Agioli...no, that’s not right. Anyway, something like that. It seemed to me that they frequently ran by when I was there and...I was no musical buff, but I certainly enjoyed that more than anything else because it certainly took us out of the active war situation.

When we got to Anzio, of course we wanted to unload just as soon as we could to get out of the action there and then we got orders that we were to...we’d take a lot of trucks, in British they called them lorries, trucks of ammunition and all kinds of stuff, and we took those up and we just opened the bow doors and let them all out. Well, then they got into the situation. There were so many trucks up there they had to do something about it. And we got some sort of orders that we were to bring a certain
number of trucks back every time. They were empty, of course, and I remember we’d get them unloaded there and I’d go up...(Side ends)...

I was just thinking about on the Anzio run, we’d take the troops in and land them to the shore and then we got orders to take a certain number of troops back, a truck back, lorries, they were called then.

In any case, this was all done under warfare, a lot of problems. And I remember down, looking over Anzio, there was a big bluff and one of the things that was in there—the Germans had cut a hole in the back and put a gun in there, which they called Anzio Archie. I don’t know, but in any case, the gun would come out of there and fire rounds at us and anything that was blown and then they’d fire some shots and then go back in. But of course, it was hard to...as far as I know, all the time we ran on the Anzio run, the gun still seemed to be operating all the time and they seemed to be able to get ammunition to it. Of course, they controlled the land back off shore. Anzio was the only place that they held but that was a real escapade running up there and back.

One night when we were loading the ship, they were putting a tank on our thing and it was to run from the shore onto the ramp and onto the ship. But somewhere the tank got on the ramp and dropped down and it couldn’t go on shore and it couldn’t go on base, but finally the Army got a crane. They were all equipped to do most anything in those days, amidst the war. They finally got a crane down and got it up and got it on the dock and then finally back on-board the ship. But years later, it was interesting, the boss of a cousin of ours was talking and he remembered that incident. He was on the shore side with the Army; they were on the mainland of Italy. I don’t know if it was Fazioli or Baccioli or where it was, but anyway, he was there when that happened and recalled that incident. Of course, we didn’t know each other was there.

That Anzio run was certainly not a pleasant one and various things used to happen because people didn’t want to go up there. I remember one time one of the sailors got sick. He said he was spitting up blood and he was just in terrible shape, spitting up blood and all sorts of things; he was scared to death. Not to death, but
almost...maybe he did die. And I remember he didn't want to go up there. He was sick and he didn't want to go. There was a big hassle on-board with him.

I don't think I mentioned, the Anzio run was January 19, 1944. It was D-Day. And we kept running back and forth up there all the time and without hesitation because we had to try to keep the beach open and to expand it. And they needed more and more troops. We kept taking them up there. I guess it was ? but to state explicitly, we were not the only ship, of course, taking troops up there--troops and supplies--on any of these; there were many...many assigned to this task.

One time when we were on the run to Salerno, I think it was, I guess I was on the bridge. I don't know what happened to me but I got very dizzy, got sick, and so they...I called and let somebody know and when we got back in North Africa, they took me into a hospital and I think they thought I had diphtheria or...in any case, I think it ended up I had what they call sand pie fever, which is, as far as I know, kind of a mild form of malaria. In any case, they took me and dumped me in the hospital. And I remember being out in the hall for about a day before they had...they were so busy. They just had troops all over the place that were sick. And I remember I got...I said to one of the nurses that I was...felt bit or I had bites and she said, "Oh, that's not you, it's just bed bugs." But anyway, I had bed bugs sitting out in the hall. Finally they moved me in for a day; then they treated me. I don't know just what they did to me; I haven't any idea what happened to me. Finally they told me I could go out and they had...I think it...I guess it was in Tunis. In any case, there was a short-line railroad that went up into this desert and they had a rest camp there, all tents and everything, where you could go and recover. I was only there a day and I got teed off with that, so I went down, there was a train going back, so I got on the train and went back to Tunis and went into...went down to the dock to see if...to find out how I could join my ship if the LST, my own ship, wasn't there. So I got back on-board after an escapade of a few days in Tunis and the environment, I got back on-board the ship and into the regular routine again. Tunis was the name of the country; Tunisia, I think, was the port.
From time to time while we were down there in the Mediterranean some interesting things used to happen. One night we were...one day we were there and we were always running short of liquor and it got very highly rationed. And it was Fairyville that was just outside of Tunisia, I guess, and that was their base. I remember going ashore and I went up to Fairyville and said to, “I’d like to draw a ration of liquor.” And the guy said, “Well, that’s all right. Where’s your ship?” I said, “Dock 2.” He said, “Oh, well, maybe there’s a guy down there from your ship doing the same thing.” And I said, “Well, maybe.” Well, they did have some sort of communication, telephone, and he come back and the guy was...from our ship was there, one of the officers, with their rations. It wasn’t very much, but anyway...and so I said to this fellow, I said, “Well, okay. That’s what it is.” I said, “Forget the liquor. Come on back down and have dinner on-board the ship with us.” And the food wasn’t that great out there; it was very, very slim at times. But if there was any food, the Navy seemed to get it. Well, anyway, so we’d get... somehow when we got there and went back up, ??? back up to board ship  ???. Well, the guy...the other officer told me he said the same thing to the guy and so he had his buddy from the store back up there with him and rationed the liquor with the officer. It was kind of rather hilarious, but...

Another time the sailors were ashore and they...but there was a jeep with everybody in it, so they got in the jeep and drove the jeep back on. Of course, it was no trouble to get the jeep on-board. We just lowered the ramp and got the jeep on-board. We got some paint. Paint was very scarce through the latter part of the war. Not the latter part, well, I guess the latter part. Well, in any case, in those days in the Mediterranean we painted the jeep blue. We used to go driving around a blue jeep. I thought that if there was anything the Army would notice was that there weren’t any other blue jeeps they could take. But they had many other things to do than worry about what was one jeep doing. We used to ride around the men in the jeep and...finally, we left off...I guess with the jeep on-board. And some way or another we were...well, I guess when...I don’t know what the heck we were doing with the jeep in the...we had it on-board with...oh, when we were running...when they were getting ready to go to Anzio, we were all loaded, we got orders to unload, that we were going
back to Britain. Well, that raised a great joy on the part of all the ship’s company to go back to England. And we did it and some of the guys took the jeep ashore and traded it for a donkey. I don’t remember why or anything, but I remember we got the donkey on-board and we were (laughing) and we got orders to go back to England and go somewhere. Anyway, so we had to unload the ship again, unload it and off we went back. And I remember sailing along, going through the Straits of Gibraltar, this donkey was ? and all of a sudden it stopped and I think the guys, or somebody, had pushed the donkey overboard. But I remember the donkey ??, and trading for the jeep for a donkey, which is not very useful on-board a ship either. In any case, so off we sailed back to England.

I remember one thing about the Anzio run, too, was the ? came along to me and said, “We have a problem. Some of the men in the last several days, with all this running back and forth, have grown a beard.” And I said, “Well, what’s the problem?” And he said, “Well, if you want to grow a beard, you have to ask permission to grow a beard. Otherwise, people would just think you didn’t shave that day,” and you got in trouble then. But if you had permission to grow, it was...and he said, “Now they want to shave it off and they can’t have permission to shave if they didn’t have permission to grow.” And I said, “Well, the next time we go up to Anzio, tell those guys while we’re en route just to shave their beards and nobody will know the difference.” So that’s what happened there.

While we were down in the Mediterranean, I mentioned various...we didn’t seem to get much time ashore; there wasn’t much to see anyway. But another time we went and I was able to get off. We went up to Carthage. And I had always read about the ruins at Carthage and I must say they were the best ruins that I ever saw; there was absolutely nothing left, just a field that had been plowed over.

So we arrived in Swansea late at...in fact, it was in the middle of the night. And we pulled in, and I was on watch, and I remember I could see ships all over the place. And I had fairly good night vision. And anyway, I saw...there were so many ships
around, I thought I better call the captain, which I very rarely had to do. But I did. He came up on the bridge and he said, “What’s the problem?” And I said, “Well, there’s all these ships right around us here and I just thought you ought to know.” And he said, “Well, where’s...” He couldn’t seem to see them and he said, “Flick on the lights.” Well, this was the masthead and the running lights and I flicked them on. We flicked them on and, my gosh, it looked like a celebration because everybody else flicked them on, too, and we were all right on top of each other. Fortunately we didn’t hit anything. But in any case, the captain said something about, “You got yourself into it. Get yourself out.” And I’m not quite sure what all that meant but, in any case, he left the bridge and we did manage to move around and finally got into a place along the dock and by then it was getting light and we spent the day there. It was rather interesting because the sailors all wanted to go ashore and there seemed to be a great reluctance to let them go ashore for whatever reasons. In any case, we...I don’t know that we got ashore at all or not; I don’t remember. But in any case, it wasn’t long, maybe the next day, that we left there and went around to...well, anyway...we did get ashore there. There was a sense that something was moving. We, of course, came out of the Mediterranean. We didn’t have any newspaper, we weren’t allowed to turn wireless on, so we had no rumors of anything moving. As we were to find out very soon, there was...getting ready for all the rumors, apparently, to go on the invasion in Normandy. And that’s why we were sent back. This was, I don’t know, six...five or six days before Normandy. And we got there and we did get leave and it was rather quiet in London. I went up to London, went up with Waddy again, who we met and, fortunately, we kept meeting each other in these places. We got up and got rooms in the Park Lane Hotel. But it was certainly very quiet and we just enjoyed ourselves for a couple of days there. There were very few people on leave; there wasn’t anybody really...military around London at all. They were all busy. As we found out very quickly, they were moving south to get ready to go over to Normandy. One thing I do remember was that I went in to get a new uniform and the tailor said, “I guess you won’t need it for a while.” He said, “We’ll have it ready for you.” And this is another indication that there seem to be...people seemed to realize
that Normandy was approaching very closely. By Normandy, I mean the invasion of the continent and Normandy was the name of the beach.

All of these materials kept coming on-board and I read some of them. They were orders of various kinds, just piles of them and I don’t…the captain knew they were there but didn’t seem to pay too much attention to them. I guess he was getting his orders from somewhere else about what was to happen. And in any case, we got them all loaded up and ready to sail, and we did sail about midnight. And since that was my watch, I was up on the bridge. And we took off, going over to Normandy. It was an uneventful trip. It was…the weather was all right at that time and we just sailed over. We didn't have too much of an idea of what we were going to get into. But we did sail and had got in…got there about dawn and as we were getting ready to…orders to pull in and land up on the beach, it was obvious that there were ships, landing craft, all wrecked, many of them, and tanks and various things, trucks all disabled that had landed and were under just the natural hazards of getting there and pulling up to the beach. And there were lots of casualties on the beach and a lot of…they seemed to have trouble advancing, of course, because the Germans were on the high ground, firing down, and it was really kind of a mess. We got…but we did get up on the beach, get the bow doors open and put the ramp down and the tanks and the vehicles, whatever there were, all unloaded and proceeded, I presume, according to whatever orders they have. But it was really kind of a mess. It was not a very pleasant thing at all. In any case, I happened to be walking down on the tank deck after we’d got all unloaded and everything and I noticed something coming through the deck on the bottom of the ship. And I never did figure out what it was, but I think it was a tank that had been a casualty before we got in and we simply sailed on top of it and waited for the tide to go out...for the tide to go out so that the troops can get unloaded. But this thing was there and we got it all unloaded and ready to sail and we had to wait until the tide came in again so that we would get afloat, and we did. And fortunately we were able to rise high enough so that we got free of it and we kept...maneuvered and we got away from it and got ready to sail back to England. Looking back on it, as we sailed out, the intensity of the landing seemed to become increased. There was the landing
crafts, the landing ships, and then some came in from troop ships on various
amphibious craft. And we were obviously very delighted to get out of this and go back
to England. And all the way back we speculated we would get...for several hours we
speculated that we would get some leave and we wouldn’t be able to do anything
because of this hole in the bottom of the ship. And, well, the upshot was that we did
come back and we were...thought we had to go into the dockyard and they signaled for us
and we didn't do anything; we just sailed directly into the dock, the dry dock. The
dockeys were people who worked on ships. The dockeys were not noted for their speed
and so we thought we’d be around for a few days at least. We didn’t know what we
were doing but I do remember we got in and, like everybody else in the invasion,
whatever you were doing, you were geared up for this moment to...time to swing into
action and made your way. Well, we got in, got up in dry dock, got up and, boy, these
dockeys went to work. It was amazing in the speed with which they did it. And, in any
case, we weren't allowed to go to shore. We just stayed there and they fixed the
bottom rather rapidly and we just turned out, got out, got a load, and went over to
Normandy again that same night and got there the next morning. Things were still very
chaotic on the beaches, but they seemed to be making progress. But we got unloaded
and we continued to do that for a considerable period of time, just back and forth, as
soon as we could load, and then over and back. And after a while it got so that we
could calm down and after a considerable period of time, and I don’t really have a time
factor on this, but we got into the routine of going back and forth and sometimes we
stayed overnight, which meant we got some leave in the evening and we usually went
up to London. There was good train service and we kept shuttling back and forth for a
considerable period of time. And then it got so that they got more controlled and off of
the beaches and began to get some harbors to go into. I remember one was ? and we
sailed in there very frequently and the ship sunk right in the middle of the...right in the
middle of the...well, where we were sailing. In any case, we had to dodge around and
got in. But we were able to land the troops’ docks and this kept up for a considerable
period of time, from there.
We were able to get up to London, as I said, and then we finally...this was sort of an evening out and then we...frequently we could do it and we kept running on that back and forth. But we’d go out to London and most of the guys would go along to the pub and enjoy themselves and then we had to get back on-board by...to sail again, about midnight. And since I had to watch at midnight, I didn’t ever go into a pub before we sailed. I always had the feeling that if something happened they would say, “Oh, the officer was drunk.” So I never did. I sometimes think it would have been a lot better if I had. But, in any case, we used to get back and sail at midnight. We moved from South Africa and then the southern ports around, got up and we got into Tillsbury and then out of Tillsbury for quite a while and...

Experiences on Leave

This sort of routine proceeded for several months. I was able to get considerable amount of leave and sometimes we could...I went on short courses up to Oxford and places like that. And I thoroughly enjoyed traveling up to Scotland. I spent a good deal of time just moving around and people were rather surprised that I’d go up to Scotland for a day and back. But in any case, I did. We had an arrangement that if you could...when you got leave, you got what was called a warrant, which was a ticket to wherever you wanted to go. We used to get these tickets. Then we got the idea to...if we went from...I got one from down by the Isle of Wight up to Northern Scotland and returned...and got another one return. And this meant that you’d get on the train and go wherever you’d like, but you’d never reach that destination; they’d just punch the ticket and give it back to you and never had to turn it in until you reach that final destination, which I don’t think I ever did reach of it, either one of them. So I had this thing that was punched full of holes. Nobody was very concerned about it at that time because the trains were running and people were highly involved with the military and gave us good...we were treated very well. And it was one thing, the Navy was in Britain, was the senior service, and this was almost evident in everything we did. I remember going down to theaters and I could always get a ticket [for] one person, if
you were in uniform. But one night they said to me to just go and stand over there. They let me in the theater and I was just standing. After a while I said, “I’m standing here. Do I get a seat someplace?” And they said, “No, you only have standing....” It was full. Well, I knew the theater was full if they wouldn’t get a naval officer a seat, but everyplace you went you got a bow.

Waddy and I, again, we were...he was on LST’s too, so we had similar voyages of course. We...I remember we got in line once. They were going to have...the House of Lords, they were going to have an event there. Well, the lines were just all over. They'd measure distance there by blocks where anything was just a tuppany bus ride or a shilling bus ride or a bob, or something...a bus ride. Well, in any case, there was a long line and I said, “Boy, I don't think we're going to be able to get in here with all these people.” So we decided we'd leave and go back to where the entrance was and we walked up there and said to the fellow, “We're way back there in line and we're just wondering if we stay in line are we going to get in here or not?” And he said, “Oh, you certainly can.” He said, “Just go right ahead in.” So we were the first people to be in the place. And there were many incidents like that where the Navy got precedent as the senior service.

I remember a time I was in York and we had been traveling around and I had a room in the hotel. I went down to the bar and got a drink and it was a two-bob, two shillings. And then somebody else came in, an Army officer, and he sat down and they charged him four-bob. And I thought, “Well, I wonder if they made a mistake,” or what happened here. So I thought I’d try again, so I ordered another drink. And so I wouldn't have to ask him how much it was, I gave him a pound note. And, sure enough, he gave me...he had only charged me, again, two-bob.

Along the line, I got...changed captains. Trevor, who had been the first lieutenant on our ship, Alan Trevor, called Trev, took over the role of commanding officer. And a fellow by the name of Elson left the ship and Trevor became captain and then he designated me as the first lieutenant. And I was a pretty junior officer, but they
managed to...as it happened, they kept...it worked by ranks. But the first lieutenant had to be the senior officer, the line officer on-board. If somebody came on, they’d take over as first lieutenant, I guess. I don’t remember. I remember Trevor saying to me all the time, “After we get somebody, a replacement for one of the officers, we have to make sure that he has less seniority than you.” And it was a very happy experience with Trevor as first lieutenant. I was pretty green and there were certainly lots of things I didn’t know. But some way or another, we seemed to survive very well. He was very good to me and as time went on, finally, when we all got all of the war, he got married again and had a child, and asked me to be the godfather to this child, which was...I felt an honor. He was a naval officer and had been trained as such and really knew his way around and was very, very capable in all ways.

Well, we went along and we were on leave when the Battle of the Bulge came along, so we were called back and got over and ran the troops across to try to...Army contain the German troops, which they...which they did. About that time, too, I remember the Germans had developed some of the big missiles or bombs. They did it in two ways--one was they sent these bombs over and they landed someplace and there was nobody wanting to admit what they were. I guess they kept talking about some plant of some kind blew up and various things, but these were missiles that came over. And then there was the Buzz Bombs. They were just like little airplanes that had a bomb and they sent them over and they went some distance and then just landed whenever power they had ran out. I can remember lying around. There wasn’t anything we could do about it, and just hearing these things coming; you always hope, boy, hope they go over. And if you kept on hearing them, you knew they had passed us. Where they landed was in somebody else’s bailiwick. They finally were able to put up some balloons and things, put up some lines that would catch them, detonate them before they got on land. They put them out on the channel and various places, the English Channel that is, and they stopped them from coming in so they’d explode over water. I guess it was partially successful, but it was really kind of a mess. A lot of them were directed at the London area, of course.
Life Lessons: Loving to Learn

During all of this time that I was in England and on-board ship, or wherever we were, I was always very conscious of the fact that it was a great opportunity to learn various things. I started out from my first experiences in New York and then to some extent New Orleans. But then when we got to England, that experience, and down in the Mediterranean, there were many, many things that we had the opportunity to go on short courses, visited museums, cathedrals, just innumerable ways that we could learn on-board ship. There was reading materials and I had materials in the mail. And I must say that during the war the mail service was very good. They were excellent; they wanted to get letters to the troops and they did a wonderful job. They developed a scheme where they photographed the letters and sent that instead of the letter and that was a very efficient way of getting materials. But not only did I take advantage of it and learn a lot but I remember the thrill of seeing different things that I had read about before, like flying fish in all the stores and this...and many historic sites. I particularly enjoyed some of the short courses, like the one when I went up to Stratford-on-Avon or up to Oxford.

I kept getting reinforced as I went along that I wanted to do some graduate work. And I remember back when...even when I was at Fernie teaching school, I knew I wanted to do some graduate work and I paid the fee to take a master's degree at UBC. I never got around to doing it and then at the same time, I applied and got accepted at the University of Washington to do graduate work. And again, nothing developed of that; we got involved with the war and I wasn't able to continue there. But the fact that I had enrolled in the University of Washington indicated and helped my application when I got back out of the service to go to graduate school, because I had already committed myself earlier. It seemed to be a factor in getting my GI Bill, although it was necessary. I think everybody...they were very fluent...not fluent...they were very flexible... (Tape ends)
Teaching after the Navy

This is a continuation of my visit to the University of Chicago. I was mentioning that I met Garbuckle and his wife Peggy who I would become friends with, I suppose, for the rest of my life, at least until now; although they got separated and divorced later on, which was very sad. In any case, I was at Chicago. I went around and saw...visited buildings and had a fine time living at International House and went down and saw a director of the place and wondered if I could stay there if I was able to get back. This was in...toward the end of...middle of November of 1945 and I...I was able to get a place to stay. International House, as I got to know it, was a wonderful place for me to stay then. I could get meals and have a room and people all seemed very cordial. I remember meeting people, like Cindy Butler, who I've kept friendship with over the years and some of the other people. I was sitting having dinner there and me at the same table and they said, “Well, if you come, whatever you do, don't play bridge. It takes too much time.” I remember them saying that and they used to sit out in the lounge and they were quite right that it did take a long time, and a lot of people were playing bridge each evening on Saturdays and Sundays. It didn’t concern me because I didn’t know how to play bridge anyway, but that’s the way it went. But I felt International House was a place that I’d really enjoy staying. The policy of the house was that fifty percent of the students at a residence would be from the United States and fifty percent from other countries. As I was to find out later, you didn’t have to be...you could be a student in various other places and still live at International House. In any case, I felt very good about it and getting accepted and I guess I got...they told me that I would be able to stay at International House, I don’t know. But anyway, the semester began right after New Year’s and it seemed like I was pretty well all set to go there.

Of course, I still hadn’t been fully discharged yet and didn’t have permission or authorization to study under the GI...or under the...I’m so used to the GI Bill...under the Canadian Study Plan. But I did get on the train and headed back to Vancouver where
I...I got to Vancouver and I went over and tried to find out what the arrangements were under the study plan. And they, again, were very effective and very fast and very cordial. I must say, they seemed really committed to doing something to help returning military people. I went there and it was...there didn't seem to be any problem at all; they just said, well, I could do it. I had indicated to them that I had gotten accepted there and that I had previously indicated about going to the United States for training. I indicated that I had been accepted at the University of Washington. In any case, it all seemed very cordial and I got permission to go. And while I was there...of course, my sister Jean was there so I had a chance to visit with her, and she had been married since I had left. I hadn't met her husband, Angus Rumsfield, who had gone in the Army and was overseas.

After getting settled, or one thing or another, I went down to see McCorkendale, who was the superintendent of schools. As soon as I walked into the office, he said, “Where are you going to graduate school, Charters?” And I said, “I’m going to the University of Chicago.” And he said, “Oh, that’s just wonderful.” He said, “We need a teacher out at Dawson School.” He said, “You can start tomorrow morning and earn some money to go to graduate school.” And I said, “Well, I’m still in the military.” He said, “Go down and get yourself out of that and get down there.” Well, strangely enough, I went back up to the headquarters, or whatever it was, wherever they were taking applications for graduate school, and I went up there and said, “Could I get out pretty soon? I want to start teaching school.” And there wasn’t any problem at all. I got out, sure enough, and went around and found a place to stay up on Twelfth Avenue, or up in that area in Granville where I had stayed before, had an apartment, and got a place to have a room and a place to eat, a boarding house type place that I had stayed in many times before when I was at the University of British Columbia as a student. So I went down to...the next day I went down to Lord Dawson School. Dawson School is right in downtown Toronto in a very rough area, and I went in and reported for school and told them what I was to do, which was mostly physical education and I don’t know what else. But anyway, there were all the boys there and I started teaching and they were really a rough lot. I tried to...I used to go out at recess...
at noon and play out in the field with them and try to get along. But I can remember as I was doing some things, they would come up to me and show me a belt or an award that their father or somebody had won in boxing, or wrestling, or something like that. They were letting me know that they understood what life was all about, I guess. And I continued to be there and they kept challenging me in various ways. I remember one day one of the boys took a bottle of ink they had and just put it...dumped it in one of the girl’s pockets. And I was interested in testing what I should do. I finally said to him, ”You bring,” I think I said, ”twenty-five cents to school tomorrow to ...” It was more than that, I guess, bring some money to school tomorrow so that this girl could get her coat cleaned at the dry cleaners. Well, I wasn’t quite sure what was going to happen but, my gosh, he did bring the money and got the girl’s coat cleaned. And they just kept testing me from time to time and I stood up and went along. I used to play out in the playgrounds with them. There was a cinder...there wasn’t any grass, just cinders and it was really rough. But, in any case, I was going to go off to graduate school so I had let the people know that that’s what I was doing and I...I remember the last day of school. We were in the classroom and the girls had bought a little present of some kind and made it very clear that they did it and the boys did not participate in it at all. I felt very badly because I thought I was maybe making a little progress. The fact that they wouldn’t even...just very low...I felt very low indeed. I was walking out of the school, went back down to catch the streetcar to get home and on the corner all the boys appeared. They handed me a wallet, stuck it in front of me, and they...I said, “Well, thank you very much.” And they said to me, ”Please won't you stay?” I had to tell them that I couldn’t stay but I really felt tremendously good and in about a half an hour I went from the bottom of things to the top. In any case, I said goodbye to them and that was the end of that. But it was a very wonderful experience with them.

So in a few days I...oh, I guess I went back up to Alberta to see Mom and Dad again before I took off for Chicago. In any case, I did take off for Chicago, and went by train, which was the current way to travel in those days.
Arriving in Chicago: Graduate School

I was really very happy to arrive in Chicago. I looked forward to it as a great experience, just the same as I had looked at the Navy as a unique experience which I was going to enjoy, and which I did enjoy and thought I was making a contribution. I certainly didn’t like the fighting and I’m not sure that I all agreed with the idea of the war, but I got in and did what I could and I felt very satisfied with my experience in the Navy. Not only did I enjoy being able to make a contribution, but I really felt that I learned a lot in terms of relations with people, in terms of the travel, which I thoroughly enjoyed; the educational experience was tremendous for me. Not only the visits to other countries and to historical sites, but all of the reading I was able to do on-board and all of the visits to museums, cathedrals, theater; it was really a broadening experience and I thoroughly enjoyed it and learned a lot.

When I arrived at Chicago, I had many factors that contributed or provided the background for my visit there. Part of this was the memory I had of the people I had met [through] Uncle Wallace who, although he was at Ohio State and I knew that in some way or another, deep down, I always had a feeling he was at University of Chicago. And he had been there for a period of time. But when I was in high school, the principal, Etter, knew him from Chicago and Etter was very enthusiastic about his experiences with him. And I remember one of the things that he did one time was to, I think he got three or four of us and we went down to the university...he took us down to a program at the University of British Columbia and that was a way of getting me sort of into the idea of the bigness and the importance and almost the grandeur of university life and what the university was doing. I also met C.B. Wood, who knew Uncle Wallace from somewhere and Uncle Wallace had written to him to introduce me to him. And C.B. Wood became a very fine mentor to me over the years and he introduced me to things like symphonies as well. In some way, I looked at the idea that I was going to go to Chicago and this was reinforced by Len McCorkendale, the superintendent of schools, who was always anxious to send me on to...anxious for me to continue graduate school and for, specifically, the University of Chicago. This was all reinforced when I visited
Uncle Wallace at Stevens College, who really never talked to me about any place else but the University of Chicago. He said that I should go there and meet with Ralph Tyler, who had been a student of his and, as I explained elsewhere, Tyler was very cordial and friendly and really got me entered into the university.

When I first go to Chicago, I was at International House and it seemed like as soon as I arrived in Chicago, I had a blank for the war. And that experience seemed to just fade away and I got...although there were some things that made me very much aware of it. One was that I got money from the Canadian...from Canada to pay for my tuition at the university, gave me an allowance for living, and I think there were some allowance for books as well. But this was quite generous and I had saved a little money during the war. I sent half of my paycheck back to Dad, who put it in the bank and I had that available. And when I got out of the service, I decided to go to Chicago and I gave Mom and Dad some of that money and I remember giving a small amount of money to Jean, who was building a house, and they were talking about putting [in] a fireplace. In some way or another, I gave a small amount of money, I think it was only fifty dollars, but it was enough to get the fireplace put into their house when they bought [it] in Burnaby. And as I went along, I was able to get an assistantship...two of them, one at the university...not at the same time...and one in the instructional department...instructional technology department, or audiovisual, or whatever words we used at that time. And so I got that and that was considerable help. And early on, Uncle Wallace asked me if I had enough money and I said, “Well, I thought I did,” and he said, “Well, I’ll send you a little more.” And he sent me fifty dollars a month. So while I was in Chicago, I didn’t have any real financial worries. I was able to move along and enjoy myself and go to some of the cultural events at the university and some of them downtown.

It was true that I didn’t have any financial worries after I got through UBC and I didn’t really have any at UBC because I got...Mom and Dad paid my room and board and I saved a bit of money by working in the summers and Uncle Wallace sent me a hundred and fifty dollars a year. I think the tuition was only fifty, so that left another
hundred dollars. And then when I graduated from UBC with a teacher training certificate, I got a job in Fernie and that assured me of life without having to borrow any money there. So I didn't go into debt and all; I had enough earned at Fernie to carry me over the summers and that went along. And I did earn a bit of money in the summers, too, from when I went into the Army to Cadet Corps. We were paid some amount of money, not very much. And from there I went in to get a job in Vancouver and that paid me even more than I got in Fernie, so I was able to really live fairly comfortably. I didn't have too much expense; I made some contribution to church, but not much. And I used to buy quite a few books while I was in Vancouver and, as I indicated, the summer after my first year in Vancouver I was able to get a job in the summer, which helped me to get along. But I didn't have any big expenses and I never thought about having enough to buy a car, I guess, or anything else, although I lived very well. Then when I went into the service, the pay in the Navy was fairly good. I was able to save some that I sent back home and I still had enough money when we did get leave, to go on leave and do all of the things that I wanted to do. And so I arrived in Chicago and as an experience, I had enough money there, so that took care of my expenses and not having to borrow money to go to college or do what I...I was able to get along and soon as I graduated from Chicago, I got a job again at...I got a job at Fernie that paid me very well and it was some way that they paid me because I was told I was getting, I think fifty-five hundred dollars, but they told me that when I...when I...I remember Ken Bartlett, who was the dean and that's where I was going to be working. He kept calling me and I, every time I called him in the summer, I thought I was going to tell him that I was coming, although I didn't finish. And every time I got on the phone, thinking I'd postpone it, he said, “Stay there until you get the degree,” and so I did. And after July 1, when I was supposed to go on the payroll, I was being paid by them and also, even though I wasn't working, when the time come at the end of that year, they in some way prorated the salary to cover, I don't know, eight months I guess, of...no, instead of putting it over twelve months, they made it for ten months. So at the end of the year, when they budgeted for the next year, they added another couple of months and gave me an increase for that, as well as another increase. I remember Ken
Bartlett saying to me that I got the biggest increase of anybody in the university. I’m sure that didn’t include the chancellor, or him, or anybody like that but, in any case, it was a substantial increase. And that took care of my financial burdens while at Syracuse. Maybe I’ve talked about some of the salaries when I got to Syracuse. I may have said Fernie, in any case, when I was talking about Ken Bartlett. I was, of course, at Syracuse.

Well, back to the University of Chicago. My first days there I didn’t have any financial worries and I had just declared that I was going to study. And I did...at least I figured even if I don’t learn anything, I’ll just sit at the desk and act like a student anyway. And I did. I worked every night and all days I’d go over to the...I remember looking out the window at night over across and there was a sign there for the Windermere’s Hotel and it said, “Hotels Windermere.” I thought...and I used to think, am I going around the bend here or is there two hotels? Well, I found out there were two hotels by the same name; I think they were east and west. In any case, I was very relieved when I found out there were two hotels, which of course was very unusual--two hotels by the same name right together. But I used to sit at the desk in International House and work every night after dinner and in the morning I got up and went over to the library. At the library they gave us a little work space, rows of us, the graduate students each had a little area about...well, I guess about three rows and a chair, a little arm separating from the desk or a little partition partly separating us from the next student on either side. And I used to go over there and work, even though I got tired sometimes after lunch. I used to put my head down and have a little nap and then I’d get up. I didn’t want to do anything else. And although I had been interested in athletics, I never bothered to go out for any sports or anything; I just worked day and night for the term.

I had mentioned, also, that I had seen Sandy, my cousin, W.W. Charters Jr., at...we met when I was visiting at Stevens College in Columbia, Missouri and it turned out that Sandy had got a room, too, and then we got a room together at International House. And that was a fine experience, although we never saw very much of each
other, actually, except at night. He used to go off; I don’t know just what he did. And he didn’t eat regularly at International House, so I didn’t see him at meal times. But it was a very cordial relationship and I enjoyed meeting with him. He was working on a Ph.D., I think, in social psychology. And then I think it was just one year he studied there and then moved to the University of Michigan and pursued his program there.

I used to go to church fairly regularly at Rockefeller Chapel, which is a beautiful place, fine music and a very fine preacher. And while I was there, they had graduate students who ushered and got paid. I never got that kind of a job. In fact, I’m not too sure I was aware of it much, until I practically graduated. But I remember they did have us read the scripture in the morning and we had to go over and rehearse it in the chapel and then we gave it on Sunday, read it on Sunday. And we also got a small amount of money for it. And it was interesting the way the chapel supported, in a small way, students who went to the university.

We’d finally, a period of time, just sitting around eating meals; we finally found a group of people, about a half dozen of us, who ate regularly for dinner at night and this was a very happy, social experience each day. We didn’t do much else than that, except just have the meal together, but this was a great bunch of graduate students from various departments and we…I thoroughly enjoyed it; it gave a break from our work.

The University of Chicago was under quarter system, so I started in January and after three months we took a set of exams on the courses that we were taking. And Chicago had a...these exams, I kind of forget what grades I got; I certainly wasn’t an outstanding student. But I got along well enough that I felt comfortable and I wanted to continue on. And I had great interest in being a student and enjoying all of the aspects of it. The professors were very demanding but they were also very cordial and I can remember I didn’t start out taking courses, although I was in touch with them, because I knew I was going to be in adult education. And I was the only student in adult education. It wasn’t all...I guess the second or maybe the third year some other
student came and entered the program. But he was...Cy was very kind to me, too. He was a single person and he got to date a girl at International House, one of the girls that used to, Betty Eckhard, who used to meet with us there. And she was dating him and I used to get some feedback from her about how I was doing with Cy’s classes. He was the person she was dating and later married. But Cy used to invite some of us over to his apartment once in a while, some students, and that was very enjoyable, I must say. And I had a chance to talk about many things; he really got me interested, much more interested, in adult education. And he told me about his experiences out as he visited around adult education agencies. Cy was also Dean of University College, which is the adult education college of the university and...sometimes we went downtown and had classes down at University College, which was in the center of the city of Chicago and we...that was the same pattern of some people going...students from the campus going down to take work with the students from the community down off campus. The same pattern as we were to follow at Syracuse under the name of University College. We used to take the I-C down to classes down there and then track back up on the I-C. I-C stood for Illinois Central, which stopped at Chicago. The train stopped up near the university and just a few blocks from International House, so it was easy to go over and take the train downtown whenever we wanted to go. I was talking about Cy Hull, who was very helpful and gave me lots of time to visit with him whenever I felt like it. Cy used to have a few parties that I went to and got to know the staff at University College downtown very well and they were...I spent time down there, so they were all very helpful to me as well.

One of the first classes I was in was Professor John Dale Russell, who was a Professor of Higher Education. I took this class from him and had to write a term paper and I remember going into the office and he wondered if I had made the correct interpretation from an article that had been written by somebody. And he even went with me and we dug out a copy of that article--I don’t know if it was in the library or in his office or where it was--but I remember he took the trouble to go there, dig it out and see if I made the right
interpretation or not. I’m not quite sure what the conclusion was, but the conclusion I came to was that he was really interested in his scholarship and if something was only slightly misinterpreted, he was anxious that I should realize that. It was a great experience and I remembered it all my life.

Then there was another professor, Henry was his name, a rather short fellow and he did some editing in the school review as well as teaching classes, of course. But he was always wandering around the library. As I said, we sat at our carrel. He used to come visit with us and quietly put his head down and talk. And I remember he used to go around frequently. And then he got...as I moved along, I was able to...I asked why did I have to take a master’s degree if I was going to take a doctor’s degree and I remember Tyler said there wasn’t any need to do it at all. He said you could just proceed directly on. But somebody made it clear that if you didn’t get quite finished with the Ph.D., you have to remember that all you had was a bachelor’s degree as you went out looking for a job or something. But that was all right, I didn’t mind; I decided I’d go along with it. And one of the things was it saved writing a thesis. A Chicago thesis were [for] master’s degree and dissertations were for doctoral degrees. And I remember Dr. Henry coming along and was meeting with me and I told him that I was not going to take a master’s degree and proceeding on. And he said, “Well, that’s a good idea.” He said, “If you want a master’s degree, just take a weekend off and write one.” And I didn’t know how they...that they expected so much of a student that the pressure was always on and to move in an academic way all the time, and to proceed and not worry about a time factor but be judged by your products. And he also got me...he was editor of the School Review and something else and he gave me a couple of books to review and publish in those periodicals; my first experience on publishing. And, of course, he just didn’t hand it to you, forget it, but he made it as a learning experience for me. And I made several drafts of this and he talked with me about what ought to be in a book review, and what a publication means, and sort of introduced me to the publication arena.
Exams

Picking up again, I’m not sure [what] went on ahead of this but I always thought of Chicago as my field of study of certain areas, certain steps that had to be taken. The first one was the passing of the prelims. This was after...what it was, was a series of nine exams that were prepared by the board of examiners of the university. The professors gave them their objectives and the reading and they constructed the examination. We went in...we got ready to go into the exams and we started to write. We wrote for two or three days and we had separate areas we had to cover. And it seems to me we started to write and I felt that I had a chance to write all I knew somewhere on those examinations. It was a very...actually, it was kind of exciting to do it, to put this all down. But, of course, we realized they were examinations, too, and we...and how we did on these exams indicated whether we were able to continue on or not. We wrote for about three days and I was exhausted when I got through. I thought that maybe I wanted to go out on a party or something, but actually, I was so tired I just went up and went to bed in my room at International House and slept around until the next morning. We were told that on a certain Friday, I don’t know whether it was the next Friday or two weeks away, that we could go into the office and we’d get an envelope giving us the results of our performance on these exams. Obviously these were not exactly exciting days, but trying days, to figure whether we were going to be able to go on or not. But in any case, on the given Friday morning, I went over to the office of the Department of Education and the girl there was handing them out. All of the students were around waiting their turn to get this envelope. And you really felt you were going to have fate in your hand because it just indicated whether you could continue on or not. But I went up to the desk of the girl and she was taking it out and finding my envelope in the file she had in front of her. And I remember she said, “You don’t have anything to worry about.” That was a breath of fresh air, I tell you. But I got the envelope and it indicated I had passed the prelims and that was certainly a milestone. And then we went in to meet with our professors individually to indicate what we had to do. I found out it was the custom to make most people at least continue on and take some additional work of some kind or another. I
never was quite clear what all was told to people, but I remember I was told by Cy Hull that I had to go in and sit in on... (Side ends)

The First of Three Hurdles

This is a continuation of the experiences after I took the prelims. I was saying I was told to go over and take...sit in on three courses. And the first one was a course by Fairway, the famous physicist, and it was indeed an interesting experience to sit there and listen to this lecture on physics that he was giving to his students in the Department of Physics. And much of it I didn’t understand, but it was amazing how much I seemed to grasp from his description of what was going on. And the second one was to go and sit in on a beginning chemistry course given by Dr. Sleshinger, who was chairman of the physics department. This, again, was an interesting one because I knew some physics I had certainly forgotten and this...he just went on and talked about...or chemistry in the case, I'm sorry, and he talked about chemistry. And, again, I was amazed at what I...how much I could understand about what the general field of physics was all about. And the third course was over...I think it was in the School of Social Work, but I went and took a course on Freudian Psychology. And, again, this was an interesting experience for me. Well, I spent that semester just going into those classes and listening to what these professors had to say. Again, it was a case of pushing you academically...maybe not beyond what you could understand but, certainly at the beginning, out to the edge. And it was truly a great experience to be in the presence of these professors and to hear them. Again, it opened up a whole new vista for a student in the Department of Education in the Division of Social Sciences to have an experience really outside of the area. I was always grateful for that and, of course, there were no examinations or anything, which was, you know, typical of many of the experiences at the university. The lectures and activities and programs were always an intellectual stand, but not...no examinations.
The Second Hurdle

The second major step was to, and we sometimes referred to them as hurdles, was to take the language exam. I had studied a lot of French in high school, a couple of years, and [in] college a couple of years. And I was certainly no great student of the language and certainly had kind of forgotten a lot of it by the time I got to this stage, but the requirement was that you had to take one foreign language at the higher level they called it, or two languages at the lower level. And once you declared yourself, you had to stick with it. You couldn’t switch…if you failed one of them, you couldn’t switch to the other one; you had to continue on. And this was a real hurdle for a lot of us. In any case, I decided to take French at the high level and I studied like mad for that...a good part of that quarter or at least a considerable part of it and went in and took the exams. The exams were whole division or one subject and not for each department or area within it and I remember the exam that I took was centered on psychology. And I remember it was in the area of presenility and some way or another I got a complete block and I never thought of presenility being “before senility.” I just drew a blank on it. And I remember discussing it and writing about it, trying to figure out what it was. But anyway, again, when you get through all of these exams, you just think you don’t know anything. They were so demanding. But in any case, I did take the exam and in due time I was notified that I had passed it. And I think I must have beaten around the bush so much that they thought I knew something about it and not just recognized the simple term pre-senility. But in any case, that was an event. Then we had to complete the requirement. You had to critique an element in your own field in the language. And mine was, of course, adult education. And I remember going through all these journals and various things looking for something, an article or some discussion of adult education that was in French. And I kept looking and looking and reading this stuff and finally I went back to the professor and said, “I just can’t find anything on adult education. I’ve gone through these journals.” Finally they agreed that I didn’t need to do anymore in it. In retrospect, I think I should have just picked one that was close to
the area and done a critique of that rather than looking so hard to find it and not being able to.

During this period, of course, I was forming some friendships with some of the people in International House. There was a small group of us who got together before dinner on a Saturday night, went up to one of the people’s rooms and had a drink or two and thought we were really celebrating something. It was a very enjoyable experience. One of these people was Sidney Butler Smith. Sid was a student working on a doctoral degree in libraries. And another one was Harlan Smith, who was a doctoral student in chemistry. There were a couple of others from time to time that used to gather with us, but the three of us met fairly regularly on Saturday night, and met some other times as well, for a meal or something. And, frequently, part of the group sat down for meals at International House. Harlan became a very good friend and became best man at our wedding and Sid became an usher at our wedding. And I was grateful for them to come with me to Toronto when we got married. About this time, too, they were going to get some other students in the field of adult education; I had indicated earlier, I was the only one. But Thurman White came from Oklahoma and he was a student and we used to meet very regularly, informally and otherwise, and we would become very good friends and are to this day. And he is still living. Another one was Joe Matthews, who was from extension out of the Washington office. In any case, we were friends and continued to be friends until he passed away, several years ago. They both brought their wives with them and they lived with apartments and we all participated in various activities, although, as I’ve indicated before, social life was not a high factor during our student days at the university. My social life was not extensive; certainly our friendships became rather extensive. Another student I met was down at University College, downtown, in the same building as the YMCA. Malcolm Knowles was a student...became a student of Cy Hull’s. He sent me down to meet with Malcolm, who had his office there, and I remember meeting Malcolm. One time we were sitting there and he was still having his lunch and at the same time he was having vodka martinis because I think he had an ulcer or something, which continued on. But
Malcolm also was to become very much involved in the field of education and became one of the leaders.

During this period while I was at the University of Chicago, the Fund for Adult Education had been created by the Ford Foundation and they had millions of dollars to spend and had sponsored various programs, primarily in the field of liberal adult education. Chancellor Hutchins with some others, Mortimer Adler and Cy Hull, started what they called the Great Books Program. These were discussion programs whereby each week of the program the participants read one of the Great Books. And then they met and...the students met and they had two leaders and these leaders were not allowed to contribute any knowledge, but only to ask questions and thereby, to some extent, of course, directed the discussion. But no additional knowledge was permitted in the discussion, only the books. So this Great Books Program began in Chicago and they had groups there and all over America and Canada and was rapidly expanding things supported by the Fund for Adult Education, which in turn was supported by the Ford Foundation. But this was a great program and I got involved in some of the discussion groups, thought I was interested, and I remember going down to one course at University College where the chancellor and Mortimer Adler, the two of them, led the discussion. And this indeed was a challenging, intellectual experience, Great Books. And, as you will find out later, I finally did my dissertation centering on the Great Books.

**Third Hurdle: Dissertation**

The third step was to get a dissertation topic and this indeed was a challenge. And there’s groups of students, individuals in all departments, and we were trying to develop a research project, a dissertation project, that was acceptable to their department. And I was...I got working on a program on the Great Book’s thing; I thought it would be a great idea and I started to work on it and develop it. I had several drafts of it that I talked with people about. I can remember going into Ralph Tyler’s office and saying to him, “Well, here’s the fourth draft of, I suppose, ? of my proposed dissertation.” And I remember him going out and taking my proposal over to
the window and kind of looking out and reading it and, presumably, thinking about it. He come back and he said, “It’s acceptable.” And I was just flabbergasted to think one would...actually, in retrospect, it was a very good topic. And I just went out of there and was just gleeful that I had a topic and it was “The Evaluation of the Development of Thinking in the Great Books Program.” Well, I got out and I can remember walking back to International House, where I was staying of course, and suddenly realizing that I didn’t know what it meant by “evaluation” and I wasn’t sure what the components of thinking was, and I didn’t know much about the Great Books Program. And all of a sudden, here I was to construct some evaluation of the people. And I talked with Cy Hull about it and he said, “Maybe we’ll get some groups in the Chicago Public Library.” And I remember going down and talking to Gertrude Gescheidle, who was director of the library. Cy had spoken to her and she agreed to let me have access to twenty-one of the Great Books Programs that were sponsored by the library. And so the plan was to give them all an examination at the beginning of the program. They all ran about the same time and same period for the program. Then after three months I was going to give a third of them the exam again and that would eliminate the practice of other things that people might experience just from taking it. And that became the benchmark for the others. Then I examined another third of them in six months and another third of them in nine months, so I was able to use these students and then developed a program to develop an instrument test, which I was able to finally get approved and tested. And I had the help of Dr. Tyler and Dr. Hull, and also Chester Harris who was Professor of Statistics, and he was extremely helpful. I had taken a lot of statistics that it got so it was literally in my head. But I was able to really cope with this and develop an instrument. And they were very free with their time to work with me on it and I presume all the other graduate students had the same experience with their advisors. And I remember one night coming out of the library, I may have mentioned this before, and I met Ted Harris and I asked a question about something I didn’t quite understand. And he said, “Well, you’re missing the point.” He said, “Come with me.” So we went over to a very famous little restaurant near there, sat back and
had a beer and he explained it to me again. He was great and very generous, all of them, very generous of their time to help us.

As I got into the dissertation I found it was a much bigger job than I thought it was, mostly because I really didn’t have the tools tuned up for the test that I had and I had to do a lot of reading and evaluation and thinking and, of course, work through some of the Great Books again to get the proper selections of items. I was also under a deadline because I had to have it done by about the first of September because that’s when, the fall, that they started the Great Books Program that we were to go through and we had selected twenty-one of them. Seven after three months, all of them at the beginning, seven of them after three months, seven of them again after six months, and some of them again after nine months. One thing that I do remember, though, as I was developing the instrument which I gave to the faculty to test it out to see what it was, I remember one professor was trying to get the agreement on the items that I had from all of the faculty; I didn’t think it was a good evaluation item, good test item. I remember one professor said to me as I was trying to get him to agree to something and he said to me, “Don’t push too hard.” And I thought that...I always remembered that as when you’re trying to test something, you have to let people respond the way they want to respond to the question and not try to talk them into the correct answer. It was a good lesson that I learned from that particular thing.

In any case, I got the test questionnaire finished on time. I had originally hoped that I’d be able to take the summer off and go home before I started to administer the test. By home I meant to Alberta, to see Mom and Dad. But obviously that didn’t work out and I was lucky to meet the deadline, and I did, and that was fine, so we were ready to give the instruments. I selected as many as I could to do myself, but I also needed help from other people. So it was common if we asked other graduate students to give a hand, and they did very willingly, and we were able to administer the test on each of the dates that we had set. I administered the questionnaire, or the test as people would like to call it, one way or another, and I started to write the dissertation and I was able to do a lot of it, except for the results that we got from the test and, I
think, whatever...I think whatever results were available and I...and I wrote the parts of the examination, or of the dissertation, and I had Cy Hull read it as I went along. I remember he said to me once, many other professors had said, too, at various times, he goes, “You may get the best critical reading of your writing here from the faculty while you're a student and you should appreciate that.” It came in handy later on, and so right they were. So I just started to write and got them in and rewrote them when they came [back] and I was also able to do some generalizing or processing it. I was able to process the data that I had and I remember going over to the room of another building that had the latest equipment there was, at that time. And there was a Monroe Maddock there and I used to go in first thing in the morning to get on it so I wouldn't be delayed and I would spend most of the day doing this very elaborate formula that I was using to do it.

As I got the second batch in, the first of the seven groups that we tested, I was able to put that into the formula and eliminate the improvement there because it might be cause of factor, familiarity with the test, or many other reasons. And so we used this first batch as the baseline. I was also able to get in touch with a typist to do it. We used a manual style that was unique to the University of Chicago, but got to be used in many, many institutions later on. But we used the manual style they selected and this was...Robin, I think was her name, also, finally had to approve the dissertation and I remember one thing that she insisted on was she gave a list of people that were certified to type it and she...and she also, when you turned the dissertation in, she looked it over and before she would approve it, she called the secretary, the girl that was the secretary, called the typist to make sure that they had been paid. That was a very interesting situation, but in any case, that’s the way it was and I didn’t have any trouble paying, in any case. I suppose some people might have tried to skip and get out.

Well, after I got the second batch, I was able to process and begin to see if there was any improvement in their scores and spent a lot of time on the computer putting this data into...we literally had hundreds of times we used that formula to get all
of the proper items processed. After the second, the sixth month test, I was able to see if there was any improvement or if there was ?? . So I began to know after the second that there was...they were all positive and showed inkling of improvement. And then I did the third batch, which found conclusions where there was improvement, substantial improvement after, but it was not statistically significant. In any case, we were very pleased with the results because it indicated a lot about the method and the ability to learn and there was discussion on the Great Books Program.

The National University Extension: “Meet and Greet”

As I moved along...it was during this period, too, that the faculty decided there should be a committee of graduate students, so they got us all together in a room and had a meeting and, lo and behold, I ended up to be chair of the committee for graduate students. I'm there to make suggestions that seemed appropriate and ? what didn't seem appropriate. It was also during that spring at the University of Chicago, University College, Cy Hull was host to the NUEA, National University Extension. They were host teacher. And I was a graduate assistant to Cy Hull and obviously I got a lot of work to do, which I thoroughly enjoyed. And I remember Cy said it would be good to greet the people when they came into the hotel. And we had to show them where the room in the hotel was, and there were two of them--one of them east, one of them west. He said it would be a good idea if we met the people as they were coming in and I, being in the Navy, was sent to greet the people at the front door and I understood perfectly well what it meant, so I did. And it was amazing that nothing like this happened before and I don't think anything after that...so I greeted them but it was...they all appreciated it and it was a nice gesture. But the thing was that I got to meet all these deans and directors in the NUEA, which I continue to participate [in] with various senior people. And I had met them and so I didn't hesitate later on in the years, as the meetings went on I didn't hesitate to speak to them and ask for their assistance. But in any case, at this same meeting, the NUEA, I was set up for a meeting with Ken Bartlett, who was at the University College at Syracuse University. And Cy set this meeting up with him and I
can remember being up in a little lounge off one of the halls, meeting with Ken Bartlett. And he kept talking about Syracuse and I didn’t have any idea where Syracuse was. The last time I heard the word “Syracuse” was when we went out on invasion, on D-Day back in 1943. It was July 20, and I didn’t know where it was. I excused myself for some reason. I went down the hall and just asked people, a couple of guys that were standing there, I said, “Where the hell is Syracuse?” And they said, “What do you mean ‘where’s Syracuse’? You never heard of the Boys from Syracuse?” I went back in and talked with Ken and the upshot of that was that I was invited to Syracuse and I met all kinds of people. And I remember it was apparently on the day the board of trustees was meeting down at the hotel and when it was over, Ken called the chancellor. I guess they had arranged it, and when he got finished, the chancellor would call Ken for me to meet him somewhere. In any case, we were just sitting at Ken’s place, late afternoon, and Ken called the chancellor, I guess, or I assume it was, and he said...they had a long conversation and Ken said...I heard Ken say something about, “Well, I’ll bring him over.” And the upshot of that was that he said, “The chancellor’s going to come over and pick you up and take you around, personally drive you around University College and around campus.” And that was a distinct time, of course. I remember one of the things that we did was, the chancellor, when we got through driving around, he drove me up to the house, his house, and it was ??? and he had me meet his wife. And I was waiting for something and I remember she said to me, “Can I get you some cookies and a glass of milk?” And after being through what I had been through in the war, I didn’t think too much of the milk. But she was a very lovely person. I really enjoyed meeting with her and I did have the milk and I did drink it. And I found out later that very few people ever got invited into their home by Mrs. Tolley; she did very little entertaining. The next day, when I was talking about it, he was very much impressed that he drove me around and took me to his home and met his wife. They had been students together at Syracuse University. He was very much a leader and so was she and they were lovely looking persons then and, I gather, when she was a student. She stood out in terms of her beauty and her abilities as a student. And they would welcome me with any
enthusiasm if I applied and was accepted. But nothing much happened, so I took the train and went down to Missouri...

(Tape not audible) Stevens College, which had been over many, many years. But in any case, they were staying there. I don’t know how long, but they were in a house and I took the train going in. We got in and the train was just crowded with people, but I got a place. I put my bag between two coaches and it was really an old-fashioned train. But in any case, I took my Burberry off and put it over the bag. Well, we went off and my bag had gone and was jammed between two of the coaches. I go all the way back and I can't even get off the train because my coat was caught, but some way the train shuffled and moved a bit and the coat became free. I got off the train. I found out...went up to the house with Aunt Jessie and found out that Uncle Wallace was in the hospital and he had a burst appendix and when I got in to see him, he seemed fine, but they just developed...he was one of the first people, I guess, I don’t know how many millions... the first people there are to be treated with it. But in any case, he had early shots of penicillin and was recovering very well in the hospital. I just stayed there a couple of days and talked with Uncle Wallace about going to Chicago and he told me what to do--to go down and visit the University of Chicago and see what I liked and see if they were interested in me. So he told me to go down and see Ralph Tyler, who had been a student of his, who was Dean of the Social Science Division. Well, I had a very happy time for a couple of days visiting with Aunt Jessie and Uncle Wallace, and Sandy was there. Sandy was a reporter for some newspaper. He wasn’t able to go into the service because of some heart problem that he had. But in any case, I got to become acquainted with him and rode around with him a couple of times when he was writing a story.

So I left Stevens College, the town that it’s in, and went down to Chicago. I got off and went out to the university, where I had never been before. I got out there and I didn’t know where to get a room or a hotel or something around there, but somebody said, “Well, go in and try at International House.” So I went in and they had a room available for a couple of nights, so I was able to stay there. I got a good chance to tour
around the campus, went in and talked a few minutes with Cy Hull about the adult education program and then talked with Ralph Tyler. And I was kind of anxious to get accepted in some way because if I went back to Vancouver, I thought [in order] to be discharged and say I want to go to the University of Chicago, I had to have some sort of a letter saying that I was going to be accepted or was [already] accepted. And, well, I kept talking to Ralph Tyler and he said to me that...very cordial and, I must say, I felt very welcome there and it sounded like they had a commitment to do something for GI’s coming back and I...he said, “Well, go over to the admissions office.” So I got over there and they asked me a lot of questions. I kept saying to them...well, I didn’t have any credentials or anything with me, of course, and I kept saying to them, “Would you...can I get some letter or something to take back with me to Vancouver so that I could maybe enroll on the...” It wasn’t the GI Bill, they didn’t call it the GI Bill in Canada, but it was a very similar arrangement and, in a sense, a little more...it had a little more benefits than the American GI Bill had. But I got up and talked with...kept talking to this lady and she kept saying, “Well, you’re accepted.” I couldn’t believe that I was really accepted. I said, “I’ll get whatever information you need just as soon as I get back to Vancouver,” and she kept saying she didn’t need anything. Well, the upshot was I did get the letter and was all prepared to go back to Vancouver. I found out there were a couple of other students ???, one was Doug Arbuckle and his... (Tape ends)
**Early Years/Homesteading**

Grandpa went down and became the first homesteader in Verdant Valley, Alberta, Canada. I was born some six years after they’d gone out homesteading. Dad had come in on homesteading and Mom had come out to visit Aunt Annie, her sister, had a home. Uncle Herb and Aunt Annie Morrow had a homestead nearby and Mom and Aunt Edith came out to visit them. I’m not quite sure what year that was but I suppose it was about 1910. Mom and Aunt Edith were certainly quite the young ladies to follow out from there on the train, by themselves and visit Aunt Annie, and that was good. Mom met Dad, and Aunt Edith, who was with her, met Uncle Will, who was a telegrapher or an agent at Munson, which was nearby and the end of the railroad.

Mom and Dad were married in November of 1913 and Jean was born in August of 1914, actually the day before World War I started. We always accused her of starting the war. In any case, they were married and Jean was born and two years later, in August, I was born.

Aunt Margaret, Dad’s sister, was married to Walter McCrimmon. As a matter of fact, out on the farm or out in that area of Verdant Valley, one year after Mom and Dad had been married, Aunt Margaret, she was called Auntie, and Uncle Walter, were there, and he was a teacher. He got a job at Rosedale, in Alberta. I think it was about seven or eight miles from there and he taught school. And they built what was called Teacher, just near the school where the teachers had a place where teachers stayed, and they lived in this small place down there. We used to go down and see them once in a while. They didn’t have a car; neither did Grandpa and Grandma. I remember one time going down in the winter and we went down on the ice. I guess that was the easiest way to go. Of course, there were roads but there wasn’t much to them. I remember going down on the ice and Grandma was with us because we were going down to Auntie’s for Christmas. Looking ahead, Dad saw some water in the river that had thawed which we would have had to cross, and so we went back and we went the other way. We had to go back and I remember Grandma saying, “Alan,” she said, “I thought we were going the other way.” And everybody thought it was kind of
funny, but anyway, we did go. We did get back...we used to go down to Rosedale quite often to visit them.

When Jean was about six, Mom and Dad decided to move into Drumheller so that Jean could go to school. We lived in a little house that had just been built--was right facing right on the railroad. I remember that because Jean and I had a room back off the kitchen and then there was a little dining room, a living room, and a general room and another little bedroom where Mom and Dad slept. It was opposite where the railroad went by and I can remember when I had scarlet fever, I guess it was. It seemed like in those days everybody got chicken pox, scarlet fever, and we’d get them, the kids would get them and talk about getting over them. I remember when I had scarlet fever and they put me in Mom and Dad’s bedroom and I could see out the window the trains going by and I remember while I was in bed one time, I had a catalog...they produced big catalogs and they sent them out. I think this one was by Simpson Stores, or maybe Eaton. In any case, I can remember looking through it trying to get all the things necessary for a farm because these stores sold everything and sent them out by mail order. It’s probably by freight, as well, because they were too heavy for the mail. And I remember all the stuff out of the catalogs.

We moved there and I’m sure there may be other reasons other than Jean going to school, I don’t know, but whatever it was, we were there. But at the school, the classes were full and she wasn’t able to go and had to wait until the next year to attend. As time went on, we both went to school in new buildings, two buildings. I don’t remember much about the school experiences at all, except that I remember one time we went out to a farm at thrashing time and, of course, everything stopped out there for thrashing because this was a wheat growing area. In fact, on the lot, on the section next to Grandpa’s, people moved in and they implied that he was the wheat king. So this land was quite fertile for growing wheat. In any case, everything stopped for thrashing and it created quite a lot of interest, in a friendly way. Dad gave me an excuse to take to the teacher that read, “Please excuse Alex. He had to help his Grandfather thrash.” And Jean got one and it said, “Please excuse Jean. She had to help her Grandmother cook for the thrashers.” Grandpa and Grandma were still out on the farm and doing farm work, of course.
Early Childhood Memories

I guess about the time before we left the farm, when I was about age four, we had a car but it was one of the first, I think, and we used to travel around in that car. Before we had the car, one winter night I remember going over to Grandpa’s and Grandma’s and we went by sleigh with a team of horses. I remember Mom gave me a bell to ring and even then I remember I thought she was doing it for busy work for me. Very seldom did my parents ever give me busy work or anything to divert me, but I do remember that. It was cold, in the middle of winter, very cold of course, but Dad put lots of clothes on Jean and I. We did travel around some in the car and we used to quickly go and see Grandpa and Grandma. Another time we went in the car, we went out somewhere and the visiting minister was going through and I can remember him preaching and putting on a show. I think it was Sunday afternoon. All the people from around there came to hear him and it was quite a social event, as is always what happened. The service was held in the schoolhouse and it was there, just isolated out there, and the only building near it was the outhouse that was behind it.

Jean and I used to fool around together. We had this Model T car which had the gas tank under the front seat and it was easy to take the front seat off. In some way or another, Jean and I, of course it was her fault that led me to do this, but some way or another we got the top off the gas tank. There was a bag of seed potatoes and, apparently, we opened the bag and filled the gas tank with these little seed potatoes. I don’t remember the incident at all but I certainly heard about it later on. I made it quite a job for Dad to take the tank off and get the car going again.

One of my first memories is standing on the steam tractor that Dad had bought and we were out, I don’t know where we were going or what we were doing, but I remember being on it and being very impressed with this big machine that I was standing on. It was one of the first steam tractors to come to this area. It was used not only to plow and do many other things but also used at thrashing time as it was connected to the thrasher. I remember one time when we were thrashing they let me go out and get in the grainery. The wheat came through from the thrasher right into the grainery and I was in there. And I can recall that it was a great sport to be there.
Another thing I remember about the thrashing was I saw a photograph later on of Mom in overalls and standing beside a thrasher. I found out that something broke inside the thrasher and of course to be able to fix it, that was another thing because they had to thrash the wheat. The story goes, they’ve got Mom in these overalls and she was very slender and Dad was a little huskier and all the men were much huskier. But they, apparently, couldn’t get inside the thrasher to fix it and Mom apparently went in and did it. They had this photograph and everybody was standing, looking very happy when it happened. It seemed sort of inconceivable that Mom would do a thing like that. She was very reticent and I always thought it might be questioned a great deal whether she would go inside a thrasher machine or not. I do recall from the many experiences that these were really pioneering days. They had to do with the best they had, take lots of chances, those sorts of things. But it was interesting to see them in those clothes by the thrashing machine.

Out behind the house, it was typical of most all farms I suppose, there was a barn and it had some chickens and a cow. One time I remember a couple of cowboys came through outside the barn and, I guess, Dad spoke to them. They took me with them out for a ride on the range and I thought that was great sport, except that they sat me straddle and I felt the pain on my seat. It was a wonderful experience. Also, outside that same barn I recall branded cattle and each farmer in those days had to have a brand and that continues through to this day. We had a brand that was called Half Diamond Over AC and I can still remember that smell that came from when they branded some of the cattle there.

In Drumheller, we lived not far from Grandpa and Grandma. Grandpa and Grandma came into town and built a house there, one of the first real houses it was, and we used to go over and see them quite regularly. They were on, also, a homestead not very far...well, I suppose a couple of miles in those days, but seemingly not so far. One thing I remember about going to visit them--we were in the house and, some way or another, I got in the bedroom and got the door locked and they had to call Grandpa and they couldn’t get it open. He had to go out and take the whole window frame out from the outside to let me out. I remember getting out and walking out and Mom and Grandma were just sitting there. I don’t
remember anything much happening but I remember that I was glad to get out and so was everybody glad to get me out, I guess.

In Drumheller, there were lots of sporting events I didn’t take part in. Well, I guess I did because out in the backyard they put some sand out and borrowed a hose from Grandpa and filled it and Jean and I used bob-skis and, some way or another, she got hit with a bob-ski. Cut her under the chin. I remember going over to the doctor to fix it. I was speaking back earlier about sports. They did start a golf course and we walked down the railroad and then we crossed the tracks and went down to the other side where they started a golf club. And they had to build a facility for curling and for hockey. Then there was quite a big celebration. It must have been first of July or something because it’s Confederation Day in Canada and so we were down there. They had a ball game and everybody played. It was called the Fats against the Leans and we were sitting there with Mom, and Dad was out there playing some position, I don’t know what. We sat there and looked across the other side and there was a scoreboard out there. We used to ring a bell if they got a run and they kept one side of the field way out to the other where the scoreboard was and put it on the board when there was a run scored. I remember later on in Chilliwack it was the same sort of thing. There was a big board outside the railroad station and they used to telegraph the scores of games. They’d come through and tell them if somebody had scored, or if some team had scored, and they’d put this on the board outside. That’s how we kept up to date on sporting events and things back in those days.

Grandpa and Grandma had a telephone. I remember out on the farm they put the telephones in and there used to be a big box up on the wall. We had a phone in Drumheller. I don’t remember much about the phone, except one day we were sitting in there and the phone rang, and Dad had to go down to Calgary, or whatever he was going for. He called Mom and I guess we had to go down. In a few minutes we were dressed and down at the station and off to Calgary. Mom was a great traveler. She was always available to go and take us kids with her. She’d get us dressed and off we’d go on very short notice. We got on the train and down to Calgary and stayed in a hotel. Of course I had a bathroom and a bathtub and that was great, and they got somebody to come in and sit with us and put us to
bed and they went off to the theater. I remember the next day Mom had a box of chocolates and Dad says, “Oh, some guy came into the theater, came down to our seats and gave it to your mother.” Mom would say, well, that she was kind of embarrassed about it and said, “Oh, no, it wasn’t like that at all. You’re Dad arranged it.” I guess he did.

I remember another time when we went out for a drive on a Sunday afternoon and found some place on the railroad that I think was a B & B gang and I think Dad maybe was trying to get a job on the railroad. He was only interested in railroad and then ended up working railroads and was very happy in that situation. I remember going out there and, in those days, there weren’t much roads. There were roads but the way they indicated the routes were on the telephone poles. If there were telephone poles, they’d be different colors, maybe red and blue, or red, white and blue or some combination. That indicated the routes to where we were going.

**Rosedale Recollections**

In 1925, my mother and father decided to go to British Columbia where they were going to meet Aunt Edith and Uncle Will. Uncle Will was the station master for Rosedale in British Columbia. We went down to get on the train and the conductor asked us where we were going and Dad said, “Rosedale.” The conductor said, “That’s a long way.” In any case, we got on the train and I don’t remember too much about it except one morning where there was a great deal of discussion because as we went through the mountains, a rock came down apparently and went through one of the windows of the sleeping car and this provoked some discussion, of course, some interest. Oh, another thing that I remember then was we got on the sleeping car and the porter was black. And I guess I kept looking at him or something and the porter said, “Well, you never saw one of these before, did you?” And I guess he was right; he was a very black man and I hadn’t seen one of them before.

We got to British Columbia and early morning on the train we got to Rosedale. We were greeted there by Aunt Edith and Uncle Will. We stayed there for a day or two and one of the things while we were visiting there was that Uncle Will had just gotten a new Ford car. And
this is one of the earliest cars, certainly one of the first ones in the area. Dad knew how to drive so he started to teach Aunt Edith how to drive. And that was kind of a pioneering thing, for a woman to be driving a car. But Aunt Edith used to drive around like that all the time. And while they were one of the first cars, as other cars came along, she was, as I recall, the only woman that drove a car. I don't remember very much about what went on for the first couple of days, other than that.

I do remember two things. One was it was just in the days when woman were getting their dresses shortened. Mother was in the wrong dress, of course, but Aunt Edith had cut hers off and she was the first one in the community to have her dress shortened. She also got it cut very short and this was a topic of conversation. But I remember while we were there in the first few days Mom also got hers cut off. I also remember that this was just the time when women were getting their hair cut short. They always had it long before, I guess. I don't know; that's all I remember. I remember Mom sitting in a chair at the kitchen table and Aunt Edith had a pair of scissors and she cut Mom's hair off, at a reasonable length I guess; it was regular length, and so mother was second or third, I guess, to get her hair cut in Rosedale. They were quite the pioneering souls, I must say.

After a few days we moved over to Grandma’s and Grandpa Kern’s place, Mom’s mother and father. They just had a very small, little place where Grandpa worked the farm. It was owned by Uncle Will, and he had some cows and milked them and then every day a fellow came along with a wagon and picked up the milk cans and took them over to the station where they were shipped off to the Fraser Valley Milk Producers Association where they were treated...because they made butter and milk. The train went down first thing in the morning and farmers had to get out to the road and the train would stop very frequently in all the farmers’ places and pick up the milk and take it into Vancouver. At night the train came back and dropped the cans off at the place where they were picked up. The farmers came the next morning to get the empty cans and left the full ones there.

I wasn’t very old then. I was in grade three, but I do remember the first morning we were over there. Grandpa had a horse to work on the farm, of course, who plowed and he
also had a stone boat, which was really just a flat thing that they attached onto it and the horse pulled it and that’s the way you moved around, down to the store, or wherever you went. And I got on this thing and Grandpa took me. I remember hanging onto his leg because we were both standing up while we went somewhere.

Dad didn’t have a job but he finally got some work and worked on a job at Rand McNair’s, which was a mill that had started making shingles but moved over to making lumber. Dad worked in that mill for quite a while. And then the mill went broke and Dad was out of a job, but he seemed to get some work around, some way or another. He finally went to work in the railroad of the Canadian National as a section man, and I remember they started at something like twenty-five cents an hour and they had to work at that for three months before they got forty cents an hour. He got a job and they laid people off on the railroad, too, because this was the beginning of the Depression. So all through the Depression he had to move around from one section of the railroad to another one. But at least he did have a job, which was a great thing during the Depression.

After a few days, or a week, Dad got a house down in Rosedale on McGrath Road and it hadn’t been occupied for some time but was distinct from practically everything else in the whole community. There was just a small lot to it, no farm and no place for a garden or anything but they were able to get this house and they got some furniture together. I remember they got some “gunny sacks” as they called them, which is what food came, food for the animals came in. And they got those and in some way smashed them together and stuffed them with straw, and we took those down to this house and then we pulled it along on the road at night because Mother didn’t want people to know that we didn’t have any furniture, I guess. We got the furniture down to the house and we got a stove, a kitchen stove. I remember the stove very well because, apparently, it was a very good stove, as stoves go. But it was always a joy to Mom that we had a good place to cook. It had a place where they heated hot water on the side, a reservoir, and also, of course, it had an oven. And it burned wood. The stove also, as time went on, was used to heat the house. In the winter when it got very cold, there was no sense of heating, but there was little stoves they bought, some of them quite large, that people put in the living room and it was what they
had to heat the house. This kitchen stove, it generated a lot of heat. In fact, some people just came in there to get warm.
I always admired him for it. I went to church very regularly and I never did join the church there. Not very many did. Not many young people. I used to leave the gang; usually the people around the stove and go down to the corners and nobody ever ridiculed me about it. They respected me a little bit. It was the right thing to do. People would respect you and have some confidence in you if you did the right thing. But this fella, Ogden, left and went to Vancouver and then went on to California, I think, and after his first wife died he married another girl, Viola Close, a girl from Rosedale. Her father had a store and various other things. His name was Peter Close. People used to nickname him “Peter Tight.” We had various things going on in the church. We had a young people’s group; not many people attended. Eight or ten or so at the young people’s meeting, but the church was well supported and Uncle Will was quite a supporter of the church. I remember he was very much a supporter of the church. He hadn’t been raised in the church. He was kind of a strong guy, so much so that when he left, the “Maple Leaf Forever” was the Canadian anthem, they changed; they used to start singing “O Canada” because the maple leaf was very British and very Protestant. Catholics objected. He would sit down through the whole thing which was a little unusual, I must say. The church was there and people went to it. They got married in it. Funerals were in the church. New man come in, Turpen, a new guy. I always had a lot of respect for him. And later when the service came along, he joined and became a very famous chaplain in Vancouver. Was chaplain for the hospital there, the veterans’ hospital there and various things. When he died, they had a service for the military people and another one for the other people. He had a full house—full church, twice. He was really a great guy. He was there while I was there.

I went off to Vancouver.

Uncle Will was a man of great conviction. He lived the way and always followed through. Always a man of great truth, admired him for that. I always aspired to him. Our church had a bell, as most did; a great communication device. It rang for the
church service; it rang in the morning for Sunday school, church in the evening, and Sunday school in the morning. And then the bell rang for other events—I remember there was a fire—a big fire in the pool hall in the day time, and the ice cream parlor which were adjacent to each other, got on fire. It was a terrible thing in the community because it was the biggest thing in the community. They were important buildings for whatever reasons. It was where people went. I remember hearing things. I saw the mother of the man who owned the place sitting outside with packs of water on her forehead. That day, their life savings had gone. I suppose they had some insurance, I’m sure. Nevertheless, that was their whole living, assets going up in smoke. And that same evening on the hotel across the street, wasn’t too operational, it got on fire and burned down, too. There were rumors going around that it got set there and I didn’t know whether they did get paid for insurance or not because there were people who always came around and asked questions. But in any case, the bell rang for the fire and other events. There was a woman down the street, and apparently she was having mental problems because she went off into the forest. They rang the bell and people went out and looked for her. They finally found her, brought her back and rang the bell. The same woman, later on, drowned herself down the bridge and the flue behind her yard about 100 yards from me. Great discussion on why this woman took her life, great sympathy for her. It was a tragedy and it was another reason for the church bell to ring.

You have to remember about that time, there wasn’t any radio. Well, it got so that the radio did come in that time. My Aunt Edith and Uncle Will got a new car, first to get a new car. They also got the first radio. I remember going down and listening to it. It was a complicated thing to get it all tuned in. It was the first one I’d heard of except for the little Crispo (?) set. They had this radio. He was the agent, in fact, the food and everything came into the station. I remember trains coming in and people would be taking the food. Bread came in one day old and came in from Vancouver. They loved to travel and had a place in Coldslate (?). Rented lots out and put tents on it and camped. They used to take us out to it, went out to it very regularly, used to all of us go. Mom and Dad and two kids, and 4 of them, and Grandma, there were 9 of us.
We’d get in the Model T. It was hard to go up the hill; some of us had to get out and walk up the hill. There were only two speeds. Almost just a trail, no cars or trucks until later, but gradually trucks replaced the horses; the horses gradually disappeared.

There was lots of sports around, the small time stuff of course. I particularly liked to play basketball. We had teams from many communities that played each other but there was no organized league. We played on a Saturday night which was the night that many things happened. The people didn’t have to work on Sunday. It was the only day you didn’t work. Even Dad used to work five to six days and would get the afternoon off on Saturday, but no time off for the farmers who had to milk the cows.

They put wax on the floor to facilitate the dancing, but it was on there for quite a while. It was very slippery; when practicing sports, it was very slippery. They used to put water on the floor but it didn’t seem to help. We’d have these dances. The basement of the halls they’d set up with benches.

The school, of course, was big in the community and around Christmas there were events, were community wide in this little community. One of these activities was May Day, where students elected a May Queen in May and there was a big ceremony to crown her. Took place during the day and everyone would come in, even farmers and everybody and have this event. I remember when I was in school, my sister Jean was elected and that was a big honor. She was elected to queen and we had big events all around. And in the evening there was a big dance in the community. We used to do the Quadrille.

When I was a kid, we weren’t allowed to play cards because they played it in the pool hall and other places. We didn’t play although Dad and Uncle Will did, and Grandma. They played cards and Mom and Aunt Edith were against it, and they ruled of course. We used to sit and watch Dad and Uncle Will play. They’d play Five Hundred once in a while at the community hall, a big card game. We weren’t allowed to go but they used to play Solitude and we could watch but were never allowed to touch the cards. I remember all of a sudden something happened, I don’t remember what, Mom
and Aunt Edith decided that everybody else was playing cards. Dad and Uncle Will and Grandma played cards and they were pretty good people, maybe everybody who played cards was okay and so we started playing cards. There was no big event... just all of a sudden we were playing cards. Mom and Aunt Edith, and they began to realize that maybe they were wrong and later on they played, too.

The same thing about dancing, we weren’t allowed to dance. The youth, we were only kids, grade 8, of course we were pretty grown up. All of a sudden, Jean was May Queen. She was supposed to lead the crowd. We went down from school and practiced the Quadrille and everything and we all danced and Mom and Dad and Aunt Edith and Uncle Will. They all danced. My mom’s ability, Aunt Edith, I guess you would call it feminist in those days, and they were out in front. They decided to let us dance.

Anyway, this event on May Day in school, it was a big thing. People came down and had strawberries and ice cream. We used to pick fruit to make a little money. We picked strawberries and farmers had all kinds of milk. We would sit around at little tables and people would buy strawberries and ice cream. It was the silliest thing but it was a social event and it was done nicely; there were nice tablecloths. After this event, the farmers had to go home and milk the cows and then come back in the evening for the dance. Cows always had to be milked in the afternoon.

Everything stopped while that went on, even though the Chilliwack fair was going on. Everything slowed down around 4 o’clock and people went home and came back in the evening. Well, the schools were where a lot of activities took place, a social thing. People were really interested in having their kids go to school. They never had any trouble forcing them to go. My dad was one of the better educated people. He had gone through elementary school through eight. Most of the people went through five. A few of them went on to high school, school teachers went on to grade 12. They didn’t have any more. Dad went through high school and then he went to dental school, so he was really one of real better educated—a really smart man. People looked up to him for
his ideas. My mother only went to grade 8, but Dad always said she was smart and he said it was a great tragedy she didn’t get more education.

Another big thing in the community was, of course, the church. We had a church in Rosedale. It was right after the three churches joined in Canada from the United Church of Canada, so we just had the one church, very small place. The minister was divided between three others. One was East Chilliwack, morning at one church, afternoon in another, and the evening at Rosedale. He preached at the three churches. I could even hear how the word got around from one to the other. This minister, Odgen, was a very fine preacher, a very fine man, had a lovely young wife. We could always hear what was coming from some big event he was discussing, an issue. I can remember this once, a Saturday night, they had these young people dancing and he got up the next morning and preached about it. I don’t remember what happened except he did preach and kind of reprimanded people for not letting dancing take place and Aunt Edith and Mom got so that they were good people and their husbands and they danced. He made a speech and I don’t remember any problem about it. It just petered out.

But there was a problem in the local community, the pool hall. That’s where people went and played pool. There was a barber shop and they sold tobacco. Apparently people were drinking and got arrested one time for having liquor on the premises and sent off to jail for a month or so. In any case, there was this pool hall, drinking, and people used to play cards. I got in because I had a paper route and I would take the paper in, so I saw what was going on. I remember it so well. When I was teaching up in Fernie, I just put two rules on the kids. Two rules—don’t go to the pool hall, and second, be back on time. We never had any problems. That was a carry over, this attitude towards the pool hall.

In any case, church had this ceremony. I went along to Sunday school and then I decided that I really didn’t like going to Sunday school so I decided that I had to do something. I decided to go to the church in the evening. I went to church, I went
regularly and I was not as great(?) as my father because he didn’t go regularly, just once in a while, Christmas. So he decided to come to church, too. And we sat together and he went every Sunday to church, too. We would sit together. When I stopped going there, I got out of high school and off to work, he stopped going, too.
Community Activities

At the end of tape two, I was talking about going out and playing basketball and staying in the community hall for dances and people going for supper about midnight, and after that we would dance on until 3 or 4 o’clock in the morning before we got home, time at least for the farmers to get home and then they would just go out and milk the cows. Then go to bed. It being Sunday, they could rest and go back to bed, I guess, rest. Most people in those days worked every day or some people worked six days a week, like Dad, worked on the railroad six days a week and, finally, I remember they cut him back to five and a half days. But during this time, this was the Depression, and a lot of people didn’t have jobs at all. And so people weren’t objecting on the railroad because they got paid by the hour and at least they had jobs.

There were other sports as well, baseball in fact. Prior to the time I was actually playing, Rosedale had quite a famous baseball team--this was a little beyond sandlot stuff. Prior to my time, they did have uniforms and most everybody could play. You needed nine for a team. Some were a little better than others, but not a lot. I remember I played shortstop, er… second base. I wasn’t that hot, certainly not as a batter, but I do remember one time somebody hit a ball and I went after it like mad. I jumped way up into the air and caught it and it was, as we used to say, both people in the audience, in the stands, applauded. There weren’t any stands, ‘course you just sat on the benches, but we didn’t have any coach or manager. This fella that was there that day, he was directing…he knew a lot about baseball; he said, “Well, that was very fine, Alex. But you didn’t need to make it look so good.” I remember that I didn’t know quite what to think about it, but in any case, there was that, and baseball, which we played. Soccer was really quite a sport and we called it “football” and I wasn’t a very good player. One thing, I was fairly small for my age and wasn’t too good, but even apart from that, I was doing…not a great soccer player, but everybody played and we had a great time and we used to play other teams. Well, no organized league, but we certainly went around and played.
**Trains**

One of the great things in Rosedale at that time, in all of the small towns of that day, the importance of trains. A train had only gone through Rosedale many years before, but I remember Uncle Will was one of the first station masters back there; it was the early 1920’s. In any case, the trains...well, there were very few tracks. In fact, one we used to call the "milk train” came along and stopped at many of the farmer’s places. Many farmers had property adjoining the railroad and they would pick up cans with the milk and then the train went down to Vancouver and they took the milk with them, of course. They did other things. They used to bring cans down to Vancouver, empty, and bring the cans back, and the next morning they’d replace the cans that they took off with the milk, with the other cans. Things happened very rapidly the time I was...we were there. And trucks started to replace and within a few years the milk was all picked up by truck and hauled not as far as Vancouver, but somewhere near Chilliwack.

In any case, the milk train went down in the morning and came back in the evening. And, especially in the summer, this was a great occasion when the train came through at night. We used to go down and wait for the train to come through. It brought everything into town. Bread came in a basket and they’d take it off the train and Uncle Will would be at the station. People would go and help themselves to the bread and leave a note and grocery person, Archibald, would put it on their bill. This was fresh bread, except one day late when it got to the store.

They used to dance around at the station. I remember the girls used to do the Charleston. They had gotten into short skirts and would dance on the platform, kick up their heels and their legs, and it was quite an evening. And they would sing and joke and, of course, the fellas came, too, and they were down there and it was really quite an event when the train came through. But gradually, that was replaced. Dad, after working for McNair and Graham, got a job working on the section gang in Rosedale. And just about the time he got the job, the Depression came and he didn’t have enough seniority to keep a job because people weren’t leaving their jobs and people would come back because railroad was one of the places they could work. There in the section, the
tool house it was called, where they kept the hand car and stuff, was right near the station. I used to go down and meet him and walk home with him at 5pm.

[One of the] the great choice of railroad was that you got passes. And I remember one year in the early thirties, we picked a lot of fruit and would take them down. We had cherries on our lot and would take them on consignment. And Uncle Will shipped them all off on consignment and kept the money. And we were able to get enough together to...I guess for us to go down and visit in the east and that was a big event and we needed the money for the sleeping cars because it took a couple of days to get down there. So we left and went down there and I remember we went to Buffalo, got off at Toronto, took the train down to Buffalo and there we were met by some of Mom’s sisters, Aunt Bertie, Aunt Ethel and Aunt Nora. There were three of them there, met them and they gave us a wonderful time in the summer, went all around in Buffalo. I remember one night Aunt Nora got Jean in a long dress and we went out with her son, Wilbur, and his wife and they took us out. We went to a dance and that was quite a dance. They were called “night clubs.” I don’t know if people drank there or not; it was Prohibition in the United States. So I guess there were some awful hard drinking probably, I didn’t know enough about it, that’s what I heard. I do remember being in Rosedale and people used to come across the border from the United States, especially to go to Harrison Hot Springs which is a rather elegant place. And used to go there and have big weekend parties. The ferry used to go right by our place in Rosedale. The ferry went across the river to Agassiz and it wasn’t far from Agassiz to Harrison Hot Springs. We used to go over there, too. They had a pool where you could swim in the mineral water and it was very hot.

We, in any case, life of the railroad was very exciting in those days and I can recall that people used to watch for new engines on the trains and while that wasn’t very often, it certainly was a big thing to go down and see the new and powerful engines that went through and the new passenger cars. People would look at the new railroad cars just the same way as people look at cars, although there was not as many as there are these days.
Paper Route

It was during that time, too, that I was able to get a paper route and that was a very big thing. It was one of the few things...only one other boy had a paper route. We made a few dollars taking them around. I remember I got the bicycle. I bought the bicycle, I don't remember from who, but I bought the bicycle and got the paper route at the same time. I remember the bike had a broken...part of the frame was broken. It was wired up with haywire which was the standard piece of material for fixing everything in those days. I drove this bike for five or six years, well, five years. I never did buy a new one. People thought I should use my money to buy a new bike, but I had no great desire to have a new bike. I just needed it to run it--I had to go about ten miles to deliver twenty papers. I did it in the rain and the storm and whatever else. There was papers Saturday but no Sunday papers, so I had one day off but other than that, I used to ride it. I had about twenty customers and delivered them thirty days, well, twenty-five days or twenty-six, about five-hundred and fifty papers. And I had to pay a dollar ten a hundred so they'd pay me $5.50 and I...if I collected all the money from the customers at fifty cents each, that was ten dollars, so I really had about $4.50. I used to buy one or two extra because the woman in one of the stores would help me and she'd sell them for a nickel. And sometimes people in cars would stop and buy a paper from me. And also I used to take it home to read at home and it saved Mom and Dad from buying the paper--although he preferred the Vancouver Province. I delivered for the Vancouver Sun. In any case, this was money for me and it was quite a bit and all that to keep the bicycle going which, once it broke, was quite expensive to get a new tire.

In any case, at a minimum I brought in enough to pay the bus fare to get to high school because Uncle Wallace did it, although for a couple of months I had $3.50 because the twenty-five dollars didn’t cover it all for the whole year, but I had money for clothes and I had to pay money for shirt things in school and go out to a dance once in a while for twenty-five cents. I got along quite comfortably, as a matter of fact. It was a very good thing and it gave me cash and it was more than most of the kids in the
community, although, many of the parents had money and gave their kids money. And I guess I could have gotten some from Mom and Dad if I didn’t have, well, they had to give money to Jean, of course. With the money they were making, they couldn’t give me five dollars a month to do things that I needed to do.

We also had an opportunity to pick fruit. We used to get paid by the basket of strawberries or a crate of strawberries, or fruit. A lot of the people did it; it was big business. We used to pick cherries. There were big cherry trees and would send them off on consignment. This worked very well because they did send checks back. And it was a lot of kids picked fruit and made some money, certainly not big money by any means, but I had the paper route which was a big thing beyond that and I fairly enjoyed that. And as I said, I had to go ten miles in the rain and it would freeze and I didn’t have any gloves or mittens. It was really very cold. I didn’t look forward to it. I used to get up in the morning, go down, catch the bus, then I had to go to Chilliwack, get home and then I’d have to go out and do the paper route as soon as I got home. It took me quite awhile because when I got home I’d have to bring wood into the house because we had a stove; it sure did burn wood. I put a pile by the stove and in the winter I had to put two piles, frequently had to do more of it at night. Of course, Mom and Dad filled in for me a bit, too, so it was a great day and then I’d get home and I had practice and go to bed at 8 o’clock every night. I was really tired with all these activities every day.

**School Days**

I spoke about having to wait for the bus for grade eight and the next step was to go to high school and if you were able to do so, you had to go on a private bus for seven miles into the city of Chilliwack which had a population of maybe 2000, but it was a very fine school that we went to. We had to go by bus and it cost three dollars and fifty cents each. It was...you had to pay privately. Uncle Wallace sent Jean and I each a check for twenty-five dollars to pay the bus fare for the ten months. We took the money in...the principal had known Uncle Wallace and we gave him the check to pay in
advance. It was a good idea to give them all the money because maybe we would have spent it and not had enough for the bus. It wasn’t quite enough but I remember the paper route, the additional, I guess there were two months, that didn’t cover.

Chilliwack was a very fine school that was somewhat elitist because all the girls were called...Miss Charters and I was Charters. I never did get to know the first name of many of the girls I went through high school with, but in any case, we went in there, it was a fine group of teachers and was noted for being an excellent school. We could take two options. One was junior matriculation which is grade twelve; that enabled you to go onto university. And then there was the normal entrance which simply meant entrance to normal school where they took people out of high school after they finished and gave them one year of training and that enabled them to go out and teach, primarily elementary schools. In any case, I was going through on the junior “matric” program and someone decided that I should do both, and that was fine with me. But one of the things I had to do was pick up an art course and they decided that I should stay and do that after school. The teacher had to give a special class. Her name was Jena McNee and she was really a very fine person but wasn’t that enthusiastic about spending time after school, so I used to go into her room. Sometimes she gave me an assignment. I don’t remember learning anything in that art class except that it was probably a good idea to take both entrances. Obviously turned out I didn’t need them but it didn’t...I thought about it later on. In many things when you’re given an option, and you’re not quite sure, it’s better to just take more than one because you don’t know what’s going to happen.

In any case, we went in by bus every day to the school. We took a lunch with us and we ate it at the school. A lot of people in Chilliwack could walk home from the high school. There weren’t that many being bused because there wasn’t money to do it. But we did. I remember for a while they started to think we ought to have something hot for lunch so they had somebody come in and make soup. Of course, there were lots of vegetables and stuff around even though it was in the Depression; there was lots of food, vegetables, and milk because it was a rich farming community. But not everybody
had it. Some people were hungry for it who didn’t have farms and weren’t able to race cartons(?). But in any case, they set that up and they charged a penny for a cup of hot soup. I never figured out what happened if somebody couldn’t pay the penny. Of course my sister and I were able to pay and most of the people did it, but a number of people didn’t have soup and I was never quite sure if they didn’t have the penny to pay for it or didn’t want to do it. But we, some of us, there was, oh, wait a minute, it was the janitor in the school had had a son who won the Victory Cross, which was the highest honor in the British Empire. Of course we used to go down there. It seemed the kind of group where you had to kind of be invited in or something but I remember we used to go down there and after a while I was in and met with him and he was a great old philosopher and he explained a lot of things about our behavior and what we should do in school and this sort of thing. And he was really a fine guy and sometimes I’d go in and eat lunch in there. Later on when the new principal came, he refused people to go into the furnace room to do it. I always thought that was such a great tragedy. He just didn’t understand what was going on in there. In any case, one of those things that I thought, that when things are going right, it’s better to leave that alone even though it might not appear that way to the person in charge.

We took the bus in and the bus was kind of fun ‘cause we’d get out in the morning and we were going to school with nothing to worry about for the rest of the day except school, until the afternoon at three when we got out. We rode the bus and had quite a hilarious time. Every once in a while the bus driver, Mr. Cunningham, would stop the bus saying if we didn’t behave, we’d get out and walk. There wasn’t anybody getting out and walking but it was just a possibility and I guess it kept law and order on the bus.

We sometimes asked kids who were walking because they couldn’t afford to take the bus and I remember every once in a while the bus driver, in a particularly heavy rain which was frequently, he would stop and pick up one of these. Even though these kids got a free ride, it was another matter. Nobody ever objected to it.
I recall also...business manager of the school paper called the Tattler. I was elected to be on the debate team. I was elected secretary of the student council and the president was a girl, and that didn’t seem at all unusual. Girls were secretaries but nobody told us we were upsetting the rules and we had a great council. Lorna was a great president. She was one person I didn’t have to call Miss Pearson; I did know her name.

I spoke earlier about baseball. Chilliwack there was a fellow came in to take over a shoe store. (End of tape)

**The Nickel or the Egg**

It came down and just about clobbered me, missed me, but only a couple of feet from me before I saw it. I didn’t catch it but I remember that experience of playing under the lights in those days. That was a pretty innovative thing as a matter of fact. A man had a great job getting it going and it worked. Chilliwack was also the place for the state fair. But not the state fair, the, I don’t know, it’s just called the fair. Mostly animals, and highly geared to agriculture. People took their animals. I remember one year I worked for Mr. McKelver. He said he’d give me a nickel if I worked all morning, I guess I was in high school, in his chicken place there. I got home and I told Dad, oh, he said to me, “I'll give you the nickel, or I’ll give you an egg and I’ll hatch it and give you the chicken.” So I talked with Dad and he said, “You'll have the nickel, but if you have the chicken, you might have quite a bit more.” I went through with this and I got a Rhode Island Rooster. I got it out of the shell, of course. This Rhode Island Red rooster grew, I don’t know, it was growing forever. I took this rooster to the fair. I started out with one egg in the shell, ended up taking him to the fair. I won second prize in the contest for Rhode Island Red Roosters. I felt very good about that. I always thought it sure pays to think ahead. That idea of having a nickel and it may be quite a lot more. Though, I don’t know that I ever got anything more with the rooster. In any case, I had it and had the honor of getting a prize. Indeed it was a prize in that area. It was a rich agricultural area. I remember one time there was a chicken setting
a world record for consecutive days it laid an egg. This was over at Agassiz, a few miles away, across the river. It got to be such a world event that the Vancouver paper even put it on the front page that it laid another egg; said it set some kind of world record for consecutive egg laying.
Recollections Post-High School

Well, then I got through at Chilliwack. It was time to think of what to do after high school. There was a good deal of talk about me going to university. Really not a lot of talking about it, just Uncle Wallace agreed to give a hundred and fifty dollars. Tuition was fifty so that left a little extra money. I had to get a pass down, that was transportation. Mom and Dad paid room and board for me. So when I finished high school I was also getting some money. Dad said for me to go up an extra day at Blue River. The whole crew said we’ll put him on in the summer when the weather is better to do construction. And in this case, they up at Blue River, they were putting in heavier steel in staking up the rails, carried bigger loads, more speed. Got me a pass and up I went. Mom had given a blanket before I left to take. It was up in the mountains, up the Rockies, and uh, he told me to go see Perkins, the big boss; there were a lot of straw bosses, of course. It was quite a big crew of guys, a hundred or more, and so I went over and spoke to him when I got up there. All the equipment was around, the sleeper cars, the cook car and everything, they were ready to start, a day or so. I went over and spoke, he took a look at me and I told him who I was and he said, “Walk over and you can start eating in the cook car.” Well, that didn’t mean much to me except that I was going to get something to eat. Also, it meant that if they sent you over to the cook car to eat, you were going to get a job because they weren’t going to feed you for nothing and so, but I didn’t know that. So anyway, I went up there and that was the end of that conversation, went to the cook car and also went into the bunk car where there were places for people to sleep. There were two or three high, but it [was] just boxcars fixed up. They didn’t do anymore than that and they were all wooden, let me see, well anyway, they were there so I got to put my blanket on one, I guess that’s mine. That’s all I had was a woolen blanket. It was very hot so it wasn’t a problem keeping warm. So that was pretty well because I was wondering if I was really going to get a job.
The next day I was, they were out there, hundreds of men came around, jobs were very, very scarce; we were in the Depression, they just came up there in the hopes of getting appointed. Jack Perkins went around and looked them over. I guess he knew some from years before, but in any case, he picked out what he wanted. The rest, he let them go. He didn’t say anything to me, so I went up to him and he said, “Yes, you go to the cook car. This work’s too heavy for you outside.” So with that, I went over to the cook car and met the cook, Jack, who was a good guy. He ran a tight ship, I’ll tell you. And he said that was fine with him and we got along and he immediately had me do some things from the wash.

He called me over, he was making pie. He said, “Do you understand what I’m doing?” I said, “I can see it, but I don’t know much about it.” And the next day he called me over again and rolled a couple out and said, “You roll out some more pies, a few of ‘em.” He put something in ‘em. He even cooked them all together, twenty or thirty pies. He said, “Go make the pies.” And I had to go make these pies, thirty or so. And I had to do that most days from then on with some supervision, but I’m not sure how good they were. The food wasn’t exactly gourmet but it was edible. So I did...

...then, I think it was the next day, he said that the, there was a pot on the stove, the size, maybe 18 inches across, and it was full of cooked beans, peas, and he said, “Strain those peas,” so I had a heck of a job handling that. I couldn’t handle it myself, I had to get one of the guys that served the table and did the dishes to help me lift it down, but it wasn’t their job, but I got it all strained and got it all straight and I was so proud of myself. He came over to me and said, “Do a broth for those peas,” and I said “Oh, God, I just strained all the peas and I threw out all the juice and now you want me to throw out the peas?” He said, “What did you do to with that juice? That was the pea soup for a hundred guys for the day!” So no pea soup that day. But he was a good natured guy. He didn’t goad me too much. I was trying to do what he wanted to do and he’d do it and, in any case, that was the end of the soup day. Another thing we pulled in one day, somebody... anyway .... (Too garbled to understand)
I got paid by the hour and I found out that... I worked 14 hours a day. I didn't have another job so I was glad to have it, but it was long hours. I sure worked long hours but... so the morning or any other time, but I worked the long hours and tried to get along with the cook, Jack. We did very well. We didn’t like the second cook; he used to assign me jobs that the second cook was supposed to be doing. I didn’t do a very good job of it. He would come over and show me what to do. I tried to do what he told me. I think I did pretty well. He seemed happy with me.... (Unclear words)

Another time we decided to have pancakes on a Sunday morning and we moved the train along from one siding to another and we moved in the night, turned the engine off. We got in the cook car about seven in the morning and said to start to make pancakes. Well, pancake stuff all over the place, we were stirring up, stirring up pancake batter and stuff and we were cooking them on the stove, a fire on the stove, we got flipping them up and we don’t know how to flip them up. We cooked hundreds of them that morning. I’ll never forget—pancakes all over the place. He was in a good mood and so were all of the rest of the guys, even the guys eating. They got some pretty good tasting pancakes. As I said, it wasn’t exactly gourmet but it was edible, I guess.

He used to spin a few stories, the cook did, very well. One night we went up to.... (Couldn’t understand)

In any case, pool hall, beer parlor, I remember watching this. One guy got the waiter over, paid him and told him what to do. He was pointing to the boss and, “Waiter get the beer. Take it over to the boss.” The waiter would point to the fella that had bought him the beer. So that was done. The transaction was complete. This was the way to do business. It certainly is in many of the things that I experienced later on; there is always the boss. I don’t know whether I spoke about the fact, the cook made it clear that we were to have on the stove pot a very strong tea for Jack Perkins for whenever he dropped in. I don’t remember him dropping in; the point is, there’s always a boss people; need to do what the boss says or suffer the consequences. I’ll always remember that—protecting that pot of hot tea for the boss and that’s okay. I remember
Jack, whenever he talked about the pancake. When there’s a new person on the block they always kid about various jobs and that was true. They were kind of making fun of me, although, we were having a good time flipping these pancakes around. And that was true most every where you went. On the jobs I had at camps, they were always playing games up there, too. I remember I was spark chaser up there. They wanted me to climb the tree that was at the back region. These trees were six, eight feet across. You had to put spikes on me and a line which went around the tree and you pulled in the line as you went up and lowered or loosened it as you came down. This was fine, the guy went up the tree next to me and said, “Throw me over your line,” so he threw it over to the rope that was dangling which was the one I had to raise and lower to get up and down the tree. So I threw it over to him, he took his ax and drove it into the tree. So in effect, he left me up in the tree. Nothing I could do about it. They all had a good laugh and he went up, took the ax out, and of course I was able to go up and down, and mostly down, I might add. Fun and games that people play, people have to relieve themselves from time to time. So it was pretty clearly me, the new guy on the block.

I remember they did the same thing when I was in the Navy. One of the things that they particularly make fun about was the fact I get seasick and they were always kidding, “Wait ‘til you get to sea. You’ll see what it’s all about.” Well, as it happened, we did go to sea. I never got seasick; I never did. It was just amazing but they were all having all the fun. In any case, we did go to sea and it was certainly a normal thing to get sick and everybody expected everybody to get sick in the Navy and once you did get sick, there was never much fun made of it. People knew what it was like to be sick, they were just anticipating to make a little fun before we went out to sea. I know someone who got sick every time we went out to sea. But I was fortunate, I never did. Enough of that, I got through it.

I got a letter from Mom and Dad saying I wanted to go to college so I wanted to get back down, so I did. I got back down and I had all my checks. They weren’t cashed, which was probably a lot of money in those days. It was a lot of money,
seventy-eight dollars, and I remember I got down and hadn’t cashed it, as I mentioned. Dad always said, “Do you need a little money?” And I had given him the checks and cash ’em and do whatever you need to do. So I got back down and went in to buy some clothes for college and I got those. Of course, I went to UBC. (End of Tape)
University of British Columbia (UBC)

As I mentioned before, I was pretty well set to go to UBC. We had the railroad pass, of course, to get down there. As I looked forward to it...I had only been there twice before, once when the principal, Etter, took us to the famous Saturday night lecture series where people came in from all over, well, I presume mostly Vancouver, but people came from Chilliwack and he took a couple of us with him down there. I was impressed with the level of the discussion. Of course being a high school kid, I didn’t know much more, and I had gone to these lectures. The only ones I had been to before, I recall, was with Dad, and especially on a Sunday afternoon there used to be discussions. And I went to this one which was a much bigger scale and higher level and I was much impressed with it, I must say. I was grateful that Etter would take two or three high school students down to Vancouver. It was a couple of hours drive and we went down on a Saturday and came back that evening and it was late and he took us out to our homes. The only other time I went down, it was in the spring when I went to see the university, but particularly to see C.B. Wood, who was, Uncle Wallace had known him, and I approached C.B. Wood, and during all this time he was a great guy and during this period, a very kind and a very fine mentor and a very fine person. He used to take me out to the symphonies and out to dinner once in a while and sometimes he would take me over to his home. He always had a student live with him and C.B. wasn’t married and he would have this student which, I don’t suppose he paid anything, but he was helping him.

In any case, that was my only experience. So I got on the train and down I went, got off the train and I was to take the streetcar out and my trunk had been at the station. Of course, in those days they used to deliver the trunks to wherever you were going. Anyway, I did get on this streetcar and everything is going fine except I got to the end of the line--they said it was the end of the line; the streetcar was going in both directions and I got on the one going the wrong way and I don’t know where I ended up, so I had to go back and transfer and turn back and go the other way. It cost me
another seven cents because fare was seven cents, which was a fair amount of money but I didn’t have a choice. The money from Mom and Dad, they paid it for one month and the money from Uncle Wallace hadn’t arrived yet...but I had some money that I had leftover from working so I wasn’t desperate at the thought of seven cents. Uncle Wallace hadn’t sent the check. I had to send him a telegram saying I couldn’t register. He sent back the check immediately for a hundred and fifty dollars plus five dollars, which I guess was his way of paying for the telegram I had sent, of course. In any case, I ended up, finally, at the end of the streetcar, West Point Gray, and I went to the residence which was nearby. I just walked over and then it was a very pleasant place and I tried to get there and the next day I went out and registered and did all the things.

This was the beginning of an orientation session and there wasn’t orientation as we have it now. I don’t remember anyone saying anything at all except that I remember the girls put placards on their backs with their phone numbers and that was the chief thing. There was a night or two later, there was a snack parade which went downtown into the city and everybody held hands and just went around and tied up all the traffic and everything else. It stopped the streetcars and nobody could get through. No great damage, it was peaceful as I recall. But in any case, we did do that.

And there wasn’t much other orientation. We just registered and we went to class. Had to buy books of course, a sizeable number. So I finally got started. I had not been a good student in high school and when I started off in college, I wasn’t much better. And years later I really didn’t know how to study; nobody told me how to study. It was really a shame that nobody had explained that to me but I guess that was just part of life. You went on your own, nobody to help you in that respect. I did all the assignments for the term but the examinations were given at the end of the year, which was May, and your future depended on it. They were given in each of the subjects. There were five subjects and we went through that and English 1A, Economics 1, Physics 1, Math 1 and well, one other...oh, French 1. That was the courses. Well, we didn’t have any exams but there was a great fear that they would give us some tests.
and things. They did award a famous degree which was BAC, “Bounce at Christmas.” They kicked out a number of students at that time. They weren’t making the grade, I guess, I don’t know. Certainly made the rest of us kind of scared, certainly I was scared. But I survived that all right and things went along as far as the classes. I enjoyed them; they were very inspiring and very senior faculty, and I certainly remember Angus; he was chairman of the economics department. He taught economics. He came into this room which was sort of slanted down and the teacher was at the bottom, except he made a point of walking around all up and down the stairs for the whole class and kept on talking, and it was really kind of fascinating, very knowledgeable fellow. I was much impressed with him. And then we had physics with Thrum, who later went on to be one of the great people of Canada. And he was a physicist and was also the head of the COTC and a real powerhouse of a man about campus.

The English taught was by Sedgwick, who was a single man who really put on quite a show, very knowledgeable. His special field, apparently, was Shakespeare and he wrote a Shakespeare... something... an article on Shakespeare, and he was quite famous. And he taught that and mathematics taught by Gage, who later became the president of the university. Brilliant guy and very interesting, lots of fun in his class, and he wasn’t married either and, in any case, that was Gage. Oh, French was with...I forget her name but she much impressed us all the time with her experiences; she was very interesting, knew a lot about the subject. So that’s the makeup of a really, a very exciting time.

The professors had a habit of visiting, of having the students visiting their home, and as I recall, most of the professors had the students in once a year. Of course, the courses weren’t the whole year. It was very fun; later on they had hors d’oeuvre and coffee. It was very social, certainly a chance to meet them better. It was just a delightful experience.
There wasn’t much doing in the, in terms of organized activities for us, and one of the first things I did was I attended West Point Grey United Church and immediately got involved in the young people’s group, in which I think I was chairman. I’m not sure what I was doing. I had a pretty good time at the church with the young people’s group and, in fact, I decided to join the church there. I didn’t ever join the church when I was at Rosedale, but I did go and join there and it was a very fine experience and kept my membership there in the church. In the university, we had to go to churches outside, and I went there. There was very fine ministers, went there Sunday evenings.

I meant to say as far as the rule was concerned, there were no dormitories at the university and everybody had to go get rooms where they could, and it was right in midst of the Great Depression and lots of folks worked and took in students to pay for the expenses, and that’s what I did. There were no rules. There was only one rule about residences, as I recall, and that is the girls and the boys could not room in the same house. Other than that, rules as far as hours or anything else was concerned, we were just on our own. I remember there wasn’t many difficulties with it.

We took a lunch to the university and we could go in the cafeteria and sit there and eat our lunches and that’s what I did most of the time. There was a commons room in most of the buildings so some of the times I’d eat in the commons room. In terms of a beverage, we’d go to the cafeteria and get coffee. It was a very simple life as far as food was concerned. During all this time, of course, I had a pass and could go home, which I did fairly frequently but not too often. I went home twice before for Christmas and we had a Christmas break for quite a long time and I… (Didn’t finish this thought)

It was fairly obvious to me, and I think fairly obvious to a lot of people, that I come from a small town and the idea of a farm, well, we didn’t have a farm, but was very much like farming and highly related to it; what we did was very much like the farmers. I was fortunate however; my father had a bit better education than most people. He had gone through high school and that’s more than many people in
Rosedale. In fact, there weren’t very many other than the teachers and the ministers who had actually gone through high school at the time I was there. There were a few who went on to university and…but I never had much contact with them or life about the university.

Mom and Dad had, as I had previously mentioned, while they lived in Drumheller, were in association with the Lodge Masons and other things. Lived a rather sophisticated ....what always impressed me was how they had tails and nice long dresses and so, in that sense, we were, I was a little above the other people because others in Rosedale, I could be wrong, I don’t think went to the Sumenac Lodge, but there were quite a few that were a member of the Orange Lodge, which was, in that part of the world, pretty much a sign and the Catholics, the meetings of the people were not of the same level as the Masonic Order. In any case, I was from this area and, as I say, my father and mother seemed to have...but in that same community there were remittance people, that is, people who came home from Britain. I think a lot of them, after World War II, a lot of them were brought over by families who people thought was a little less...weren’t quite the style of the families of which they came, and that they wanted to come over and they sent the money regularly and these people, when they got there, had expressed that they were often very rich and had fine country homes, and maybe they did, but they came over and it was very clear they were from the old country, which was Great Britain. They seemed to be much more advanced in music and in general and other things--culture, arts. They sort of made this the kind of way they entertained, some formal things, like they had afternoon tea. Most of them also went to the Episcopal Church, which people thought was one stage up from the United Church.

But in any case, I was down in Vancouver and I was there and it wasn’t soon after I got there...I had spoken about joining the church, but there was also an organization called the Student Christian Movement which was [a] very big, influential group on campus and they frequently had get-togethers in some of the better homes, the Shaunnessy Heights, where these people had us over and fed us dinner and
afternoon tea, for some. So it was through that I did get contact with a lot of nicer homes and some of the people, and I appreciated that. They, and then as I mentioned before, the professors frequently had a party or a get-together in their home once a year and they were very fine. These were fine homes out in Point Grey and in the university and Valmouth area, which was the university endowment area; was areas set aside and they could sell off a lot of lots, quite of the expensive and many went to the university endowment that, these were lovely homes and they were right in the area all around where the university was, and these were good homes. Sometimes we had the opportunity to go there and visit with the people. You have to remember this was in the midst of the Depression. And those that had something left were very fortunate, indeed, and seemed to be willing to share this with other people. In fact, a lot of students at the university were not highly involved in the Depression, in the fact that as I visited in their homes with some of my friends there, really very, very fine homes and they had cars and some of the students who went to the university had cars, too. They drove by Tenth Avenue where buses left to go to the university. Those of us in the area would be gathered there to take the buses, the shuttle bus, to the university. It cost us three cents each way and sometimes these people who were driving by had room for two or three or four people in their car; they were very generous in stopping and picking us up. It was nice to ride in the car out there and, also, to save three cents. But the people themselves at the university, the students, I never felt sensitive about not belonging to, or not coming from, better schools, and private schools, and schools in Vancouver. There certainly was no reflection from them and I always thought this was very fine of them. As we went along in college we became much more similar and so we didn’t have any particular stigma attached to us.

Now speaking about the SCM, that’s the Student Christian Movement. It was a nationwide organization at universities across Canada and it was a Protestant. Any other groups, I don’t know, but certainly there weren’t any Catholics and this, I really enjoyed the activities of that group. There were discussion groups and had agendas of various kinds to do things and, as I mentioned, sometimes we went out and had a good time with the students at teas and some of the other things in their homes. I do
remember that in learning college there was plans for students, an all Canada student conference of representatives of all the universities and this, in our institution, was pulled together by the SCM and there was an equivalent body of work with the Roman Catholics and while I was in college I...they had this conference in Winnipeg at Christmas and this was...and I was designated as one of the representatives of UBC. This was the first time that the Catholic and Protestant students had ever gotten together, something like this of student venture in Winnipeg. And a lot of students were highly sensitive to the difference of which colleges they came from. There were people who were Catholic, or it was quite evident at the meeting that there were certain differences, but we got together and by the time we got through, it was really quite a friendly social thing and I guess that’s what the purpose of it was. I do remember when I was in Winnipeg, going off somewhere, I walked downtown and quite a few prayers. This was the Christmas break. Christmas at the height of winter, in Winnipeg, and I remember I was walking across the street when the sole came off one of my shoes and this was a tragic thing back when my foot was cold. I had to go and get another pair and I didn’t have much money, obviously. We had some of our expenses paid by SCM for room and board but there were other expenses and mine was paid through railroad fare. Dad got me a pass on the railroad so there weren’t a lot of other pocket expenses, but I didn’t have a lot with me. I remember this shoe created a rather major problem, having to go buy there and it would cost me two or three dollars for a pair of shoes, but in a way I was able to get around this. I remember this conference with the SCM and it was a very big. Although, I never particularly felt that I was one of the leaders. But I certainly was accepted.

I was mentioning that before I went to university, there was a very good feel about the teams at UBC because they were often very good athletes and they played a lot of sports and they played not in the university league but to much inter-collegial contests. Although, once or twice a year people would come in somewhere in Canada and play and some other sports and there was also very active girls’ teams. So, in any case, when I went down to university, I thought I would go out for basketball. I noticed something somewhere there was going to be something in the gymnasium so I went
over to the gym. We were just a bunch of people moving around. There wasn’t anybody that I could see that was in charge, but I noticed quickly that some of these boys from the high school in Vancouver, they of course knew each other from that, and they came out and played and teams just started trying to organize themselves.

There was nobody to talk to about anything so I went once or twice and dropped out but I did surely get the idea, not the first year, but the second year, to crew and so I did. I went down to the shell. They had a shell at the Vancouver Yacht Club at Discovery Bay. So I went down there and they were cordial. They said, “Sure, come on out.” I didn’t know anything about crew of course, but they were very willing to help me and I went fairly regularly. I worked with a big person that was sort of associated with crew. Although in those days they were not particularly big fellows, as I recall. This guy must have felt particularly out of place. So I went down and it turned out to [be] twice a week, or something like that. Took the streetcar all the way down. I was feeling very well and we got all set to have a race and I was crewing one of the boats. They had the event on Saturday and I was all set to do it and, by the way, we did have a coach. He was very well organized and very fine and he encouraged a few people to come in. I had worked hard in the summer; I was in fairly good physical shape so I could pull the oar in without much difficulty, so it was this great time around crew. We were all set for this event on Saturday, and the day before, I was diagnosed with the measles. So I was out for a while with these measles. I thought I lost out and had to go back to…but I did hear something later on. Somebody told me about the manager of the sport and I saw somebody who was the manager of basketball and they sort of indicated that others could come out, and so I went out. The job, primarily as I could see it, was to sell tickets in the gym to the basketball game and I got used to that and then I...there were a lot of other things and after that I did ask to be the senior manager. As far as the job was arranged, basketball worked with the city team in the league thing because the university represented the group meetings and I used to go to those. And, also, once a year, went on a trip down into the United States and I had to phone, not phone, but write ahead to set a time when we could play a team. And that I did. In any case, we got the trip arranged and went...we had to pay our own expenses
from the student council. They allocated a certain amount of money for sports and, I think, they paid for cars to drive, certain amount of money for hotels and meals. I don’t remember paying any kind of a serious amount of money. But I did enjoy going to that place. I never felt that I was of the same caliber at that place. But it was certainly accepted that I play. Later on after college, I never particularly followed up with the activity and I made a contribution to it because the alumni had to give money to buy sweaters for the people who had been awarded for those sports. But I enjoyed the experience as team manager. I had a lot of contact with the newspaper. One of the columnists was always calling me about the team and “was there anything that might be of interest.” I remember, probably at the end of the season, he called me up one day... (Couldn’t decipher words) ...down at the paper and he was now on salary and not by the amount that he wrote, so he wouldn’t need to bother me. I always thought he was a good guy.

But I was a part of the athletic program of the university.

Football games primarily, we used to go to, and a dance. That was quite a social event. We went to them. (Stopped on that thought)

**Interests and Extracurricular Activities**

I’d always had an interest in international relations. Uncle Wallace had sent me a magazine about international affairs. It seemed like it was more than I had time to read. I was also interested in travel to the United States which was, of course, a foreign country. In any case, somewhere or another I got interested in the international relations. I attended those meetings very regularly. Again it was a case of going to someone’s home for the meeting where they served refreshments of some kind and was large enough to hold a considerable number of people, and I enjoyed those. And I became president and, of course, that increased my commitment to the idea. We got a letter inviting us, inviting someone from the university to attend the conference in Moscow. There was great debate about this and debate about how we could raise
money to send someone and as we moved along, we realized it wasn’t Moscow in Russia, it was in Idaho. In any case, I was interested in going.

I did agree to go, went down to Moscow for a two or three day conference, and also while I was there, I visited the Beta House. Clearly an impressive conference with delegates from other, I think mostly all American institutions, I don’t know if there were other Canadian representatives there. But it was an interesting adventure. I remember going down again and didn’t have very much money—I had a twenty dollar bill—it was all I had and I was reluctant using it. I had a pass to go on the RR. I decided I wanted to buy a paper and I gave her the twenty dollar note and I got the paper and a nickel and got the rest, I got nineteen silver dollars. I carried those around and I got them back home and, gradually, spent all the money I had. But I sure wish I could keep it, but I was interested in international relations.

Sometimes faculty represented, or were represented or called the honorary president?. But there was usually one that was particularly active. I did not. When I first arrived on the campus, Les Barber had me over to visit the fraternity house, Phi Delta Beta, and I didn’t know the name at the time. It didn’t mean anything to me. He asked me something about joining. I didn’t have enough money but I declined my freshman year. The next year John Shaw introduced me to the SAP’s, Sigma Alpha Phi and kind of an enthusiastic group, I thought. Felt that I really understood, really got along with, that was one of the main criteria for joining a fraternity. You join with the people that you like today and you’re going to pledge with them and you’re going to be with them the rest of college life. I joined Sigma Alpha Phi and it wasn’t long after that that they talked about joining Beta Beta Pi. And when somebody in the fraternity heard, I guess it was Dr. Shrum, who was the head of promoting Sigma Alpha Phi to becoming a greater chapter, he got me the name of these fraternity houses, one in Monaco, Idaho; and one in Coleman, Washington and they were actually only about seven miles apart. Good institutions, one in each state. They invited me over. They were big places; it was known as the Beta Hotel. It was a monstrous place. And they had...and I was impressed [with] the activities they did and general behavior. So when I came back
to Vancouver I told them about my visits, which didn’t really have much to do with anything except I expressed to them enthusiasm and that there was people from other chapters visiting, so we finally got a call for chapter Beta Gamma Omaha, and I joined and thoroughly enjoyed it, very social and many activities, but I didn’t keep in very close touch after I graduated. I did years later. I’d gotten in touch with John Shaw and Keith Porter and we had gotten together after I got to Syracuse and we’d cheer. They’d come down to the football games and they brought their wives, matter of fact, the wives were all members of Alpha Gamma Delta, and we used to have a really fine time during the weekends....football games, university clubs and various other activities. That was a continued contact with the fraternity for a while, although I didn’t have enough contact with the chapters. There was an event scheduled for Toronto, and we’d arranged it so we went together again to go to ?. (This section I couldn’t decipher)

When a graduate of British Columbia, we went up and had a gala old time at the party and had a very fine weekend as well. Later on, I went back to the 50th anniversary of MBC. I’m not sure which hotel I was in but they had two big rooms, two ballrooms, and at that meeting fifty percent of all the living members of the active chapters came back. And then I was going to the meetings ?. Then I went back later on to the active...well, I was going to Vancouver for some meetings, ACAT, and I got in touch with two of the brothers who were responsible for raising funds for that and a new building.

(Large section I couldn’t decipher)

While I was still in college, I got a...for a long time this was a very happy and memorable occasion for me and also for Mom and Dad, who came down for the ceremony. It was a joyful event, not just for me, but them. (Unclear words)

In any case, later on I got the notice from Dad, the newspaper clipping from Dad about Frontier College, which was an organization that took college students out and sent them to other logging camps, mostly in the summer because that’s when college students are free. And they gave us a job and also we worked along, whatever this job
was, we did a day’s work and then in the evening on Saturdays and Sundays we would get certain structures in reading, arithmetic and perhaps other things. Actually, I got a job, was assigned a job... (Can't decipher0

And then in the evening they gave us...we would work with some of the people. I worked with a couple who wanted to know more about arithmetic because they sawed the logs and were paid by the amount of wood that was in that log, and so they had some interest in doing it. And they got enough to understand and talk with the guy that was measuring the logs how much they were getting and whether it was appropriate or not.

However long after, we got out after two weeks. They closed all these shops because of fire damage so I had to leave there and I, we, were located with another company. The company name was John Sturic and Welsh and we went up to Plankin River, the northern part of Vancouver Island, so it was an interesting experience with me to be up there. And one thing I remember was the excellence of the food. I guess they had men there who had a great deal of time there and the only thing they enjoyed was the food. They provided really excellently and we worked long hours, had to be up and out to the job on the mountain by 8 o’clock, so we’d have to get up really early to get dressed, get breakfast, and get our lunch together and go up there. We went up partly by the railroad and then hiked on up there on our own. I enjoyed the experience with Frontier College and I managed to keep in touch with them until this day, as it was a fine activity and introduced me to the ideas of literacy and adult education.

These people would have to work and at the same time study in the evenings and that was a typical pattern for most all of adult education. (End of tape)
A Few Random Recollections

I should mention that while I was active in the class of ’38 and went to all of the meetings and various get-togethers they had, they were always trying to develop some enthusiasm and I enjoyed it but was never elected to any office. Although at graduation I was elected to deliver a scientific representative, which was renamed that title I suppose, supposedly all of my life…but I didn’t have…but as the alumni group has grown, I wasn’t very active at all. I don’t think that position was kept among the class officers. I did run for some office; I forget which one it was now. But in any case, I didn’t get elected and didn’t really expect to but I gave it a good campaign try. John Shaw was my campaign manager but we didn’t quite make it and, um, things were kind of informal and I never did see the results of what happened because I…but I did win when I went back for teacher training and that year I did become the President of Teacher Training, Class of ’39. While I was going through this I realized that I didn’t have very employable qualifications. I decided to go back and take teacher training and I talked to ? and Uncle Wallace and the family. And so I did go back to teacher training but didn’t get a degree, but a certificate, while I went back for the year. I didn’t really find it very exciting and…but nonetheless, I found it very useful and did graduate. I remember going out and what we called “practice teaching” down at the three schools. The one was ? Junior High School which was the only junior high school, maybe the only one in the ?. But, I don’t know, but I went out there. ? made the assignments and said it was a very good school. Then went out to the school in the endowment lands which was directly responsible for the Department of Education through some sort of arrangement to deal with the government giving them the money to be getting the property to the university and selling it off and ? to the other school. This was rated one of the best schools in the country and enjoyed that experience.

Then I went over to North Vancouver where one of the unique things about that place, they had a school court where they presided, where the judge presided, and they ran a type of court where the decisions were binding, and it was an unusual experience.
I did go and participate in that teacher training, which was inspiring. One of the things that you’ll have to remember back then, as far as the possibility of war, [it] was really growing and it seemed like it was inevitable and everybody’s lives seemed to be reworked around, until finally...and then when I got a job up in Fernie teaching school, it was really the war teaching. Almost seemed like the wrong one. The Canadian Government had made a total commitment to it. The schools were responsible, for example, to grade some military training and it all began the cadet corps training and I was one of the fortunate ones. Was twice to summer school to get some experience, I don’t know, get some training in what I was supposed to be doing. And so that’s when I went to this cadet corps training and field range and went back again to ? in Alberta. We were sort of in a regular training program and not much of the cadets, except all that were there, were part of this. I have no idea how I was selected in the first place. What it was. But anyway, I went through two years of it and found it helpful and it helped me to get acclimatized to the war and all the time we were [in it]. It was all volunteers in those days, so I was volunteering. And the Air Force there had some feelings that the cadets of the school...and it was just as well that I stayed there for a while, and so I did stay with the school. That was the pressure to do something else so I went to Vancouver to teach in one of the schools. I taught in the elementary school and joined the COTC and later the Navy.

My last year at UBC was kind of full, occupied with the idea of war, um...the history escaped as a possible recruit for some aspects of the military, was rather glum. The whole country seemed to be in that stage—whether we would go to war or not. It was complicated by the fact that the French Canadians did not approve of conscription. They felt it was wrong to volunteer the Army for the ?. That sort of divided the country of those who were for the war and those who didn’t want any part of the fighting for the British Empire. But it was preoccupation to war and all about it. It was sad to leave. I would have stayed but felt it was... (Tape stops)
This is a continuation in a series of tapes that I had given to Kate to have transcribed. The reason that it was given [the title of] #7 is because I think that was the one that was omitted from the series. In any case, we'll call this 7A.

Graduate School: University of Chicago

I had ended where I was in the admissions office, where I was talking to the admissions officer at the University of Chicago. I finally received a letter from her and was, of course, grateful. And I then went back to International House where I had asked to get a place to stay when I came back. I was, this was in October I think, maybe a little later than that, and I was going back to Vancouver. The first thing that I did when I got back to Vancouver was go in to see the superintendent of schools, McCorkendale, who had encouraged me to go the University of Chicago. I told them that I had been admitted and that I wanted to go. He said, "Fine." He said, "You can go there tomorrow and teach at Lord Dawson School." He said it would be a way to make a little bit of money. And he said, also, that there is a vacancy there that we need [filled]. And I said, "Well, I'm still in the service." He said, "Well, go down and get yourself released, discharged this afternoon, and start there tomorrow morning." Well, I went down to the officers, were in the old hotel in Vancouver. So I went over there and, sure enough, they gave me some kind of release and I went down and started to teach at Dawson the next day. The experiences at Dawson was very pleasant but it was down in the inner city and there were a rough bunch of kids that I was working with and I didn't...they'd had a series of people doing the physical education for the boys. I forget what else I was doing there, but there was a number of classes where I had both the girls and the boys. They certainly tested me to the limits, but I survived alright. And I remember it was the last day of school before Christmas and I was going to go to Chicago right after Christmas so that I could be there to begin the term at the University of Chicago in January of '46. I remember on the last day we were all in the room and I told them I was leaving. I remember the girls gave me a present and said it was from
the girls, which I was very glad to get that, but very disappointed that the boys had not
done anything. I felt and prayed the Lord that they wouldn’t have excused themselves
and not done anything and was disappointed that they were not part of that gift. And
get out of school was before lunch and I was walking down to take the streetcar where
I was staying and I get down and at the corner the boys all appeared and gave me a
wallet and they said wouldn’t I please stay and continue to teach in January. And I felt
very humbled and gratified and, I guess I, in the period of about an hour, I don’t know
when I felt so low and when I felt so high.

In any case, I finished the term there and went off to the University of Chicago,
arrived just before Christmas at International House. Sandy had also got a room and
that we roomed together. We did very different schedules from one another and didn’t
spend a lot of time together other than in the room. In any case, that ended the time I
had for the...until the end of my military career. I did want to say that when I went
down to get released, the staff was very cordial and very helpful and similar to my
experience at Halifax when I went through the checkout for the medicals. They were
very cooperative and anxious to release people as soon as possible and also explain all
the benefits and things that we were entitled to. They gave me, certified me, for the
benefit that...but I did want to say that they were very cordial and had been trained to
facilitate the release of people in the service.

The Navy Experience

As we got ready, we got out and were loading up the car and getting into a
convoy just outside of Halifax and I can remember we spent all day getting into convoy
and sailing off and we’d never got out of sight of shore, which made me think it was
going to be a long trip over to England. I’m not exactly sure how long it did take but it
was quite a while because convoys move very slowly. In essence, they move at the
speed of the slowest ship. In any case, the trip was my first long voyage at sea and I
was rather intrigued with the whole thing. We went through some of the North Atlantic
Gales and although it wasn’t too bad at that time, there were lots of icebergs around
and all day we seemed to be maneuvering so that we wouldn’t hit the icebergs. But what struck me at nighttime when it was dark, we just kept going merrily on our way and some way or another we never seemed to hit any; although we did spot some and take course to avoid them. I got involved in the, some way or another as we were going across we got switched from Navy watches, which involves a dog watch, two dog watch, which were short ones but simply meant that you did not stand watch at the same time every day. However, as we moved to Merchant Marine watches, and I don’t know the reason for that, then we had fixed watches, and I had the one from twelve every night to four in the morning, and another one twelve noon to four o’clock. The problem was that with these watches we never got any more than four hours sleep because we’d get off watch at four in the morning then had a bit of a nap and had to have breakfast and the work of the ship was done in the morning and I had...I was involved with that and at noon I was back on watch, got off at four, had a bit of a nap and had dinner and slept a bit more and got on watch again at midnight. I was fortunate, however, to have from that, the midnight watch. I had a chance if it wasn’t too stormy to sit and observe the stars. And one of the times when I was in New York I visited the planetarium and I got a number of sky charts, sky maps, that gave some indication of the constellations and things and I got somewhat familiar with them on the way over to England.

We traveled along at the regular speed which was somewhat uneventful. Everyone was waiting for me to get sick, seasick, but fortunately I never did. But unfortunately, captain felt a little bit woozy at times. But in any case, we all survived and we went across the...we were never allowed to give the destination of the ship because, obviously, if people didn’t know it, [if] sailors didn’t know it and got picked up they obviously couldn’t tell. They seemed to think we were going to England, but people had these little pocket maps of the North Atlantic, which some of them were about two inches square, and every day they were plotting their way across the sea when we would get to England. In due time, we did spot Land’s End, a historic and traditional place to going across the Atlantic. We did that and went up to Liverpool. We landed in Liverpool and unloaded all our supplies and steel and whatever else we were
carrying. We pretty well stripped down. I was given a couple of days leave, as were all the others, and I went down to London for my first time and got acquainted with the blackouts; and there were three. Were mentioned in Halifax but they were not very strict at all and, in any case, I went down to London and thoroughly enjoyed seeing some of the places that I had never seen before but had heard of. Did that and went back up to Liverpool.

We got on the ship and sailed north to Scotland, up into the Berth of Fourth then along to Gorick, I think it was that, where we landed. We stayed there a few days and then proceeded up to, further north to do a little practicing of beach landing. We didn’t really do much as far as I could see but, in any case, we went through the pretense of something. Then we loaded to go somewhere, as it turned out it was the Calgary Tanks. It turned out we were going down to the Mediterranean. While we were there, Lord Von Patten came up to revere the troops and each of the ships. The LST’s and others were allowed to have the commanding officer, plus one junior, plus one other officer head over for a bit of an inspection. The commanding officer took me over with him, so I was pleased to have an opportunity to meet him, shake hands with him. We then did load and went. Oh, while I was in Scotland I remember I got a chance to go down to Gorick and go around there which was county air, which was where my great-grandfather and wife had come from. I didn’t get any trace of the family but at least did go to visit there. In any case, we loaded and sailed down through to, down toward the Mediterranean, which was obviously getting warmer, although we didn’t have any final destination as far as I know; at least I wasn’t aware of. Went down through the Straits of Gibraltar and, of course, all of these were known places. We could tell by [the] direction, of course, we were sailing that we were going south and, of course, we got to Gibraltar [and] we realized we were going into the Mediterranean. Sailed around and then [it] turned out we went directly to Syracuse in Sicily. And D-Day for us in Sicily was July 10, and we just pulled in somewhere along some dock and I can remember we were getting ready to unload and some German bombers came over and dropped a bomb, didn’t actually hit us but [was] very close to us and we got some flash and stuff on-board. But I can remember when things calmed down we, I got out from under this
truck which was loaded with ammunition, and that was my safety spot. As it turned out, nobody got hurt and we proceeded to unload this ship which at that time, I think at that time, we had about a hundred and fifty vehicles on-board and, uh, tanks on the lower deck and trucks and some other guns on the upper deck. The idea was that those on the upper deck, some of the guns were to protect against anti-aircraft and, somehow or another, we didn’t get the word about getting those guns ready and, of course, it happened so fast and it was very difficult. Anyway, since this was the first encounter with many of us with action, we weren’t prepared. In any case, we did unshackle the trucks, and tanks all had to be fastened down with chains, securely fastened to the deck because if there was any play at all in them they would, of course, get loose and go right through the side of the ship, or end of the ship, or somewhere. So, in any case, we did unload in Syracuse in Sicily.

We walked around a little bit on the shore side but not for long and we headed back toward North Africa. There were several places that we picked up troops, Loserta, Ferryville, Tunas, Soose, Sfax and a number of other places where the troops came out of the desert and down. We loaded them all and took them back over to Sicily and other points there. And this went on for a few months. We stopped at some port in North Africa and were loading up and we went ashore for a little bit and the girls in the pubs and places were telling us we were going to go to Salerno the next day and that we’d better enjoy ourselves while we were still there. I’m not sure which harbor we were in, which port, but it didn’t make very much difference, same routine— we got loaded up, in any case, and went over across. We had to land in Salerno; I think it was September 9. In any case, while we certainly did go to Salerno, fortunately we had some orders as we moved along. As it turned out, we thought we were going to be landing at a certain place. Some way we got a little mixed up and moved down a little further on the beach so that guns from the, the German guns really fired on us broadside instead of head on. In any case, it was another invasion and we came out of that relatively unscathed, landed the troops right on the beach and off we went again to North Africa and started running the shuttle to haul more troops and supplies and things in there.
Then in early January we moved up to some ?, got into the Harbor of Naples, which the troops had by then taken so we were able to go into the harbor, Naples being a little north of Salerno. We got in harbor and increasingly more and more LST’s and other ships were coming in and we knew something was brewing. We were at anchor and we got instructions to go down. The ships all got instructions to go down to Salerno to practice landing. Well, that was a place we had just been for some time and had lots of practice. The captain had to do something so he picked up the anchor and we went out and went around the harbor a little bit and then came back and anchored again. There seemed to be some free time and so some of us were allowed to go ashore. I went in and went up to visit Pompey where I spent a few hours going around. Anytime we had shore leave I tried to combine it with something other than going into the local pubs or certainly going to eat or drink because of the danger of some sort of virus or dysentery and things, but not that you could avoid it completely, but some. In any case, I went up by myself and visited around Pompey which I thoroughly enjoyed, went back and got on-board ship. Then we proceeded to load, which we did, and the next day we sailed up, as it turned out to Annsville. On January 22, this would be in ‘44, we got into the harbor in Annsville and we didn’t meet too much opposition as I recall. We were the headquarters, the backup headquarters, that is. The units on...the unit that we had on-board...the Army unit that we had on-board was sort of a backup headquarters. The other headquarters was someplace else. As it turned, out we didn’t have too much opposition there right immediately but the troops landed and wanted to actually proceed further but the orders were that we were to go as far as they had planned. As it turned out, it was a rather disastrous mistake because soon after we landed, the Germans found it out, of course, and sent troops in there and for months we never got out of range of the German guns there. One of the big guns which was called “Anzio Archie” [was] kept on a mountain or a hill and there’s a hole and railroad tracks that would back into this thing and periodically come out and fire. Could reach everything in the harbor, of course, and on the land there but it didn’t stay out long enough so they could get a range in, so the bombers could...so the Air Force could go in and get them. We were never able to reach it by guns they had either. In any case, it
was a, kept going back and forth down the coast from Paggio Way and Vaccuoli and where it was just north of Naples. We kept running there for a long time and hauling troops and ammunition in and, of course, as soon as we unloaded we tried to head right back to get out of the harbor, and then we got orders that we had to take a certain...take the same number of trucks back that we had brought in loaded. Didn’t happen to be the same ones and I can remember wandering around on shore trying to gather trucks and get the people to put the trucks on-board so we could get back. It was really disastrous. A couple of times we just loaded, dropped several truck loads of ammunition, fortunately, down on the dock, and they were hit by a German bomber. It was really...Anzio, to me, was really part of the whole fighting. We hauled a lot of wounded soldiers back, too. But in any case, we kept going back and forth between Paggio Way and other little ports by it and it was...when we did that, the day or two that we stayed overnight I used to go up to Naples and go the opera, about the only thing there was to do and it was certainly a relief from the rest of the experiences around there. And I remember they played *Pagliacci* and Cavalleria *Rusticana* and they, I saw that so often that if I could have sung there, I could have really been on stage, I figured. But it was interesting that the opera played right through where the Germans were occupying. They--the opera--kept going on. Another time I was walking around there on shore side and went into this, sort of little, village. And I was talking to some woman there and she was showing me where the bombs and shells had hit and I said, “Germans.” And she said, “German, British, American, all the same.” It made me realize that it certainly didn’t make much difference if you’re on the end of the dog who had set it. But we kept going back and forth. And we’d sail at midnight, of course, and get up there the next morning at dawn usually, although it didn’t seem to make much difference because we were never outside the range of the guns anyway. It was January 22 when we first went into Anzio. We kept running there until sometime into March or April. I just forget which. In any case, somewhere along there we were all loaded to go to Anzio and we got orders to unload and came down and everything was off that they put on. As I recall, a couple hundred Italian soldiers that we were to take and, essentially, go back to England and take them where they put them in work camps,
I guess. In any case, we sailed out of, sailed back to England and [we had] great sharing on-board the ships, of course, because we, all the ship’s company were English from the UK. So that was great times and everybody was happy to get back home.

We finally got back into Swansea, in Wales, and we unloaded the prisoners and got a bit of leave and from there we went around the south coast. I just don’t remember the timing, but it wasn’t very long after we got there. We went around to Portsmouth, I think it was, and it wasn’t...we began to realize that we were getting involved with another invasion of D-Day ‘cause everything was being geared and up in the south was getting very busy. But I do recall that, somewhere or another, we got several days of leave and went up to London and they...but we realized when we were up in London that it was something much moving because we were about, really, the only people on leave from the military. There just weren’t many people around. They were all around getting engaged to go on this invasion and I even remember going into Geeve’s to get a new suit. And I remember the fella measuring me and he said, “I assume you won’t be needing this for a while.” And all of this was part of the build up. And we got back on-board ship and, as we had realized all along, as we had got back to Swansea, that we weren’t back there to take a leave, we were back to get into action again. And that was okay. That’s what we got paid for, I guess. And so we did load up and come along toward D-Day. I can remember it wasn’t very involved for us because we loaded so often that it wasn’t anything new at all and we knew how to load the ship. And that was always my job to load, put the equipment on and fasten it down and all that sort of thing. Partly I got the job because somebody had to do it, of course, but also we hauled mostly American troops all this time and they couldn’t tell whether I was British or American or Canadian or what I was. But at least we could communicate and so that made it much easier when we were trying to load the ship and fasten down the tanks and other equipment. Because, as I mentioned, if they weren’t properly batten down, they slide, and if there was the slightest bit of play they would come loose and do all sorts of damage, maybe right out the side of the ship.
In any case, we got all loaded and on the night of June 5, D-Day being June 6 for Normandy, we sailed out and, in due time, went over and landed on the beaches in Normandy. We had a little problem and got a hole in the bottom of the ship, but finally got it and all the troops off. They were always glad to get off because there was no portholes on the ship and they were just sitting there in their tanks, in vehicles, or in the areas where we assigned them to sleep, and they didn’t know what was going [on] or where they we were going. All they knew was that we were rolling and tossing and getting sick, so there was never any problem to get them off the ship. But, as I indicated, we finally got them off after landing there in dawn. And since the tide came in and we got floated again we...’cause we would go in at the higher tide and then when the tide went out we would sink down and sit on the sand and then we could open the bow doors, put the ramps down and they could drive right off on the sand. So we had to wait until the tide came in to float us and then we got off and went back to Portsmouth. I think it was, or Southampton. In any case, we were the first ones back, as I recall. And the dockyard people in Britain weren’t noticed for their speed, as I recall. But in any case, there was a dry dock there. We did not anchor and pull alongside of a jetty. I just remember we pulled right into the dry dock. We had hoped with the hole in the ship we would take quite a while to fix it up and we’d get off board ship; at least we wouldn’t have to go back over to the beaches again. As it turned out, they were eagerly awaiting us and we were the first ship, I think, to get back and we got into the dry dock and as they were all over the ship and everything else and got us fixed up, the hole patched and out, it seems to me that...

As I recall, we got the hole all patched up. The people were all over the place and they were eager to get us, as everybody was, eager all over, to get on with the war. Each had their assignments and each did it. But in any case, we got out of the dry dock and went over and got loaded again. And it seems to me that we sailed again at midnight and the next morning we were back on the beaches again. In the meantime, it seemed to be getting a little rough with a storm and the ships within that trip, or the next couple we made, were getting put up on the beaches and a lot of devastation, of course, from the war and also from the storm. And there was just beaches [that] were
just a mess of all kinds of wreckage and things. But after a while they, umh, not that
day but after several trips over, they had got a bunch of ships and sunk them and so
our job was all during the rest of June, July, and August to just constantly be going back
and forth from England over to the beaches, or then we got so we could go into Austin
to a dock and to various other places, but the job was just to shuttle. We went from
different ports, also, from the Tilbury Docks in London. But in-between it wasn’t always
possible to go every day because sometimes there weren’t materials arranged right at
that place so sometimes we got off and we could go up to London. And I made a point
of going all over England, even sometimes just for a day up somewhere and back, and I
really saw a great deal of it. We could, we were allowed to get one warrant. I don’t
know what period of time, but I remember we got one from the Isle of Wight to
Northern Scotland and every time we got on to go north we’d get off before we got to
Northern Scotland, and likewise going back. We’d, umh, never needed to go to the Isle
of Wight so we just [had] one warrant we kept using back and forth. They’d put a
punch in it, but in those days people weren’t very fussy anyway. If you had some kind
of a ticket it was okay. I don’t know who’d be keeping track of all this anyway, but, so
we traveled around a great deal and it seemed to me any place you wanted to go in
England you had to go through London. Even in the UK you had to go through London.
But in any case, I enjoyed it. Went to lots of plays in particular because when we
usually sailed at midnight of course, to get over to the beaches and places at dawn,
we...when I had the watch to go out at midnight it was my duty to be up on the bridge
during ship out and I had the feeling that I never wanted to take a drink, so there
wasn’t much point in going to the pubs and places with the other fellas. So I would
usually go up and you’d almost always get one ticket to whatever you wanted to see, so
I’d go up and go to that and get back on-board. Plays often started at six o’clock at
night so people could get home at a reasonable hour, I guess. So that was all the
extracurricular activities we had, which I thoroughly enjoyed, went up to short course
leaves at Oxford and various places. By short term I mean a day or two, maybe a
weekend, ‘cause very often we didn’t get any more time than that off.
We were off somewhere in the fall. It seemed to me just before Christmas, and the Battle of the Bulge came so they hauled us all off leave and had to rush more supplies and troops and ammunition and stuff over to France. But in any case, it went very well and came along spring after Christmas and it was decided, they asked me if I wanted to go back to Canada. If I went back to Canada I could go and get a month’s leave, or something or other, then pick up another ship there, another LST, and come back. And they said do I want to do it. And I said “Well, yes. I guess I would.” I’d get back there, but also I had that much experience on an LST and so it might be the most useful all around if I went on-board another ship. So I did go back to Canada, had some leave there and went back on the Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, I guess it was. Went back on that and it was, of course there were lots of people moving in both directions and the ship was loaded down with people and, as I recall, we had a fairly large cabin for…I mean we were all officers in the Navy in this particular cabin and, umh, I remember we had double-decker bunks and we also had two shifts of sleeping, as I recall. And I’m not sure about that. In any case, we didn’t spend much time in the cabin. If you think it was rough for naval officers, imagine what is was like for the other people ‘cause we always got preference being the senior service. I recall lots of events where this was evident in England. I remember once we were up at York and I was doing something. I went into this pub and asked for a scotch and they said it was two schillings. And so I gave him two schillings, didn’t think anything about it and he...some other people came in and he was charging them four schillings. And I wondered whether, if this was made a mistake or not and, sure enough, I gave him a ten bob note and he gave me eight schillings back. So it was, again, a preference.

In any case, all these plays I went to, they almost always have a seat for a naval officer. It wasn’t too bad to get one but they always seemed to arrange or any short course or anything they didn’t, there was some questioning and things, but they always came up with a seat or a bed or whatever it was for me. In any case, we got on-board the ship up at Gorick, I guess it was, and as I said, we were there and we had everybody, tried to avoid as many assignments as we could. And they were paging all the various navies and naval officers and various groups. There was a couple of us from
the Canadian Navy and he said, well, if we can get paid so we don't have to go and do any duty at lifeboats or whatever was required. And finally the word got around that there were two of us Canadian officers, so whenever they paged it they paged the Royal Navy, the US Navy and the two Canadian Naval Officers. In any case, it was a bit of a break to be on-board a ship and not have any duties or responsibilities. Got back and landed at Halifax and then again, what I do, no, I got put on the train and went directly back to Alberta, up in British Columbia, up near Jasper where Dad was the foreman. So I went back on the train and got off at Alberta and spent a few weeks at home and then went down to Vancouver to wait for the next assignment.

In due time that came of course, and I ended up in the Esquimalt where we picked up another LST. Three-five-one-five, I think, was the number of it. When we got there we went and stayed in some homes instead of boarding houses, they were. Stayed there and worked on the ship, got it ready to go and started to go south. And as we did, it was quite clear we were going down to go through the Panama Canal and then over to England. Originally we were assigned to the Far East. Why they didn’t send us across, I don’t know. But anyway, we had the understanding we were going to the Far East out to Asia but we went down, went down through the Panama Canal. Actually, it wasn’t a bad trip because it was very pleasant. And there wasn’t any great danger so we didn’t have a lot of watches or things to...well, we had the watches then again. We went onto this same watch routine and I got the same assignment from twelve to four, my luck, I guess. But through all of this anyway, I had lots of chances to observe the stars from twelve to four as I did in the Mediterranean and the channel and back there. Well, there wasn’t much star gazing in the English Channel. It was so foggy and smoggy that you couldn’t see much of anything. I always said it had one advantage, if we couldn’t see the enemy they couldn’t see us either, so I guess it was okay. Anyway, we got down to San Diego. We stopped at San Diego, the naval base there, and I remember we were just going into the harbor and the commanding officer said [to] run up the signals to send the word around that we were having a farewell party on-board our ship. We said, "A farewell party? My gosh, we haven’t even got in there yet, let alone have a farewell party." Well, we did what we were told and there
was all kinds of people [that] came from the Embassy and various things and, of course, everybody said, “Well, it’s too bad that you have to go because we would like to have you around so, you know, up for dinner or something.” So...and they said, “Just in case you stay over,” they said, “here’s the card.” So we had piles of invitations up there. And while we were...when we pulled in, there was a fella there, he and somebody on the ship, one of the officers. I forget what his last name was. But anyway, they got off the ship and said, “I’m going up to Hollywood to see Warner, Mr. Warner. My father knows him.” Well, we said, “Hurray for you,” and off he went. And he came back that night and he said, “They’re going to pick me up tomorrow morning if anybody would like to go back up.” And didn’t nobody was anxious to go. “Well,” I thought, “I’ll take a chance. I don’t have anything to lose.” So we got on the train and went up and, sure enough, there was Warner’s private physician at this particular place where he was supposed to pick up Ian. And I, we, went over to the studios and Ian met Warner and, umh, they were going to do something and Ian said that I had not seen any of the studios or anything. And he gave somebody an assignment and said, “Well, take him through the studios and take him over to the green room for lunch and we’ll meet him there after lunch.” So I had a grand tour, first class of course. We went over and ate in the green room and all kinds of stars around. Then we, oh, then somebody took me back and we got in the car with Warner and we went out to Santa Anita to the race tracks. So it was a really a great day for me to see all this and be.

While we were there also there was a party up at ? for the British actors. A bunch of people, and we were invited from the ship to go up there. They were raising money of some kind. The party, I don’t know, I guess they were preparing to raise some money and they had this big party at Warner Kent’s house. And he’d been noted for having these parties and they were written up in the papers, even up in Vancouver. And I’d known about them, so we were duly impressed, and [we] went up there and I met all kinds of celebrities and went back down and went and ate in that Chinese restaurant, famous Chinese restaurant, got back on-board ship, well, a few more things like that and the embassy, the ambassador, whatever he’s called, counselor I guess, they had us over and gave us something to eat. So all and all it was quite an experience
there. And off we went down went through, left there and went through the Panama Canal and there we loaded some, umh...

**Nearing the End of the War**

When we got to England we went into dock of course and just waited around for further instructions. There did not seem to be anything very eminent about loading us or moving us but, in the meantime, we had, we seemed to have a little problem with one of the engines so some time was spent fixing that. In fact, we stayed around for quite a while. We used to joke that if the war hadn’t ended we may have still been gone out to the Far East somewhere and might have been forgotten and still out there. However, we were able to get some leave. One day we noticed in the paper, the London Times probably, that some bombs had been dropped on Japan. The first day it came out and things went on pretty much as usual. Then on the second day, or the second time that a bomb was dropped, this seemed to imply that peace was just around the corner and that was…it was announced and again we had to read it in the newspaper. So that was V-E Day, was announced very soon. While we were there [there was] the formal opening of parliament for the first time and the King and Queen rode instate and I went over and observed them as they went by in this open carriage, which seemed such a contrast to anything that had happened before during the war period. But they were very quick. The British were very quick to get back into a normal situation and so they did ride instate. Well, V-E Day was declared and so immediately everybody thought about getting out of the service; certainly I did, and I went down to Canada House the next day and went in and just casually said, “When do I get out?” And one of the officers there said, “Well, there’s a destroyer going out tomorrow and it’s going down through the Panama Canal. It will be a nice trip back to Vancouver.” I said, “Well, that is very generous of you but, and I appreciate it, but I just came through the Panama Canal and I wasn’t really interested in spending too much time just riding back on another ship.” He said, well, let’s see, we could go out on the…I think he said the Queen Elizabeth or the Queen Mary, I don’t know which one. “You could go out of
Gorick and that goes tomorrow night.” And I said, “Well, that’s sounds just great!” I said, “I’ve got to go back to the ship and pick up what belongings I have, my sea chest and anything else, and I’ll get up here.” And he said, “Well, we’d give you a warrant to get up to Gorick,” which is the same place as we sailed from before. And so I went back to the ship, got my gear and started up and got up to Gorick somewhere the night before the ship sailed, ’cause I remember going into a place to stay and it was really quite cold but I got to know the fella, the helper there, and I also had a bottle of scotch. So I gave him a few nips and he got everything all set up pretty well and I went down and got on-board the ship and went back. Found a good place again, trip across the Atlantic and got into Halifax. In Halifax they had set up a procedure where you went by train out to Cornwallis, which was the base or, yeah, Cornwallis. In any case, they were all set up to receive us and you would supposedly go in one day off the train, go through all the tests and get out the next day. I’m glad I was able to do [that] and they were certainly all set up for efficient and effective all kinds of tests, ?, dental and everything you could imagine and got out. And I decided that I wanted to go back through to look at graduate schools on my way home. So I did and I got tickets, went to Toronto, spent a few days there at the University of Toronto.

New Chapter after the War

Then I went to a couple of other places, and well, I might just insert here, too, that before I went in the service I had applied to take a doctorate degree at the University of Washington which was in the United States, of course. And Canada had a system, it turned out, much the same as the GI Bill, where we could go to a university or other educational institution and get an allowance while we were doing that plus all the fees and various things like that. So I went down in between. In any case, I went down to visit my uncle at Stevens College in Missouri where he, after retirement, was a consultant. I got there and he was in the hospital because he’d had an appendicitis that had broke, but as they said then, penicillin had been put on the market so he came through it fine. And it was a wonderful thing not only for him but for millions of other
people. In any case, I had a long visit with him, stayed a day to two with Aunt Jessie out at their home there and also I met Sandy there. Sandy was back there. He wasn’t able to go in the service for medical reasons but he was there so I spent a little time with him and that turned out to be fortuitous because I later was to room with him. We went to, let’s see, umh... in any case, he said I should go by and look at the University of Chicago, which I had known lots about before. In fact, the superintendent of schools in Vancouver had said to me, “You ought to go to graduate school at the University of Chicago when you finish the service.” Well, I went back to, went through, left Stevens College and, umh, went to Chicago. And there I got off and went over, got myself a room at International House, which fortunately they had a room there. And I went over to see the people at university, principally Ralph Tyler, who had been a student of Uncle Wallace’s, who was the head of the Department of Education in the Division of Social Sciences at the university. Well, I visited him and it was because I had an interest in adult education, in any case, I was anxious. I decided that I was there and [it was] where I wanted to go to graduate school so I tried to get over to see about admissions and I...Ralph Tyler said to go over and see the admissions office. So I went over to the admissions office and realized that I got rather good treatment because I was one of the very first people to apply to the university who had been in the service and was going back under this arrangement. While I was talking with her, I was under some pressure. At least I thought I was, to get admitted to...that I could go back to Vancouver and apply for the university benefits which were somewhat similar to what were in the USA, where we got tuition paid, books, and a certain amount of money a month, I forget how much. In any case, I felt I was under pressure; this was pretty well along in October as I remember. In any case, it wasn’t very long, get back to Vancouver, get squared away and, umh, get the benefits and then get to Chicago. You have to remember in those days we traveled by rail and communications were not as fast. In any case, I kept mentioning to this admissions officer that I had to be admitted and she kept saying to me, “You are admitted.” And I said, “Well, I’ll get the papers in as fast as I can. What do I have to get so that I can get a letter of admission?” She kept saying to me, “Well, you are admitted.” I couldn’t believe it, of course, so finally...
This is another recording of recollections of Alexander Charters, actually recording this at Cape Cod in the library. This tape is part of the one on military service and war. One section of that is to do with my experiences in Fernie and this from that.

**Experiences while in Fernie**

I was speaking in the end of one tape, I think it’s number 7, talks about the union. In fact, my father was a union. There was a meeting of people, a teachers’ conference in Vancouver that I attended while I was teaching in Fernie. I think it was held at Easter vacation. The reason I was talking about it was, is at this teachers’ meeting there was a man. They were debating the pension plan of the BC Teachers’ Federation. This man seemed very knowledgeable about it and was arguing and discussing this at great length with some of the people and trying to promote it. And I recall, I recall that the proponents of this seemed very knowledgeable and quite set in their ways and this man appeared to me to be a real expert in the field. And somebody said later that he is working on an advanced degree and was doing it in the area of pension funds for teachers. In any case, they tried to talk him down on most of the points. He was equally vigorous in trying to defend his position. I’m not sure of how far he got but I thought he made some sense and later on I recall that he, that there were great problems with the pension fund years later and I often thought back on the, sometimes the critics, and not part of the planning, but the critics can be right and I thought he made great points at each stage of it. But I did have the feeling that while we can discuss things, there are sometimes things that are more factual than others. In any case, while I was inquiring we did have a visit by an inspector who went around. I guess it was his job; I don’t know what. I think he visited only every other year ‘cause I only saw him once when I was in Fernie. Although he may have been in school doing other people, I don’t know, umh, he...I didn’t worry too much about it. I do remember that he said that I was rather weak in counseling of the students. I never knew [what] I was supposed to be doing very much about it, but maybe it was...well, I didn’t have a
job description but this inspector, Brown was his name, was a very capable fella who was interesting. I met him in a hotel in Vancouver where I was when I got appointed to teach. I’d just been appointed to teach in Fernie and I went down with a couple fellas in the Georgia Hotel, which was the only place that beer could be sold, was in a hotel. And I went down there and met him down there. About a year later, year and a half later, I met him at a teachers’ meeting that he was also present at and I remember him to saying to me, “Charters your gonna’ go all the way. But don’t drink too much.” And I hadn’t had a drink in between and I don’t know when I had one before, but here I was. But I remember how you can be, how a little bit of evidence can be categorized.

I remember Fernie, too. There were a couple of fellas who were very interesting. There was one, headed the power corporation, and the other headed one of [the] branch banks, which I remember they used to always be doing something interesting. And one time they used to invite me over. And then the one time they set up a little rifle range in the basement or someplace and they had all kinds of materials around to protect it. And they invited me down a couple of times. I thought it was just fine. Another time they were doing, of course on radio, and they were pretending they were the only people in the class. But in any case, they invited me down to that. But there were all kinds of interesting things like that to occupy their time, not so much, but they were genuinely interested in doing some different things.

Well, in fact, I should have wanted to mention that we were worried about the inspection. These were very important because you could use them to apply for another position and even promoting yourself in a given school situation. So these reports were something that I remember having. But also I remember, though, when I went to Vancouver they never even asked for it. I guess I was fortunate because I don’t think it was a very good report or [that] it drastically mattered or not too exciting. In the summer of 1940, after I’d been at Fernie for a year, I went down to Victoria and took some courses that were offered. I think by the Department of Education. I did something in golf and other physical education and also took a life saving course to improve my capabilities somewhat as a physical education instructor. I, later, was
somewhere or another, I don’t really know how, but I was invited to go to Vancouver Island, to a place [called] Heels Range. And the train took some military training, Army type. And I found out later that the reason a few of us had been invited to the province was because it was to be compulsory for all boys above grade 8 and above, well, I don’t know, in any case, grade 8 and above, it was to provide them with some military training. And there was these cadet...they were starting these cadet courses for cadet instructors who were involved with the public schools. So I got in on one of the first of those which were to provide some qualification. Again, the second summer I was invited back and went out to Sarcee in Alberta and again there was a group of us from Vancouver. One of the persons there was the head of physical education in the Vancouver school system and while I was at this course I got a call from Fernie saying they saw something in the Vancouver papers about me being appointed to the staff. I called them back and said, well, yes they had talked with me but I didn’t know that I was appointed at all. And Vancouver, of course, was pretty independent. They were big and they could really get whoever they want. Apparently, they were concerned about the school system from which they were taking people. But maybe I was supposed to understand that I was appointed from my brief encounter there. When I got back to Vancouver I went to see them about it and, yes, they had. And they just assumed was all they needed to tell me was that I had been, but I didn’t have any letter of appointment or anything like that.

That fall I was going, that would be fall of ’41, I was appointed to the Vancouver school system and, I think I recorded elsewhere, but I had just gone into the offices at Vancouver schools and saw the assistant superintendent for elementary and said that they had told me to come back in two years. And I said, “You know, two years is up. I’ve been teaching up in Fernie.” And he said, “Yes, Charters. I have your application right on my desk.” And that was all there was to it. I went in to see McCorkendale who was the superintendent. He immediately started again about going to the University of Chicago. And so I did get an appointment in the Vancouver school and that fall I started over at Nelson where I used this cadet training that I had. I think I was the only one that had been to two courses and here I was in Vancouver and went into the
elementary school, which was in lower Nelson, and I began, I mention a preoccupation with the military and with it I decided that I’d go out and maybe join the COTC, Canadian Officer Training Corps. So I went out there and happen to run into ?. And he was there and I was there inquiring about getting into the COTC, which wasn’t a commitment to the military service but you’d get some training. And I started to do that two nights a week. Instruction from the colonels from ? and he said “Yeah, it’s fine. Just go right out there on the field.” So I went out there on the field and paraded around a little bit and then I went down two nights a week out at UBC taking courses of various kinds. I really thought they were not very effective because they kept spending most of the time on what were the various units in battalion and how many guns and equipment and various things. But nevertheless, that is what they were doing, and I was still doing that and teaching school along with everything else, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

The principal was S. J. Bryant and he was a very fine fellow, an Englishman of the old school. And I taught physical education and some health and then there was a couple of free periods and, some way or another, I was to relieve one of the teachers to do some teaching. So every once and a while I went to this class where the teacher told me what I was suppose to be doing during that class period at the elementary school. Most of the teachers there were women and I used to stay at lunch over the lunch periods practically the whole time outdoors with the boys not doing much of anything. It was a cinder playground and there was always fellas getting hurt and scratched and bruises and things and I normally talked the school nurse into leaving the office open so I could take these kids up and patch them up a bit. But it was…I enjoyed the school experience, but again, as I say, we were preoccupied with the war.

The Beginning of the Navy Experience

One day in the early spring I was down at HM...Stanley Park, and went by HMCS Discovery, the Canadian Ship Discovery which was in Stanley Park, and I thought I’d go in and inquire about going into the Navy. So I went in and I met some fella who must
have been an enlisted man. So I told him what I wanted to do, maybe a signal person, the only thing I could think of that the Navy would do. And he said, “Well, I think you ought to see somebody else.” So he took me in and introduced me to an officer and we talked and I told him what I’d been doing and he said, “Well, maybe you’d like to be a sub-lieutenant.” And I said, “Well, sub-lieutenants already made.” I didn’t realize that “sub-lieutenant” was an officer. I was trying to figure out if “sub” was below lieutenant, but I didn’t realize it was a rank. He kind of got to smiling when I said, “That’s fine.” And he gave me some material and I went and sort of figured it out and applied to, made applications, well, it was quite a while after the applications came in I found out, they called me to go down for an interview, which I did, and apparently there were several hundred people. Well, I don’t know, maybe two hundred people interviewed to send in applications and they selected a certain number of these, a couple of hundred they selected to be interviewed and I was called going down there. In the room was a table with four full captains who were doing the interviews and they were behind the table and over in front of them, but quite a ways away, there was no one else in the room I don’t think, I remember there was a very comfortable chair and ashtray right alongside of it. And after a while they started interviewing and I figured, well, I don’t know, they’re sticking an ashtray here but I don’t know, but anyway, I didn’t smoke. There was a comfortable chair and I sat up straight in the front of it and I remember they were asking me a great number of questions and it seemed like I had to say “no” to everything. They had my ? record and they knew that I participated in a number of sports and I remember they said, “Do you play water polo?” And I said, “No, sir.” And they said, “We see you born on a farm in Alberta. Can you run a thrashing machine?” And I said, “No, sir.” Well, they had everything there in front of them and they kept asking me all these questions and most of them I had to say “no” for and I, finally one of the fellas said to me, “Look, what do you want to join the Navy for?” I remember saying, “I don’t know, sir, but I do.” They kind of chuckled and that was kind of the end of the interview. I went out and, I didn’t know when I was going to get information about what had happened, but it was, I think it was on a Friday, no Saturday night they’d called somebody and tracked me down and called me at my sister Jean’s. We
were just down for dinner, I guess, and I remember hearing, I got on the phone and he said, “Are you Alexander Nathaniel Charters?” And I said, “Yes, sir.” And he said, “I understand you applied for a position in the Royal Canadian Volunteer Reserve.” And I said, “Yes, sir.” And he said, “You’ve been accepted. Report Monday night at HMCS Discovery at seven o’clock.” So that was the end of that.

So I went down on Monday, there was quite a group of us. I forget how many, maybe twenty-five had been accepted, and they were taking a few every month. And there was a class that went in every month into Halifax and they took some from various cities all the way across Canada—Calvary, Montreal...here I was, we went down two nights a week. I remember the discipline was something to be said. I remember one night we were down and some fella did something and they were told go down and walk around. It was a boom, logs which are connected by chains. And they went down and they said, “Walk around it.” So he was down there and they had a heck of a job trying to stay on the logs, finally fell in, which we thought was really hilarious. The guy, who was in charge of it all, the officer in charge, told us all to go down and try to walk around. We were all dressed up in our uniforms and “number five’s negative sub” was the uniform that most people saw naval officers wearing. And well, there we were and we all fell in of course. It was amazing to me that this is what it was. You did what you were told. So finally I was impressed with the Navy; it was the senior service. People of the same rank, I found out, in the Army and Air Force, the Navy person went first through the doors. And I was kind of objecting to this ‘cause there was nothing superior about me. But I remember one fella, one Army guy, we were doing this and he said, “Sir, if you could just do it the way we were suppose to....” And so I did. It was easier and I...one of the other things that we did while we were waiting for our turn to go for full-time training was to attend the church service at Canadian Memorial. We went down and met somewhere, marched down and we weren’t very good marchers compared to the other troops but it was, but anyway, we did and it was kind of impressive marching to the Canadian Memorial Church. I remember I was very impressed and enjoyed it very much and I really felt like I was, for the first time, kind of getting involved in the war and felt useful. We went down two nights a week to train
and got through this; it was rather rigorous while we were there. One of the things that we learned was that discipline was terrific in some ways and yet, on the other hand, you were referred to as “gentleman” when you were not on duty. And I always thought that was rather important the way the Navy treated their officers and...but the discipline applied even off-duty except that they didn’t give you any orders, which were very cordial to you and you felt set apart a bit.

In any case, I’d been teaching at Lord Nelson for the year and got in the Navy, thought I was gonna’ be going to Halifax right away but they didn’t share all the things that were gonna’ happen to us, with us. And I thought I’d better do something in the summer and at that time I got back to Vancouver and Jean had introduced me to somebody, to this group of fellas who had an apartment. And I remember a Chinese cook. And they were really a good bunch of guys and he introduced me and somebody had just left to, one of the four had just left and so they invited me to come in. I went in there with Tom, Hank, and it was the manager of Canadian Mooring Paint, which is a logging business, and he was in charge of the Bank of...a company by the same name. There was Doug ?. Doug worked in the bank and Doug Grant, who also worked in the bank, and he was from Montreal. And Ben ?, who was also working in a bank, a royal bank, on the fast track and even then he was a vice-president or designated as such. Of course they were a great bunch of guys and I really enjoyed them keeping in touch with me much after the war. In any case, we lived in this apartment with, John was his name. He was a Chinese fella. He did the cooking, cleaned up the apartment and everything. So we were sort of living the life of royalty, I thought.

The other guys were getting involved in the service in one way or another, too. In any case, I got a little more involved in the war doing whatever was useful and so I got a job out on the construction gang. They were putting a new runway in, down at the Vancouver Airport. I just went out and got a job as a regular laborer out there and it seemed like it rained all summer. And in addition to that, we [were] put down to do work down on the ground and there was the water level, was up part ways, so we were just in the water and getting soaked most of the time. Some of the time we had jobs up
above but they were like your manual labor jobs to do whatever was necessary. And I was down there in the water with the other guys and one day the superintendent motioned for me to go up. And we, and he said, “How’d you like to be a foreman?” And boy, I thought anything would beat what I’m doing here. So he said, “Well?” And I said, “Fine.” And he said, “I’ll give you...” I don’t know what we were paid, maybe forty cents an hour or something. He said, “I’ll give you fifty-five cents an hour.” And I said, “Fine with me!” So he marched me over and there was a barn there and he got fifteen guys he’d gathered up, which was my crew to work with me. He looked at me and said, “I’d like to tear that barn down.” So I kind of looked, and I’m sure he thought I didn’t know what in the world to do but, so he said, “I’ll show you.” So he gets this big, long ladder and he got a couple of the guys to set up the ladder and they went up on the roof and he started to take the shingles off and they saw what to do so they went ahead and we sent more guys up and got to the business of tearing the barn down, which we finally did. Oh, the next, later that afternoon he come over and [said], “I’m gonna’ do better. I’m gonna’ give you sixty-five cents an hour.” And I said, “Oh, that’s great!” I never could figure out what happened. All I can think of was that he went in and told the people in the head office that I’d done it and maybe that was the rate that foreman got and so that’s what he was suppose to do. I don’t know. I never got a promotion and more money as fast as I did that. In any case, I enjoyed working out there during the summer and we worked long hours every day, Sunday included. And one day the superintendent came to me, I think it was a Friday, [and said], “Take tomorrow afternoon off and go out to the races.” I guess he thought that I should have a break. In fact, I think he paid me for the time I was at the races. But it was a great afternoon and, in any case, I just went out there on my own. Well, I go out and bet, and I bet $2.00 for a while. I was doing pretty well, I kept winning and, in fact, there was this guy looking at me wondering what I was betting on and was winning and, in any case, I did. It was a good experience for me and, again, it was something useful during the day.

At the end of the summer when I hadn’t got sent to Halifax, I went back to Lord Nelson again and everybody was very cordial. I remember one night they gave us all
shots. We were getting prepared to go to Halifax, I guess, and I was really feeling
down at the bottom. And I went up and got to the school and one of the teachers said,
“Why don’t you just go up the teachers’ room and lie down for a few minutes to feel
better.” I remember I stayed there all day. They come up at the end of the day and
said, “Well, how you feeling? You better think about going home.” So I did. But they
were really very kind to me and I really appreciated it. So that was that and we got
orders to go to Halifax. We went down and got fully sworn in, I think. I don’t
remember, but I do remember going in when you had to sign something more and I
said to the officer in charge, “But I’m already, I’m in the COTC’s.” He said, “You’re
what?” I, well, I said, “In the COTC.” And he looked at me and said, “We’ll get you out
of that.” And that was another indication of the senior service. And actually, when I
got all the papers and stuff that I had requested from ? much later on, we tracked it in
the year 2000 or something, I was looking in there and the day that I signed full-time
for the Navy was the same day that I was discharged from the COTC, as that was the
senior service. They told me what the senior services were and what they were doing.
In any case, I was sworn in and went down and got on the train to go to Halifax and we
just ?, I think.

A couple of the guys were granted a sleeping cart. We had a place to sleep on
the train but a couple of them were in suites so during the day we kind of went and sat
in there for a while and got off and went to down…the train stopped in Montreal for a
few hours and I went out to see Doug Grant. In fact, Mr. Grant was vice-president of
the Canadian National. So I went out and just visited with them for a little bit and I
think they gave me dinner. We also went up to see Marty Robertson’s sister when I
went down two nights a week to train, back in Vancouver, and his sister was there and
she was in training to be a doctor. She was already a nurse but she was training in
Montreal to be a physician. She said she had something to do and to just wait around,
so we did. And I remember we went in this room with a bunch of beds with sheets
spread over them, opened them up, thought we’d take a look, and there was cadavers
under each one. And we were really kind of surprised to see them there.
In any case, we got on the train, went to Halifax. We got there and it didn’t take long to realize that we were going to be highly regimented for the next little while. And we got in to, got there, assigned to cabins and the leisure of this was [that] in the dormitory of Kings College had been taken over, that is where we got the name HMCS Kings. There was two rooms, one, where two slept in a bed, each in a separate bed in one room, and the other room was kind of a study room. And so we got there and my room got assigned a meal. And the thing I remember about the meal [was that] we sat down, all sat down at the same time and we were given milk and as soon as you drank a little bit of it the glass was filled up again. My life had got so good that we kind of enjoyed it but they…and we were told about the gun room which was the equivalent of the wardroom for junior people in the service. We could go there and buy drinks if we wanted. Again, it was a very cordial thing when we were off-duty and [we] usually liked [it] and it was kind of relaxing. We got so we got the routine set up. We had got up in the morning [and] the first thing was physical education. Then we ran around for a while, [went] back in, had breakfast and often went on the various duties. Some [days] we went down to HMCS Cornwallis which is down on the water, dockyard, to do training, and we had a very full schedule. We also had to take signal in the morning. Signal was on top of the flag pole. It was a light and we had to be able to read the Morse code, which was a flashing light. And we...the speed of the transmission was the speed you had to pass out, so you just sit there and look at it. At first it looked like a still light but the flashes got so that we could read it. And one of us would read for a while, try to read it, and the other fellas wrote it down and [we would] take turns. Well, as soon as you got the speed up we didn’t have to go back and read again. But for the first while, quite a while, we had to go out in the morning and we had to go out at the end of the day before dinner, which was usually a little free time. Well, we did that all day and we ate where, again, they bused us all back to Kings to eat every day. Whether we ate down wherever we happened to be and then came back in the afternoon, we had to go out and do this signal.

We’d go down have coffee, tea, or whatever somebody wanted. Then in the evening there might be lectures. Various people would come in and lecture us about
something. Every once and a while the captain would come in and ask the commanding officer, who would come in and... at that time he referred to us as “gentlemen” and it didn’t seem that the discipline was there. It was a very cordial way of saying all officers are equal. And other times we had to go stay directly in our room in our cabin. So every once and a while the commanding officer and some of the officers would come up in the dorms. Sergeants would come in and we had to jump to attention ‘cause we had to make sure we were at that desk when they came in or we’d get in real trouble. But they’d come in, ask us all kinds of questions and stuff just to see your reaction. They did the same thing when we were out just walking around. Someone would, one of the officers would come up, and I remember one night we were walking around and he said, “What would you do if there was an air raid?” And I said, “Well, I’d pull the main switch.” And he said, “Very good.” He said, “Where is the main switch?” And I said, “I don’t know.” And he said, “Go find the answer and report to me as soon as you find it.” Well, I went off and nobody knew where the dang switch there was. [There were] no custodians on duty or anywhere around, nor was there anyone around to find the main switch. But around three o’clock in the morning I found some kind of a switch someplace and I went in to report to [him] and knocked on his cabin door and, in no uncertain terms, he informed me that he wasn’t really interested and that I better get my presence somewhere else. And I did. They were always coming up with these situations to try and train you for immediate responses to situations and things. That’s what we did. For the first two weeks we had to make our own bed, which was duly effective. After that, the Waves were there. And the girls used to come around and clean the rooms and make the beds and they waited on the tables and did all kinds of very helpful things for us. Clear instructions: we were not to date them. In fact, during the whole time we were there it was very strict instructions about separating ourselves from the seamen and the other people. Halifax was just loaded with Navy people and we were told that we [could] go out in the evening. Saturday nights, we didn’t have anything Saturday night, just go out Saturday night. And I would. And one of the fellas left in the apartment introduced me to a girl, Titi Murphy, who was in Halifax. And her family was there and they used to invite me over frequently and [I] used to take her
down to the dances. And the only two places we could go was the two hotels. And you could go there for dinner dance on Saturday night and there was unlimited accommodations and, of course, we’d have dinner. But sometimes you’d be in a court or a hall away from the dance floor. It was their job to find out where the dance floor was, and she got up and we were, that was the only place we were allowed to go and the Waves weren’t allowed in there, and so that’s what it was. We enjoyed it, obviously. It was very nice.

We were all keyed up in good physical condition. I’d been very active, alert, and was with a great bunch of guys, I must say. And one of the things that we used to...and then there’d be a parade of us and then if we went in and if we got kicked out you went right out of the service. They wouldn’t take you. So we used to be petrified that we would get kicked out and not very, kicked right out of the service and, um, although it never happened because we were all reasonable, well-screened before we got in there. But, in any case, I don’t remember anybody getting kicked out but every time we did something wrong we used to feel like maybe that’s what was going to happen to us and get kicked out, but they never did. When we were out on the parade ground doing something or other, I don’t know what, but they used to discipline and every once and a while somebody would get sent over behind some of the buildings and sent there to do some training or marching or do something, or drill or some kind of drill, and they sent another officer, one of the others, an enlisted guy, to do the training. Well, we got over there and tended to be too strict with these guys and somebody dropped by every once and a while to see how you were doing. Well, that guy got to tell the next guy to wait and come back and got another officer. Well, we didn’t know what was going on there so some of us got screwed by a few of the others. I don’t know how many were training each other but got so we had to do the training ourselves. It was really kind of amusing ’cause we didn’t know what was going on and [the] sense of purpose to the whole thing. Then they made a whole bunch of us stay extra time and did some drills and stuff like that. They always seemed to have an answer to everything that we could figure out; how to make life a little easier. But in any case, we did and there was nothing held against us. That was the major contest
and no particular discipline. Except that we all had to keep a journal of our record of what we did. And I don’t know what they ever did with them but we had to show them every once and a while during a lecture. Sometimes we’d show a picture of something in the, put pictures in the journal of, I don’t know what to think of, but pictures of what they thought might be ingenious. So we went through the routine drill. Obviously, it was pretty amazing what we could really do. They were obviously naval officers but didn’t think we could do much of anything but apparently we were pretty well trained. And we were the DD Division.

I remember getting ready to graduate, for graduation. This was quite the thing ’cause we had white covers on our hats and we would, that’s what we thrown up and that’s what they called the “chiefs,” which meant you were an officer in training. Everybody knew you this when you were out walking around in our caps and kids would go by and say “chiefs.” Chiefs, that would be what we’d wear. We had to wear these white hats, like covers to our hats, and at graduation this was the thing...when we got all through we took the white off and threw it away. And I think it was that night when we had the final drill, finally got together and got our assignments and told us what ships we were going to and everything. We were there and the commanding officer announced that we have seven volunteers for the Royal Navy. Well, I happened to be one of the volunteers. In the Navy you weren't conscripted, you volunteered to go in the service. And the thing was, everything you did, you volunteered for.

One other thing I should mention that was kind of interesting was that we had all seemed to ? at Christmas time. We were talking to have Christmas off, or Christmas and New Year's, and some of us said we’d take New Year’s ’cause there was no way we could get home for Christmas. I don’t know, a lot of the guys were traveling quite a distance. So we did and that gave us the next weekend. And some of us got rooms up to Cornwallis Inn, which was really a lovely Canadian Pacific hotel. And we went up there for just a couple days and had a good time. Didn’t do much except eat, ’cause there really wasn’t any New Year’s Eve event. So anyway, we got assigned New York, got on the train, went down...oh, and we were told to go to the Barbizon Hotel, Barbizon
Plaza Hotel. It was fine and so we set off and went to New York by train. I do recall feeling a little funny I guess, or awkward, no, not awkward, I felt a little different in any case, being in the Canadian Navy and all of a sudden I find myself going by train to New York City to join the Royal Navy. It was certainly an unexpected event. But we did take the train in any case, and got to New York City, got off and went out to get a cab, which wasn’t any problem. And we were on our way to a hotel and all of a sudden we were pulled over by somebody that turned out to be the cab taxi inspectors. They pulled us over and the taxi driver said, "Remember, I’m gonna’ charge you a dollar each.” Well, we got pulled over and we started to say something to this inspector and I remember he just [said], “Don’t worry fellas, he’s gonna’ lose his license for taxi.” Well, apparently he didn’t put the meter down and they were very sensitive about overcharging people, especially those from other countries, I guess. And, in any case, we got squared away and each of the inspectors talked to the taxi driver.

We did get up to the hotel okay and went in, got our bags and things. There was a sign pointing to the Navy, Royal Navy, so we went there. There was nothing to it, a nice little lounge, and he told us there were three things we should do. One, we should go down to the officer in charge. Told us we should go down to the desk and register ourselves and they would be expecting us. The second thing was that we could go over and draw money because, in the Navy, we never got paid. We just drew money as we wished, and that was a new experience for me. But in any case, we went down, got some money and also some expense allowance. And the third thing he told us to do, he said there was an ensign club over here where you could meet some people and get tickets for various things while you’re in New York. So we did all of those things and started a very delightful visit in New York City. I…the rooms were obviously very fine in this hotel but one thing we did notice, there was a plate on the door down low. So we found out that was the place where they pushed in a continental breakfast in a box; it was coffee and some roll and juice. This turned out to be a very fine idea because we were told we couldn’t go out of the hotel until twelve noon on any given day. So we had these breakfasts. Marty and I were in the same room and we got to know the maids and sometimes they’d shove in two or three ’cause we had to sit in the room until
noon. After noon, we were free to go around. So we did that and go up to the White Ensign Club and were able to get some tickets. There were some girls around that would sit and chat and they continued to come there and we continued to go up there and get tickets for various events. It was really a very happy time. We went and got all kinds of tickets and we got to finding our way around on the subway, in general. And we went to visit the museums and art galleries and we were around there for a couple of weeks and, in any case, after a while we got a little tired of just doing this. We actually saw a sign. They were looking for volunteers for the Royal Navy. Well, we went in to see about doing that and I remember the fella said to us, the officer in charge said, “Look, just stay here. You’ll never have it so good for the rest of the war.” Well, he was right. We did. We didn’t realize what kind of ship we were going on. I think it turned out to be an LST, which was Landing Ship Tank, and we certainly had our share of the Navy experience on-board. But in New York we did many things. One of the things, in retrospect, that seemed great was that we went up to visit the planetarium and while I was there I bought a number of books about the stars. And this came in very, very helpful ‘cause later on I got on the midnight watch which was twelve to four and I was able to identify the various stars and constellations, and it was really something to do at midnight watch from twelve to four. We also, while we were there we went into, we’re introduced to two new things. One was the radar and the second was the gyro compass. And these were both just coming, being made available to ships in the line, various ships such as ours.

So, in any case, we stayed around in the morning, didn’t have any particular assignments. Although once we were given, sent over to Brooklyn I think it was, to the fleet mail offices, to so-call “censure mail,” which meant reading over all the mail that was there for secrecy. I, in all the time I had to examine this, I never found anything that was not appropriate for men to send out. But it was a common thing for guys to write X’s, I presume for kisses. They signed their name and, you know, sometimes we’d just add a couple, maybe cross out a couple, because supposedly they were signals, or codes given, that were arranged with their wives or girlfriends. But in any case, it was kind of a dull job but somebody had to do it, I think.
We stayed in New York City and then we soon were assigned a train to go somewhere. We went out and we got on and the ratings came from Auberry. On the way, we passed through Chattanooga and girls were all out there in their candies chatting with the “choos-choos” they called them. And it was kind of an interesting experience, going down. One thing we kind of found out, the number of people on the train had... various people counted people on the train to get them straightened out. And [they] came back and had different counts. So the two commanding officers decided they would do the count. And they came back and they were two short. And finally somebody suggested that maybe they forgot to count themselves, which they did. It just seemed it took a long time to get the people on the train counted. It was interesting, we didn’t have sleepers but years later when a commanding officer traveled down in the Mediterranean during the invasions and things, he got a signal which I happened to, it was given to me so I saw what it was. Well, apparently when we stopped in Chattanooga they saw a trainload of empty sleepers. So he took all his shipmates over and they took the train down to New Orleans and he apparently, he was, had more authority to do this and so they decided they would charge him for it. That was what the signal was about; they had decided to take the money from public funds. The government decided to pay it rather than him, but the train ride was interesting by this and we then got to New Orleans and we were taken over.

I think there was buses there to take us over and put us on-board the ship. We got on and about twenty minutes later the commanding officer and the other officers called me in and said to go ashore and go get beer. And I thought it was a rather unusual thing but this is what I was told to do. So the next guy come up and they said, “Oh, no, you take a Wave in with you.” I found out officers weren’t really suppose to carry anything. They always had a Wave with you and the Wave got a suitcase, went ashore, bought some beer and brought it back. And that was the beginning of my experience on-board this ship, was to keep track of the accounts for liquor because you had to charge each person for liquor and they paid it off at the end of the month. And so I was in charge but I didn’t know anything about the various kinds of liquor, but it didn’t take long to learn. And we did keep track of it but we had to do it in pounds,
schillings, and pence. And that was a little bit of a struggle for me to figure out because it was my first experience with it. But we did keep the account. There was also the, there was some regulation that each officer was only allowed, apparently, a certain amount of money. This was all kept separate. It wasn't part of the ship's accounting. Just the officers had, were allowed a certain amount and some of them would go over the amount and some under the amount. So I really had to keep two sets of books—what was actually? and the other was what they had to record for purposes of, whatever, if anybody ever came to inspect the books. And I never did like doing it but, “You’re gonna’ do it.” But nonetheless, it was an experience of me to be on-board. And they kept bringing materials on because the ship was being commissioned with all kinds of truckloads, all kinds of food and equipment of various kinds and things that I knew much about. But as far as officer in charge, I had to sign for it. And I remember after we’d been there quite a while with all the stuff on-board and someone came along with something and I signed it and he said, “I don’t dare write that down.” And I said, “Well, what did I sign?” He said, “Well, you just signed for the ship.” The ship was then in Royal Navy hands and on my books, but it was the beginning of a very interesting experience being on this RN ship, even though we hadn’t gone anywhere yet; it was because of the language. The language wasn’t difficult to understand but the jokes and byplays; I missed them altogether for the first while. But, gradually, I got to know the language. Though it was different, some of the jokes and things like that. And the food was different. In anyway….and here I was, a fresh officer down on-board this ship in New Orleans and it was kind of a major adjustment from all the ?. But I gradually got so I understood what was going on. We finally took off from New Orleans and went out to sea. And then on the way, I don’t know whether we knew where we were going or not because in the Navy the commanding officers might tell the officers what he knew and the Officers might sometimes share this but very seldom did the word ever get beyond the officers because if the ship was hit or something they could make people tell a lot about what we were doing and going and various things and, obviously, if you didn’t know, you couldn’t tell. So that was the reason for the secrecy. But we had some idea we might eventually be going to the tropics because we were given a tropical gear
allowance, which meant we could go down and buy white uniforms. I wasn’t very anxious to spend the money anyway, but we were walking around in New Orleans one day and the commanding officer of the LST asked what we were doing. And I said, “Well, were looking to get tropical gear.” And he showed me where to go and, apparently, [had] just been there. So I had to go down and buy this tropical gear and I remember one thing was that the shorts that I got were more kind of like basketball shorts rather than Royal Navy shorts.

But in any case, we knew we were heading up to New York and that we did. And one of the problems as we got underway, something happened to the steering and we had to go down and change the gears and use block and tackle to...the fellas had to stay down there and steer the ship by using this block and tackle. There was a question whether we could go into harbor and get it fixed. Nobody wanted to do that ‘cause we were probably on our way back to England and all these sailors had just come from England so they wanted to get home and they didn’t want to miss a convoy. Gradually, we got it fixed. Then we got to New York. We got up to New York and stayed there for a very brief period of time and put some storage on-board and also filled some of the cabins where the troops were going to stay. The LST was capable of carrying about 30-40 tanks and then a lot of trucks and some anti-aircraft guns. And there was things, there was room for about a hundred soldiers so there was a lot of spare space and they loaded it with various things including steel, on deck, to take over to England.

And then it became very clear that we were going up the Panama [Canal] but I don’t remember anybody specifically announcing. But it seemed like it was from the types of things that went on-board. We got loaded and we went up and stopped overnight in Boston and, maybe a couple nights, and one night I had the duty and about eleven o’clock at night [they] came bustling up and told me that somebody had fallen overboard in the seas and went into the water. I went down and what it was, he was pretty much covered with oil. So this was a new experience for me to try and get the oil off. But many of the people didn’t know what to do, but anyway, we got him and got him cleaned up. And I asked him what he did, what happened. And she said, “Well, he
was walking back to the ship and he walked off the end of the pier.” He said, “Well, I thought the pier was a lot longer than it was and I just walked off the end.” But anyway, we got, it was another experience for me to watch.

Then we got to going up to Halifax. And pulling into the harbor in Halifax I got...a commanding officer sent a signal to the shoreside--permission to land a Canadian lieutenant in US waters. So he wanted me to have an opportunity to go ashore. As it turned out, many of us did go ashore overnight and went back to the HMCS King and stayed there overnight. But I remember they forgot to call me in the morning and I was desperate to find the fastest way down to the ship. And I found out that the ship wasn’t going as early as I thought it was, but otherwise, I probably would have missed the ship. In any case, they were hauling people back and forth in a small boat to the ship and I got back on-board and the commanding officer [said], “I called and told them to tell you not to come back on-board, that you could spend more time ashore.” But anyways, I was glad to get back on-board. But [I] did get to go back ashore in the afternoon for a bit but then we got all lined up later in the day to get in position to go on convoy. We started out in the morning and at night just one big, long convoy going over. And I looked back and you could still see land between the ? and I thought, “It’s gonna’ take a long time to get to Britain at this rate.”

In any case, we did get underway and we got up and were assigned to fixed watches, which meant there were merchant seaman and they...ordinarily the dog watches were taken and so you didn’t have the same watch every day, I mean, on fixed watches, which is a common thing on merchant vessels, I gathered. And so I got some sympathy and met the crew and I got to watch twelve midnight until four in the morning and from noon to four in the afternoon. Well, I’d get off the watch at four in the morning and get going, get some sleep, get some breakfast. And everybody was suppose to help to do the work of the ship in the morning and so I did that and went back on watch at noon, got off at quarter to four and if I wanted to eat, I had to get up to eat and then go back on watch at midnight. It seemed like this kept going on and [I had] these watches on each ship. It seemed like I could never get any more than four
or five hours of sleep at a time, but this is what it was. The ice would come up over the bridge and the water over the bridge and freeze and you couldn’t really see anything but [you would] have to stay up there.

But [I would] send the crews down off the deck because it was so cold you couldn’t see anything anyway. And we didn’t know if we were suppose to do that or not, but I guess everybody knew. And then we got to, we had these cold watches, and there were some awful icebergs around and during daylight we’d dodge the icebergs but at night we just seemed to forge ahead. And I don’t know anybody or recall having a collision with the icebergs, but [we] got there after several days. Oh, one of the other things was when we first got on-board they all kidded me, “Wait ’til you get to sea, Sonny!” I do recall a couple of lieutenants say “seasick,” and I never did get seasick so it kind of wore off. I was really kind of fortunate that I didn’t because some of them got really sick and getting used to it...we would joke about... (Tape at this point is really scratchy and hard to understand for a minute or two).

I was talking earlier about humor as I listened to the British humor. (End of tape)

**ALEX CHARTER - TAPE 9 - SIDE A**

I was speaking about being on-board ship. I was speaking earlier about humor and I was realizing what an important thing humor is. But certainly it needs to be understood because I remember occasions when they said something rather humorous. I guess I didn’t understand it that way. In fact, at times I thought they were...not insulting me, kidding me or something. It wasn’t until I began to understand their humor that I could interpret properly what they were saying to me. And I was also thinking just a minute ago when I was talking about being on the bridge when the weather was so cold that I sent people off of their watches because I figured that they couldn’t see anything and they were just standing there getting bitterly cold. And I suppose it was disobeying orders to send them off, but on the other hand, I’m sure that it was really helpful.
But anyway, we were going across the Atlantic and finally somebody sighted land and we proceeded to go in. We went into Bristol, not into Bristol, into Liverpool and there we pulled into the dock and unloaded the things that we had brought, the food, and we had filled any vacant space we had coming over across the water. After getting to Liverpool and unloading, we were permitted to go ashore. This was my first experience in Britain. I went down and I called somebody and...was a nurse I knew. I had her phone number and it wasn't any trouble to get through. And it was one of the amazing things during the war--how good the telephone system was and how easy it was to use it. I’m sure there were places and times when you couldn't get through but, basically, they seemed to keep the telephone system going and so I phoned and went down to the Liverpool train station. It was all dark, of course, and watched out moving around, my first experience of moving around in the blackout. And there were some small lights here and there but, basically, it seemed to be dark. But we seemed to get around some way. They did their best to black out the windows. In any case, my first experience on a train I left Liverpool and went down south into, eventually into London. And there was my first experience seeing places like Lester Square, Piccadilly Circus, St. Paul’s, Westminster Abbey and all the other places that we’d been hearing about all our lives. So I spent a couple of days there and I was just a great tourist and thoroughly enjoyed myself. And I was impressed with how cordial the people...I wasn’t as much a stranger in a Canadian Royal Navy uniform as some of the people but I was also impressed with the service. The Navy was the senior service and we just got everything at reduced rates. After spending some time on leave, which was just a couple of days, we went back up to Liverpool and from there we took the ship up to Gorick near Glasgow. We went up there and it soon became evident that we were going to load the ship to go somewhere and we didn’t have much time ashore because we were busy preparing for this loading. But did get up to Glasgow and it was county air. And that’s where my people, my relatives, my great-grandfather, had come through there. So it was kind of...but I felt a little bit at home but had no contact with anybody who was a relative. They were just all strangers. And I remember it being noted as a very dirty city, cold. It was interesting that later on they were to clean the place up, maybe
twenty or twenty-five years later it was very fancy. At that time it was very dirty and, of course, there were no lights and it was war, so it was kind of grim.

We finally got on-board at Gorick. I'm not sure which one but we loaded the Calgary Tanks and it was clear we were going south. We put them on, got them anchored. It was then they started to give me the assignment of loading the ship because the Canadians understood me a little better and the Americans certainly understood me a little better than the English. And that's when the settlers got involved and things got a little tight. But while we were there, Lord Von Patten invited each of the commanding officers to bring another officer with them to meet on the tank deck of one of ships. And this was obviously the first time that an LST had been loaded. By then we knew we were going to the “Med-terrain” because we also put on our tropical gear and so we, in any case, got…it was very nice. I was brought to meet him and say farewell. It wasn’t my type of thing but we reviewed people before I went and this was rather new.

So we got through there and were heading to London, heading down into the Mediterranean. We went down through the Straits of Gibraltar. I don't know when we realized that we were going to be landing in Sicily. We were just pulling alongside the dock and two dive bombers came over and dropped a couple of bombs and everybody ducked for cover. And I remember how ridiculous it was that I got out. When I got out, I was underneath an ammunition truck that was on deck waiting to be unloaded on our way down to Stanton. So we, in any case, the bomb missed us and if it was about seventy-five feet closer when it was dropped on our port side, the whole entire tank division, as well as the ship, would have been blown up. But in any case, they missed and we did get the Calgary Tanks off and it was very, very uneasy. And that's the way it was with all the troops that were on-board the ship. They didn't understand what was ship life was about and they were in their quarters and there were no portholes on the ship at all because of security. And I guess if they didn’t put any portholes on, there wouldn’t be any light from the ship, and it was highly secured, and they just came up and looked out of there and started to get ready to take off, and they were glad to get
off. That was one thing about the Army. When they were ready to get off the ship, they were anxious to get back and get back to their natural habitat. So we went into Syracuse, which was D-Day there in Sicily and, of course, we didn’t know there were other troops landing in Sicily at the same time down in other regions. And after we were unloaded, we went back over to North Africa and considered moving back and forth. All this life on-board since ? was routine and it’s interesting how you got to accept the routine of war.

Our people, retroactively, put a log together of all of the travels back and forth—the number of troops we carried, the number of lorries, the number of tanks, whatever we carried. I don’t know where they got all of this information. My guess was we were told to get it because somebody said we’d get hardlined for it and so we put this list together. Obviously we didn’t get any hardline, but the war was hard and it was just regular war. We had a regular routine, nothing unusual about it. So we kept running across, back and forth, to North Africa. There wasn’t much we could do at either end. It was just a routine thing of loading and taking off and going across. It was important to get additional troops there and so we did. After Sicily, we went back. It was pretty clear when we were in North Africa. We heard everybody around expressing the fact that we were going to go to Salerno, and we kind of shrugged it off 'cause we didn’t know when we were going. But that was the word that got around and, sure enough, the next day or so, we sailed and went into the beaches at Salerno. This was...we were, apparently, to go into one beach but something happened and we landed a little further down and, apparently, it was just as well because there was some German 88’s that were hitting the starboard from the beach which was on the port side. In any case, we did belong there and to go in and drop the anchor, which was at the stern, [we had to] go in at high tide and then we would drop down as the tide went. And we would be on the beach and open the bow doors and let the tanks and troops off and then wait until the tide came back up. And with the help of the anchor we would get off the beach and head back to North Africa for another load. And so that continued on for Salerno.
And I remember one time we picked up a couple of German soldiers. We were just transporting them back but some way or another we were able to translate, find out what they were doing. They apparently were captured there and brought on-board and we had to take them back to North Africa, responsible person?. They were obviously very hungry and thirsty and I told one of the, I told one of the Waves to go get some food and drink for them. Apparently they did and they came back and said, “Sir, they won’t eat or drink.” And so I went out and I knew a thing or two about people sipping wine. When it’s first opened, to indicate that it wasn’t poisoned, I went out and took a drink of the water and a couple mouths of the food. They realized that it wasn’t poisoned and they went after the food because they were just famished. We got them back over to North Africa as we kept running back and forth.

By that time we were moving up to Naples. We finally got Naples secure so we were able to go up there. When we were up there, they were obviously going to take a load someplace. And it was indicated that it would be at that...we were leaving north from Naples and we’re told that we could have the day off. Incidentally, D-Day in Salerno was October 22. D-Day was the day that the first landing of the invasion took place in Sicily. It was July 20 and I remember getting to those places and all the loading we did at minus two, or minus one, or minus five days was fast, D-Day was actually going to take place. The date wasn’t set until not long before D-Day. Actually, we were geared up to hit whatever D-Day was to be and to take place. In any case, we were up there in the harbor and the commanding officer said, “Anybody want to go ashore?” Well, I was a great tourist so I said, “Sure, I’ll go ashore.” Nobody else wanted to go; I was the only one. So later on I went ashore and that’s when I went up and visited Pompeii and it was the first time that I had ever seen it, of course, but I was very impressed with it as I could remember reading about it as a boy, reading about the last days of Pompeii. So I was fascinated to see it.

That afternoon, or toward the evening, after I got back on-board ship, they had orders to do a practice run for an invasion and we were to go into Salerno to practice. Well, the commanding officer said that was ridiculous. We had just been in an invasion
in Salerno so we didn’t need to go and practice; we had lots of practice getting onto beaches. In any case, this was all in January, January 21, or something like that, and we loaded up and went up to Anzio. And [we were] the back up, the headquarters ship, and so we were second in line with nothing to do unless the other ship got wiped out, which fortunately didn’t happen, so there wasn’t much we could do. But we were never allowed to have radio, even though we had them on-board. We were never allowed to turn it on because of giving our position. But since we were the headquarters, somebody turned the radio on and heard something. I remember saying that? some news ‘cause they said the radio tower and skies were taking, were invading at Anzio and about our position?. But we did get into Anzio and unloaded and it was…but apparently, the shore people didn’t meet any opposition there. They were charging the German units, apparently, and they got so far and stopped. That was their orders; they were only to go so far. And they didn’t realize they were taking the Germans by surprise, I guess, but boy, they met a tremendous opposition after that. They ran into it and we stayed on the beach, I don’t know how long. And we kept running to Naples and ? and other places just north of Naples, I guess they were. And we literally kept running back and forth every two or three days, hauling troops. And it was a pretty sad show every time we went in there. Was a gun there nicknamed “Anzio Archie” which could fire, which was based in the hills and they could fire out and reach us and fortunately, again, we never got hit we…but it was really grim and I can remember when we dropped casualties out and put them on the ship after we’d go up and unload and they’d put the casualties on-board the ship. That was really very grim indeed. And people talked later on about D-Day and Normandy and, I think Anzio was much worse, but, of course, we went in, saw all of this. It was very grim. I remember after a while we’d take lorry loads, truck loads of stuff up, and just unload them and leave the trucks there.

And, well, it got so cluttered on this beach that we couldn’t get off the beach. They couldn’t fight their way off the beach. But they kept telling us we’d have to bring the trucks back. So certain lorries…so as soon as we unloaded, it was my job to load and unload the troops and stuff, and since we got them all off, I went ashore and ran
around and saw lorries that were empty and told them to put them on-board. And we’d take them back, which we did. And it didn’t take us long to load them so we could get out of there but they...then we went up to Anzio for a long time in January, for some time, until near June. And it only takes a couple of days to go and a couple of days back and so we made a lot of trips. And finally...but we kept hauling them and there didn’t seem to be any relief in sight. They were unable to advance it. Was a case of getting in and fighting your way through, but they used to go ashore. While we were on the Anzio run we used to sail from ? up to ?, which was north of Naples, to Anzio. Typically, we’d sail about midnight and get up there at dawn or a little after and our loads would come out. We did have a little time to spend in Naples when we were running from there to North Africa. But usually we came in loaded and had to go right back up again, although not always. But I used to go into Naples in the evening to take the ship out at midnight. And I didn’t like to go into the bars too much and things, so I used to go up to Naples and they had an opera there sung by Pagliacci and Cavalleria Rusticana. I’d go up and it was better than doing nothing, so I used to go up and listen to the opera. It was amazing that I’d seen it so often that I could practically get up on stage. Although the problem was I couldn’t act and I couldn’t sing, but it was a lovely performance and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Sometimes when we were going back to North Africa, it was just ruins of course, and I remember going up to Carthage one time. I just wanted to see, so they say, that’s the best ruins in the world. There is nothing left to show but a blank field, as far as I could see, but it was OK.

We were going somewhere and it was nice to pick up a jeep. And we took it back and painted it blue like the Navy. We ran around a bit in it, but not too much. I don’t know what they thought it would be, painted blue, which was distinctive from anything else in...the other units were green colored. But anyway, we did get it and it was kind of fun to monkey around. Of course, it was easy to get [it] back on-board ship because we had the ramps where we could do it. But most ships didn’t have a place to get on and off the ship.
One time we were going back to North Africa, [I was] very sick so they took me ashore to a hospital. And I went in there and I was trying to tell them I had diphtheria. Not that I knew what it was but I remember them getting me to the hospital. It was just jammed, of course, with all sorts of casualties and?. I was out in the hall one night ’cause there wasn’t any room or bed, inside. Finally they did get me in and started into therapy. And then they decided to send me to a rest place. By the way, while I was in there I got bit by bed bugs, I guess, I don’t know, but I got bit and like I said, it was not anything very serious compared to all the other things that were going on in that hospital.

But anyway, they put me on a train that went out to the desert and here it was tents, which was a rest place. It was rest all right. There wasn’t anything to do at all but, of course you could eat, but I guess you weren’t there to do anything else. I decided that was enough of that in a day or two and took the train back into Tunas, went down to the dock and, my God, I was lucky because my ship was back in the harbor again. There it was, back. So I got on-board and, I guess, was none the worse for wear. But it was an experience in that hospital, in any case, and they...one night, I guess it was in May, they were loading the ship, thought they had it all loaded to go to Anzio again, and got instructions to hold over. So they took it all off and couldn’t figure what was going...but we found out we were going back to England and that was to the great delight to the crew, of course, ’cause they were all English people except one or two other officers. The officers were from Canada, somebody from New Zealand and someone from Australia; somebody from South America and, in any case, they or the crew were colonials, but the commanding officer of the ship was always an Englishman, at least from my point. So we got loaded and got unloaded and started back to England and went out and went through. I remember we had this jeep and I remember that somebody traded the jeep for a donkey. I’m not quite sure why this was...’cause there was nothing else to do. But they had the donkey on-board and it kept braying and braying. And going through Gibraltar on the way back to England, all of a sudden, I don’t know whether one of the crew let it go overboard or [it] fell overboard, but it happened, and the chief turned into the donkey. He went back there; it seems to me
they took some Italians back there to do work. I don’t know why but maybe they took them back to do some work there. But anyway, it was very stormy when we went and very...

**Nearing the End of the War**

We got going in Swansea. It was on the way back from the “Med-terrain.” I was on the bridge and it was a very dark and rainy, miserable night and I saw ships all around us. And I called the captain and I thought I should let him know what was going on. And he said, “Come up.” Said, “Flash your lights for a minute,” which was something we never did. None of the other ships flashed their lights and he said to me, “You got yourself into this. Get yourself out of it.” Well, I did get out of it without having an accident or anything, and we went into Swansea and the sailors and everybody went ashore pretty well. And went from there down to Southampton and, as it turned out, D-Day was coming up in Normandy so we got back down to Southampton. I remember a couple of times we went ashore and went up to London. Of course, there weren’t as many tourists as we were in London. But the military were back and were getting ready to go to Normandy and D-Day and we had a few days there and went up and stayed in a hotel, and did it, also, to get a uniform and went in and got ready and he said, “Well, I guess you won’t need it for a few weeks.” And he also knew that they were gone off on this invasion. As it was pretty clear what day it was going to be. If certain things happened to certain ships then you’d take up their position. As far as we were concerned, we just sailed across the channel, at night of course, got over there the next morning, brought in, went up on the beaches and went in at high tide. And when the tide went out, we went down. I went down below and saw that all the tanks had got off and saw something sticking up [from the] tank deck. I wasn’t quite sure what it was but it looked like some gear of a tank. So we waited until tide went out and got up and got free of this because we were up so high and [it had] put this hole in the bottom of the tank deck. Got back to England and they decided to keep it landing and there were probably thousands of ships in ruins all over the beaches and everything. We
were ahead of the battle and, in any case, this went on for many, many days. And I remember we got back to England and they sent us, well, you’ll get a few days off and on ship when we got back. They were all ? and waited for us at all. But we sailed right into the dry dock. They didn’t even stop. In fact, they just ran right into this dry dock and they hoisted us up and fixed the hole in the bottom. I don’t know how, but it was really something. I never saw them work so fast. But they were all geared up to do this thing and so we were off and going back and forth to the beaches and after a while it got so that we went up to Auberry and sailed from there across to ? point. And [there was] a big wreck on the way into the harbor but some way or another we kept going around and around it until we got landed. This was the Battle of the Bulge. (End of tape)

I think I was talking about going across the channel into Austin and made a trip back and forth from Tillsboro. And it was my job to take the ship out to sail at midnight and, by the way, I would usually go ashore and go around and have a few drinks and something but I...but the first lieutenant was drunk, or had been drinking or something, so I never did. I’m not too sure but it probably wouldn’t have been a good idea because some nights we needed a little help to cope with the situation. But I felt that very strongly, so I never did. Most of the time when I went to shore I would go up and try to go to a play in London. I was very fond of them. The commanding officer introduced me to his sister who was married to Jack Hulbert, a very famous actor on the stage in London, and also to Bobby Howard who was also a well-known actor at the time. He had a daughter, Sally, who later went on and became quite a theatre person herself. In any case, I had been introduced to these people so it added an additional touch during my travels. Sometimes we’d go up to the theatre and drop by and see people like Bobby Howard. It was an interesting custom that I thought was rather appropriate. Sometimes if we had liquor, we could sometimes take a bottle with us and we’d go backstage and give them a bottle of liquor. It was rather interesting. They never gave you liquor out of your own bottle; they always seemed to have a little bit in reserve from other people. I thought it was rather nice that you could go in and drink your own drink. In any case, I use to go up to the theatre and the theatre was around six o’clock
so the people could get on the tube and get home at a reasonable time. So I’d do that and get, work my way back to the ship and be back in lots of time to go across the channel again. I’d go into the theatre. It was always possible to get a ticket, especially if you were a naval officer. And I remember, I cannot remember a time when I could not get a ticket to whatever I wanted to do in Britain. Then the one night I’d go down to see the theatre ‘cause Laurence Oliver and Richard Livingston were playing in Henry the IV, Part II. And I went up to the counter to see if I could get a ticket at the ticket booth and she said, “Certainly.” So she gave me a ticket and I went up and it was a seat on the mezzanine. I got up there and I said to the woman, I gave her the ticket and she said, “Would you mind just standing here?” So I stood there and waited a long time and finally I said, “I was told to wait here. I wondered if there was a seat somewhere.” And she said, “I’m sorry, sir, but the place is really full. But we would let you stand here and if a seat becomes available, of course we’ll give it to you.” Well, a seat didn’t become available but I remember standing through the play. Of course, it was magnificent production of Shakespeare and I liked it.

And I remember one other time we went down to ?. We seemed always together wherever we were in the “Med-terrain,” Halifax, New Orleans; we always seemed to end up together. Well, we were way away somewhere and I said, “Let’s go down to see if it’s gonna’ be possible to get in. Tell them where we are and see if it’s not possible to stand there.” We got down to the gate and where you went in and I said, “We are way down there in the line.” And I said, “We’re just wondering if it’s worth standing. Do you think there’ll be a chance of us getting in?” And he said, “There certainly is. Just walk right this way,” and we walked right in. It was nice to see a cricket match at Lourdes. Of course, you’d never have that many people together because of the bombs and things, but this was right after D-Day so you could do it.

But I remember another time when I went up in York and I stopped in to have a drink up at the bar and cost me two schillings for a drink. And the next guy side along of me ordered the same drink. It was a scotch and they said, “That’s gonna’ be four schillings.” So I wondered about it and, finally, I ordered another one. I gave him a
pound note and, sure enough, he only charged me two and gave me the rest in change. So there was some advantages to being in the Navy--getting to see the theatre, and this, was typical of what happened. Another time didn’t happen. Three or four of us decided there were a few things to do and we really didn’t want to do them and I said, “Why don’t we go out and look at the zoo.” I don’t know whether there were any animals in it or not, but keep the animals in the zoo because if they bombed it and they got out, it could be very dangerous. But we didn’t know if there was any in it. We went over and took a double-decker bus and I said to the driver...there wasn’t anybody in it, I said, “Are you going to the zoo? We want to get to the Zoo. Could you tell us how to get there?” And he said, “Certainly, just get on.” We all got on and we’re riding and he didn’t stop. I said, “Don’t you have any stops on this bus?” And he said, “No, I thought I’d just run you out to the zoo.” So here we go, three or four of us in a double-decker bus, all the way to the zoo. And I often wondered what the heck happened to all the people that were standing and waiting for that bus. I don’t know how long it took before the next one came along, but it was interesting to me when things like that happened.

We could get a “warrant” it was called, a free ticket on the railroads. And we kind of figured out, instead of getting a warrant every time, we’d just get one. So I got one from the Isle of Wight to Inverness. Isle of Wight is way down south and Inverness is in the north. And it run from Inverness to Isle of Wight, so wherever I got on the train in England it was one way to one of the two places. They used to punch it every time we got on-board certain places, so a couple of warrants were all punch holes. But apparently [I] got around to getting another one but nobody worried ’cause we got them for nothing anyway. I might mention, also, for a while and very frequently, we anchored in Southampton, down in the south. Not anchored, but pulled into the docks down there. And I remember it was about this time that they had...they were called the buzz bombs. They were bombs on mini airplane-like things that they sent out from across the channel and they’d simply run until they run out of whatever power they had. And they would just drop and so it was really no way of predicting where they were going or when they were gonna’ stop on their own. And I remember we used to sit and
listen. If it kept going, we knew we were safe and that somebody else was gonna’ have to cope with it. But I remember listening to them. Also, about the same time, it talks about a big explosion and somebody said it’s the glassworks blowing up or something else. As it turned out these were missiles, fresh missiles, that were coming over. They were powerful things that landed in various places. It was part of the security for the government not to acknowledge what they really were, but it soon got around what they were. And the other bombs, called buzz bombs, ’cause they buzzed I guess, I don’t know…but these were some of the things we got through and were lucky we got through when we did. Sometimes they’d send planes up to shoot them down, but whenever they shot them down, of course, they’d still explode. But the other…I guess at that time…but sooner or later we had V-E Day so that was the end of that.

Speaking of landing wherever they might be, it was because they would cause damage. I remember one time when we were in Italy [we were] out walking around and had a few minutes prior to leaving and went up into this little village walking around and a woman there was showing me holes where the shells had landed and the destruction that was caused. And I remember I said, “Oh, Germans ma’am.” And she said, “German, British...all the same.” And all this destruction to people that were just trying to get along and might be put in the services but had to go through it and do jobs related to the war, that if a shell fell, it didn’t make much difference who sent it. It was along during this time that I was called in and was told that we were gonna’ be sent back to Canada and if I wanted to pick up an LST, another LST, to get back. I wasn’t sure why I was being sent back but someone said that I was gonna’ be a first lieutenant on one of these newly commissioned LST’s. I don’t know what happened but, in any case, I was sent up to Gorick and [I] took the Queen Mary back to Halifax and was sent back across to Canada on the train and [it] stopped at Alberta where my mother and father were and [I] had a visit with them. It was nice and it was quite cold and gets...and if I had some snowshoes...and if I could get some shells for his rifle he thought I might like to go out looking around. Well, I’d never been a hunter so that didn’t work out very well but...I didn’t know how to work the snowshoes and if you don’t know how to work them, it is very difficult. But anyhow, I went out. It was kind of fun
and different and I was glad that Dad did it for me; he was trying to make me feel welcome. I stayed there for a while and went down to Vancouver and I didn’t know when I was going to war down there and they told me to wait around. They reported in to the Navy and told me to wait around, so I waited around. It was a very unproductive time for me, actually. This was after V-E Day but there was still a war in Germany, or the east, Far East. And I waited around and, fortunately, Scott let me stay at their place, or apartment, which was quite an inconvenience to them. But they did and still I wasn’t doing anything productive and Bob Davidson asked me to come up and stay at his house for a while, and I did that. I’m not quite sure why Bob wasn’t in the service. He must have had some physical problem of some kind. In any case, I stayed with Bob and had a good time. He was the fella that we were in the fraternity [with] and always took me in his car to go to the various dances and various things. He was very friendly about it and very helpful; a very good friend. He was later training to be a dentist in Portland, Oregon but I don’t know what happened, but something. He died very suddenly and I never did know what the story was.

Anyway, this was in Vancouver. I finally got instructions to go over to Squymount. So went over to Squymount and there we had to recommission the ship and get it going. It was very pleasant there but I had been used to being under so much pressure and, actually, [was] very active [at the] end of the war and felt I wasn’t doing very much. We did get the ship commissioned and we sailed and we’re gonna’ go back to England. I wasn’t quite sure why we were to England. They said [that] on the way to the Far East across the Pacific, it wasn’t up to me to decide what the routine was. But we did. We went down, it was a good crew, nothing very exciting happened except we got down partway and we had to go into...one of the officers, Leon Abrams, I don’t know what his problem was, but anyway, they decided to stand watch. So that meant we had to go to the fixed watches again and I remember I got the twelve to four in the morning, twelve to four in the afternoon and I really didn’t enjoy it but I didn’t fight it because at night up on the bridge everything was fine, and as I said before, I used to watch for stars. It was rather pleasant and, as far as I could see, there wasn’t any danger around but we still had to have the lookouts and everything else just as a
precaution, but not much was happening. We went down and we were to go into San Diego, which was a US Naval Base on the Pacific Coast in the United States. And we had pulled into the harbor, just got started in and the captain called me up and he said, “Send a signal to the people at shore—’having a farewell party on-board ship tonight.’” And I said, “Gee captain, we haven’t even got in yet, a farewell party?” And he said, “Go ahead and tell them.” Well, we did. And the thing was, “It’s too bad you’re not going, that you have to sail right away and we forgot to have you out to dinner, or take you to a club, or do something or other.” Well, I kept track of these invitations and, sure enough, we didn’t go the next day. We didn’t go until two days but I do remember the next day after the joyous farewell party, it was...we...it was...

We went up to Hollywood and he came back and said he was going back up the next day again, that Warner of Warner Studios had invited him and the rest of us could go up with him if we wanted, and we thought it was a big joke. And I said, “I’ll go with you.” And he said, “Good.” And I found out we were to take a certain train from San Diego up, get off at a certain place. And Warner, who was the man in charge of Warner Studios, had sent his personal physician in a car over and he picked us up and took us back over there. Warner came up to meet this fella and he kept calling Ian, Sir Ian. And I said to Ian, “What’s this all about? You’re a ‘sir’ now?” And he said...well, apparently his father was in charge of Warner Studios in Britain and was obviously a big fella in Warner Studios, and Warner certainly respected him. Anyway, and he left Jack Warner to do something and Ian said to him, and whatever he called me, “He’s never been around the studios before.” “Well,” Warner said, “just wait. Just stay here.” And he called his personal physician over and told him to take me around, show me the green room, all the things we were supposed to see. And I remember after...so he did and took our lunch and took me back over to Warner’s office where Ian was and said, “Would you like to go out the racetrack with us this afternoon?” And [I said], “Sure, it’s fine with me.” I was delighted to go and we got into his car and had a driver and drove out to Santa Anita and headed to the race tracks. We put an extra couple of bucks on the races. I think I made a little bit of money, and Ian had. And we said, they said, Warner said, “Let’s go.” Ian said, “We’ve got a little money we’ve bet.” And he said to
the attendant, “Give them the money so we can go.” We thought it was couple of bucks but when the guy came over and gave us the money, it was kind of embarrassing ’cause we didn’t know much better. We got back in and took the train back out to San Diego, to the ship, that night. What a big day it was. While I was there, also, somebody came down from the studios. I’m not quite sure what it was, whether it was sent by, I don’t know, but anyway, somebody came and picked us up and took us out to a place, this beautiful place, Atwater, a radio production business, and there was a party there for the working actors. He was always throwing these great parties. It got reported in the papers in Vancouver and everything, and they had one every couple of weeks. Oh, there was lots of things to do and met a bunch of the British actors—Cary Grant—and had a great time. I think that one of the things that impressed me was the rugs in the bathrooms and it was just wonderful food, lots of people dressed up in some kind of, they had tails on or some special costume he wore for this party and I guess he wore a different one for every party he had. And we had a great time, as far as I was concerned.

And when we finally got around to sailing, we sailed from San Diego, went down through the Panama Canal which really was quite impressive to me, and we got over to some place that people came on-board. There was a woman and her son and, apparently, she was the wife of the British Ambassador there and was going back to England. They put her on the ship, which meant the captain gave her his cabin and all the rest of us moved just a little bit. But he was really the only one that was put out. He didn’t seem to mind; it was all right. But we had to take them all the way back to England and...oh, another thing I wanted to mention, too, was one of the things I remember was quite a few of the ship’s company let somebody on and included the commanding officers and a few others. [We] went down to that restaurant, that Chinese restaurant, the famous restaurant where they had all the marking of the hands outside on the pavement that had been put down.

Went into this restaurant, this was in Hollywood and it was very lovely, looked like a very expensive place, and started talking about paying or something--tips and all.
And he said he was gonna’ take care of it. He got the bill, took one look at it and said, “Come on boys.” We had to divvy up. It was very expensive, but it was just kind of interesting to see that all evening he was a big shot and all of a sudden he didn’t realize he probably didn’t have enough money to do it.

In any case, we got out of there and were, as I said, sailing down through the Panama Canal. We stopped at Maine. I think we docked at Maine. I guess we didn’t go through. Anyway, we got off and this other fella...and I thought we’d go into town. Somebody told us the name of a place to go to. I don’t know whether it was a place to eat, but anyways, but the place was supposed to be good and where everybody went. So we got off and walked a little way and decided to take a cab. A cab driver was standing there at the door of his cab and I got in, and I was just getting in, going across the back seat and I saw the name of the place that we were going to. So we said, “The hell with it. Just go over there.” The other door was open on the other side and we got out, and we were walking across and I looked back and this cab driver came around to close the door on that side. He looked and, of course, there wasn’t anybody there. And so I remember that taxi ride in Panama or, in any case, the lack of a taxi ride in Panama. But it was a very interesting place to go. Again, I was very much impressed and a new experience too, lots of walking and stuff.

It was pretty impressive to go through the Panama Canal and stuff. We had a long sail from there to Britain. I’m not quite sure what we were doing in Britain; we seemed to have some type of problem with the boilers. It was obvious we were getting ready to go the Mid-East and, umh, we were around and had quite a bit of leave and I remember I was up in London on, when V-E Day was declared. And we seemed to notice in the papers, of course we kept up with them before, when they were landing the bombs, and Hiroshima, and the other place, and they finally declared the end of the war. So it was just the same time that they were opening Parliament and it was the first time that the King and Queen had ridden state. It was very impressive and, of course, everybody was out because of the end of the war and to get a little color and a little excitement and things. And it was very impressive, them riding along and I...it was
sort of a signal that things were back to normal, by them riding in state. It was the big traditional to-do. So I would go and walk around there for a couple of days and then go back, to get out of this war. So I went down to Canada and I couldn’t be sent back home and, I guess, well, everybody asked the same question, maybe I was the first one, I don’t know, but he said, “Yes, and I’ll tell you, there’s a special, there’s a destroyer going out tonight, back through the Panama Canal, back to Vancouver and you might like to go. It would be a nice ride for you. You wouldn’t have anything to do.” I said, “Well, I appreciate all that but I just came through the Panama Canal to get over here and I’m…” He said, “Oh, well, all right.” I don’t know what day of the week it was, but he said, “Thursday night, go up to Gorick and get on the Queen Mary, or Queen Elizabeth, whichever one is sailing back to Halifax.” So I got up there and sailed back to Halifax, had an uneventful trip going back. On these ships they always give assignments to naval officers. Even though it was a civilian ship, they were mustering all the naval officers from various parts of the empire wherever they happened to be, and, umh, [being] a Canadian Naval Officer on-board we felt so good ’cause we never got any of the assignments or anything. Of course, we weren’t smart enough to figure we shouldn’t mention this, but we got up in the, there was sort of a war room on-board, on part of the lounge up there, a lovely lounge on the ship. The next day they ? and they said, “This includes the Royal Canadian Naval Officers.” So we had to go and I got assigned my post, way up on the top deck. We got up there and there were some officers standing around who told us what to do. We went over to the lifeboat and I said to one, “How do we get down there?” And he said, “You don’t.” I said, “What do you mean?” Fortunately, nothing happened on-board so no one had to use the lifeboats, but it was kind of an interesting comment I thought.

We got back to Halifax and went down, well, they had moved Cornwallis Base inland, built a new place not very far inland. And they said to get on the train and go up. I got on this train. It was kind of ? matter of fact and went right through to Cornwallis, the base, or near there. In any case, I was met to take care of us for discharge. Apparently they had a routine set-up, so they had all these tests and they were testing most everything to think of. And I got all done and got back on the same
train the next twenty-four hours later and went back. And I wanted to go around and visit some people so I got aboard and went back to Toronto; I guess is where I was going. But I must say, they were all really tuned up to take care of us and I thought it was amazingly efficient. I thought it was only about a week ago that V-E Day was declared. I went down to the Canadian housing in London and Delaware Deck and here I was, back about a week later. I think it was only seven days, and I had a day or two to get up to Gorick, but I must have been the first guy to get out of the service, I would think. Unless there was some officers someplace that got out, but it was pretty fast going. So I went down and got on the train to go to Toronto. I just recall that getting out of the Navy was about the same as coming in--very strict but very sensitive people. And I must say that the whole experience was delightful. We had to fight a war and I enjoyed being in the ? more than I could anticipate being in any other service. I had an opportunity to see a lot of the world, meet a lot of people from different countries, and my tour, in many ways, opened up my thinking about people, religion and social testing. I enjoyed the opportunity to learn about things, various courses that I took and everything, and the substance of nature; including the stars, experiences at Oxford, the theatre, Carthage, just a whole group of different topics that I was glad to have an opportunity to learn so much [about]. As I got on the train and was...of course, I had lots of time to reflect what I was gonna’ do and where I was going next because I was not yet out of the Navy. I had to get back to Vancouver. But in my mind, and for all other reasons, I was out of the service. And they told us, as I came back to see my parents and reflect on the many things, what that they had done for me and provided for me. And I am forever grateful.
**Verdant Valley Farm 1908**

This tape, which we will call CC1 is to indicate some of my early days on the farm and in Verdant Valley, Alberta; the farm which my father had homesteaded. He came there in 1908 with his father and his brother, Clifford, to homestead and got take out preemptions, as they were called. They had to stay on the farm for a number of years and build some kind of a shelter where they could live. We have some early pictures of the shelters and they were indeed very primitive. But in any case, he did farm and apparently, for a while, worked on the building of the bridge into Drumheller, when the railroad came in.

My mother came to visit her sister Annie who was married to Herbert Morrow. She was the first white woman in the area. My mother and Aunt Edith, her sister, came out to visit Aunt Annie, I guess this would have been about 1911-12; I never did get the exact date when they came. In any case, they came out to visit Aunt Annie and while they were there Mom met Dad and Aunt Edith met W.D. Hughes, our Uncle Bill.

Mom and Dad were married about...in 1913 and...they lived on the farm in Verdant Valley after they were married and stayed there for a number of years. My sister Jean was born on August 3, 1914. We always kidded her about the idea that she started World War II, which in Canada began in 1914, August 4.

**Memories of Life on the Farm**

I remember only isolated incidents, which I will comment about in a brief manner. One was I remember going on a wagon, a sleigh, over to Grandma and Grandpa’s in the middle of winter. It was, of course, pulled by wagons and I remember going over there. I think it was about Christmas time because I remember Mom had a bell which she gave to us to ring. I always thought it was just to draw my attention away from whatever else we were doing.
I remember another time when we came back from Grandma and Grandpa’s and went into the bedroom and there were feathers all over the bed. Apparently they had a canary, which some way or another the cat got to while we were visiting. I remember at the time wondering why it was that there was a canary out there in the middle of the prairies, but I later on came to understand it because people, even out there, they would get something unusual and sell it to older people as a unique thing. I recall also along the same line, that one time there were a number of people who came to visit us on the farm and I was given the task of taking an apple and giving it to everybody. And, of course, there was only a given number of apples and, as I had mentioned before, apparently somebody was running a special and they were fresh apples. And this was the special treat that people did when they had visitors come in and visit them. The thing I remember was that I gave out all the apples and I didn’t have one for myself, keep one for myself. And I remember everybody feeling so sorry that I didn’t get an apple, but I felt...I can remember feeling very good that I gave them all out and I didn’t complain about not having one for myself.

I remember another time when the cowboys came up to the farm, they were on their way somewhere, I guess, but anyway they took me, carried me, put me on a horse, and took me for a long ride and then, of course, brought me back. Those were the days when horses and cowboys were just...not horses...cowboys were beginning to be active on the ranches and raising cattle. The farm that Dad ran was a wheat farm and I recall at some time or another getting on a big steam engine and standing there alongside Dad while he went out and I think we were plowing the fields. And I remember also the time of harvesting when the thrashers came in. Somebody had a thrashing machine and they moved from farm to farm to thrash the wheat and there were many people there, all of the farmers came to follow the tractors around to help to do it and, in due time, they got to all the farms. Later on, in the time of the thrashing, there was special rates on the railroad for farmers...for people to come from the cities, which were mostly in the east in those days. They came out and worked for the summer as laborers and then, I guess, went back home. But I can remember this big thrashing machine and as they thrashed it the wheat came into a grainery. A grainery is
a small building where the wheat came in and kept it in the grainery until they had wagons, [for] the wheat, to take it down to the railroad. And I think the closest place was actually in Drumheller, where there was an elevator where the wheat was stored and later put on boxcars and hauled away long after the thrashing. But I can remember being in this grainery and the wheat coming down. Actually, it was under quite a lot of pressure and to some extent hurt a bit if you got right underneath. But I wasn’t long in there, digging out, but thrashing was a big event. As I said, they did it by all the farmers getting together, a big enough crew to run the machine, to haul the wheat in from the fields and around and then to thrash it. This was typical of the early days there when people came and helped each other. Another example was a quilting bee and it was actually at a quilting bee where I gave out the apples that I just spoke about. But the women got together and worked on the quilt. And, of course, all it is really is a bit of social gathering as well because there weren’t many people close by. When Dad first went out he said that the closest neighbor was ten miles away. It may have been a bit of an exaggeration, but not much. But Grandma and Grandpa were the closest neighbors that we had, and that was quite a track across, especially by horse and wagon.

First Family Car

But gradually, I guess gradually, I don’t know...anyway, Dad had one of the first cars. They told the story where, we didn’t remember it, but the gas tank used to be under a cushion in the front where the driver and passengers were able to sit, usually one passenger. And apparently they had got some small potatoes, they were called seed potatoes, and they were in the car. Well, in some way or another we got the top off the gas tank, it just screwed on, and put...filled the gas tank up with little potatoes. I don’t remember doing it but I certainly remember hearing about it. By the time that I was old enough to hear about it, it was apparently a very funny story. I remember people talking about it, I guess it was, and there wasn’t much Mom and Dad could do about it anyway. So I guess they
just kind of thought it was a joke. But the car...the automobile did come in and that was certainly a big transformation to travel distances out there by car. I recall driving around someplace and I remember it was just an isolated incident, but it was by a field where cowboys were out and they were doing lassoing and things. This was a sport they did on a Sunday afternoon and they had a small rodeo in the field out there. But I can remember not seeing much point to it, but anyway, it was fun I guess. There wasn’t anybody there because there weren’t anybody to be an audience for it.

**Elementary School Days in Drumheller**

When we got older, Mom and Dad had decided to go into Drumheller. I remember that Jean was to go to school when we went there in the fall and that she wasn’t...there were so many trying to go to school that she wasn’t able to go, so I gathered we stayed in Drumheller for quite a while and, of course...I think it was the next year that they built two new schools out near where we finally got a little house but two separate buildings for an elementary school, they were called Park Dale. I remember the two teachers--Jean’s teacher was Kernick and mine was Ms. Mowers. And I can remember going to school there but I remember very little of being in the classes, except we went every day and it was very enjoyable. I do remember one day, though, that it was sixty below zero. Somebody came in the house for some reason and, in any case, we weren’t allowed to go to school. And I remember crying a bit because I wanted to go to school, but Mom wouldn’t...whoever this person was that was there kept saying, “But it’s sixty below.” Of course, sixty below didn’t mean anything to me; I didn’t know what below anything was. But I certainly got the idea that it was very cold and that was pretty unusual when they closed the school there for cold.

We finally got a little house right opposite the railroad tracks, between the...there was a street, dirt of course, between us and the railroad tracks and almost directly opposite us was an elevator that I spoke about earlier that brought the wheat in from the farms and stored in elevators until they could get trains and ship it off to the markets. As I recall, the house had a little kitchen and off the kitchen was a little
bedroom and then that was at the back and at the front was a living room and another bedroom. I don't know how many years we lived there but it was three or four and we stayed there until we went to Rosedale. Life in Drumheller was very pleasant and happy as kids. There were a lot of activities on a very minor scale but just beginning and Dad was a very active person in many of them. I remember they built a curling rink and we used to go down there once in a while and watch men and women curl. There was also a baseball field and I remember one time they were having a contest and, of course, it was only the people in the community who were there and a few came in from the farms and places. But it was some sort of a festive day, I don't know, it might have been the First of July, which was a national holiday in Canada or something. But there was a baseball game which was a big event, as any sports game, it was the Fats against the Leans, men who played, and Dad was in those days, I remember, a fat man and it was...they played it outdoors and it was quite a festive occasion.

There were other activities, although I wasn't old enough to do them. Dad was active in the Boy Scouts that started and I remember going out to visit them when there was a camp out alongside the river. Even in a place like Drumheller, which was developed into a very substantial coal mining town after ?. It was known all over Canada as being of very high quality. And there were just coal mines all over the place. And I can remember visiting Aunt Annie, the one that I had spoken about earlier and later moved into Drumheller, and her son, Ross. We were over there visiting and we needed some coal for the fire and I remember Ross going out in the backyard, he took something off and just dug some coal. I think it was probably open; there wasn't much of it and it didn't bother it but I was just impressed that he could easily get coal out of the ground in some places. Coal was the big industry there and all the sports teams, like the ice hockey team, were called Miners. That was the name that was given to them. And in Drumheller also it was a desire of people to be a little upscale. And they tried to...they started the Masons and the Eastern Star, the women counterpart of the Masons, and Dad and Uncle Walter were very active in it and Mom became a star, too. But these were quite the thing. I remember Dad had a set of tails that he wore. The women all wore long dresses of course, some of the very fancy, to these things and
they even put on an opera to pinafores called...I can remember as a kid going down and seeing it and Mom was singing in it. And I had said something about singing and she said, “Oh, I wasn't really doing it. I was just moving ropes around on the stage.” But in addition to the lodges and opera and things, there was always the desire to do a little better and be involved in some of the finer things in life, like music and plays. Early, there was a theater, a movie theater in Drumheller and I remember going down to it and it was...I think it was a Charlie Chaplin thing, but I remember this car going along and, of course, something happened to it--the parts all went away and I remember all the parts coming back together again and the car going down the street. But . . .

In the early days out there, the church was a rather significant factor in people’s lives. And we were no exception. We went to church, Sunday school, every Sunday. I remember I got a Bible for perfect attendance and Jean got one, not quite as elaborate, for good attendance and [she] always said that they got it mixed up--that she had perfect attendance and I had good attendance. In any case, we did get the Bible which I still have until this day.

**Branding on the Verdant Valley Farm**

One other thing that I forgot to mention about out on the farm was the fact that the animals all had to be branded in the province. It had to do with theft. They had a brand guy make, it was Half Diamond over AC, and I can remember...in fact, I can still smell when they were branding the cattle because they had to heat the iron and, of course, put the brand on the back end of the...backside of the animal. And I remember that very clearly. Later on, after we moved to Syracuse, Dad got a branding iron made and we still have it. And I got small ones, replicas of them, for each of the children made by Oren Lyons, who was a very prominent Native American Indian in Syracuse. He saw it and he took it one day when he was visiting us at our house. And he took it out to Oneida and had somebody make for him. They put corn on them and wear them around their necks. I got one for each of the children. But I remember that branding as being a very smelly occasion.
Life Continued in Drumheller

Mom and Dad were great ones for travel and it was indicated by the fact that she and another person, probably in her early twenties, would leave Ontario and go all across the country, the two of them, to visit somebody out on the prairie. It was really kind of a remarkable event and indicated that Mom was always kind of an adventuresome soul who just loved to travel. And she was one of seven sisters and they always...Dad said that there were...the Kern girls, there were seven girls and no boys and Grandpa and Grandma’s family. He always said that they were born with wheels on them.

When we were in Drumheller, Grandpa and Grandma gave up farming and moved into Drumheller and Grandpa built a house. He was a very smart man and also very practical. He did a much better job of farming than either of the boys did. But in any case, they had moved into Drumheller and not too far from where lived. We used to go over and visit them periodically and we used to...before Grandpa and Grandma, we used to drive out in this early car that dad had, drive out there to see them on the farm. Once when we were visiting them in their house, in some way I was in the bedroom, not only did I close the door but some way I locked the door. I was just a little kid, I was certainly under six. But they had to call Grandpa in and he had to take the whole window out, the frame and all. It was quite a job. I remember getting out and walking through the door into the living room and Mom and Grandma were sitting there and they were glad to see me. Nothing happened to me, but I can remember that occasion very clearly and Grandpa coming...I’m inside looking out, seeing him take the window. He had to take the whole thing out; you couldn’t take the panes apart. They were always very kind to us kids. And Dad’s sister, Margaret, was also in the area on a farm. She was married to Uncle Walter, W.A. McCrimmon, and he taught school. He taught various places and sometimes he went away and taught by himself and came home on the weekends. And then another time he moved to...they were in Rosedale, Alberta, which is about seventy miles up the river from Drumheller and when they built schools in those days, they had...in any case, they had to build places for the teachers
to stay and they were called teacher?. And so Aunt Margaret and Uncle Walter lived in them. We used to go down and visit them periodically and they would come up. But they were very close to us and in those days families were very close to one another, although there were such distances traveled, but you saw them overnight. And one time when they were...Auntie was called Auntie. She was the only aunt around, so she was just Auntie. And they were living in Rosedale, where Uncle Walter was teaching, and we were going down in the car in the river in the winter and we were able to just go down on the ice. And I remember I was sitting on somebody’s lap in the front seat and we saw ahead where the river was open and there was just no ice on it. And so Dad just turned around and started going back to get off the river someplace. I remember Grandma saying to him, “I thought we were going the other way.”

While we were in Drumheller, we used to take vacations the same as, I guess, the others did. But I remember once we drove up quite a ways north to...once we went to Pine Lake and once to Sylvan Lake. These were just little resort towns, there wasn’t very many people there, a few tents, and someplace where people could cook and some outdoor toilets. We went up there, chiefly I remember those were the amount of clothes that people wore when they went swimming. As a kid, they put more clothes on to go in the water then they did when they were out of the water. In fact, this was particularly true of the women. But in any case, they were somewhere we used to go. Another time, when Uncle Walter was teaching over in Camrose, that was up in the mountains, we drove over there to see them. I don’t remember much about it. You have to remember that we were one of the few people that had a car and we were able to get around. In any case, we were in Camrose and we were walking somewhere and this was of course in the Rockies, the Rocky Mountains, and I remember going up and walking in the fog, which obviously made an impression on me which I hadn’t forgot.

**Electricity and Telephones Emerge in Drumheller**

I’m not quite sure what year it was but I remember that electricity came in early into Drumheller, probably partly because of the coal that they were able to use to
generate the electricity; there was an abundance of it. But in any case, we did have
electric lights and gradually got things such as an electric iron that Mom prized of great
value. I remember also when the telephones came in. We were still out...we were out
in the farm and they came in and put the phone lines in and put this great big box, it
must have been about twenty inches tall and about eight inches...ten inches wide and
eight inches deep. Anyway, it was a big box and they put it on the wall. And I
remember coming in and what a great thing it was; it gave people a way to
communicate. And, of course, there were the party lines and every time the phone rang
it must have been about everybody else got on the line. Even though it was a party line
they weren’t supposed to be on. But I guess there were no great secrets and, anyway,
it was a way of communicating out on the farm. And, of course, we had telephones...of
course, I don’t know why I said that because after we went to Rosedale we never had a
phone until I got through high school, and maybe not then. But we did have a phone in
Drumheller. One day when I got home from school and I was just sitting there with
Mom and the phone rang and Dad was in Calgary and he called and, I guess, said why
didn’t we come down? Well, we did and this was after we got out of school. We went
down, there was a train I think about...it must have been about four o’clock in the
afternoon. We weren’t very far from the station and Mom put some stuff in the bag and
we got down to the station and took the train into Calgary. I remember that visit quite
well because we stayed in the hotel, ? Hotel, which was one of the fine hotels in
Canada. We stayed there and we had somebody to sit with us one night and Mom and
Dad went out to dinner and theater. Dad got back and said, “Some guy came in and
gave your mother a box of chocolates in the theater.” We thought that was quite an
event. Dad was really very sensitive to people and buying things and treated Mom very
well. But, apparently, he bought the chocolates and had somebody come down and
give them to her when they were sitting in the theater. It certainly impressed us. I
remember Mom trying to explain that it wasn’t... (laughing) ...it was somebody she knew
and brought these in to her. She seemed a little embarrassed us kids would think that,
might think that.
I was never quite sure what Dad did when we moved into Drumheller. He had teamed up some way or another with an auctioneer for a while, Bob McKee, and he kept track of the sales, and the money, and things with this and McKee was the auctioneer. They had a big place and I don’t know whether they had materials that they stored in there. It seemed to me that they sold some, too; it would have been like a second-hand job, I guess. And then they would have sales in there somehow. And I don’t know whether that’s all that Dad did or not; I don’t remember very clearly what he did. I don’t know why I should think that, but it didn’t seem like we had a lot of money. But, after all, we did have a car and a house and did various things in the community. I was never quite sure just if he spent all the years we were in Drumheller, which I guess wasn’t very many years.

**Move to Rosedale, British Columbia 1925**

In 1925, apparently Mom and Dad decided to go out west to where Uncle Will and Aunt Edith were. Aunt Edith was the sister of Margaret that went out to the prairies with her, and Uncle Will was the man whom she married and they lived in Rosedale, British Columbia. I recall a lot going on about getting ready to go to Rosedale. Apparently, they had to sell off the furniture and their property there to get funds to go by train out west. So they had what was called a “private sale” where people just came to the house and looked and stuff about bought it. Dad went down and had some flyers made in the print shop and distributed them around. And I remember people coming through the house to look at various items that they bought. One thing I should mention before we move on was that while we were in Drumheller we had a lot of diseases like measles, mumps, whooping cough, scarlet fever that went through and in most cases we had to be quarantined, so mom had to stay in the house with us until we got rid of it. These were considered serious. (Side ends)

I was just finishing up a couple of comments about Drumheller. I was mentioning that we had various diseases and Jean and I seemed to get them all, as did many people in the town. When something started around, there didn’t seem to be
much way to stop it so there were a lot of illnesses. In any case, I remember having to be in quarantine quite a lot. And this was, of course, very difficult for Mom, too, because she had to stay there the whole time and people used to come visit her outside the house. But back to the plans for moving from Rosedale. They had these people come and look at various items and eventually, I guess, they got them all sold. And I can remember Dad getting some big boxes and suitcases and stuff, and they literally sold everything in Drumheller to get enough money to go out west. Even then I could recall that it seemed to me we sold everything except what we put in a couple of big boxes which we were able to take with us on the train. I recall being a little bit sad leaving all of those things that we had in Drumheller and leaving Drumheller, and leaving Grandpa and Grandma and Auntie and other people that we knew. In any case, we got on the train one morning and started out for Rosedale, British Columbia. We got on the train and the conductor asked us where we were going and Dad said, "Rosedale." He said, "You're going the wrong direction," because Rosedale, Alberta was just seven miles away. And Dad said, "No, we're going the right way; we're going out west." So we got on the train. I don't remember much about the ride on the train except somewhere, going through the mountains, some rocks came down and broke the windows in the sleeping cars and obviously nothing to derail the train. But I do remember being on the train, having to make some transfers because we had to go on the CNR up to Edmonton and then go from Edmonton across because we couldn't take the CPR, which was the southern route, we had to take the northern route because Uncle Will worked for the CNR in Rosedale, British Columbia. But that was the experience--we got on the train and left Drumheller with what little belongings they had, Mom and Dad. At that age, they would have been only...maybe forty or forty-five, again starting out from scratch the same as they did when they left Hagarsville separately, but went to the prairies to get another start. It must have seemed a little discouraging to Mom and Dad to have everything they owned in a couple of big boxes and suitcases. In any case, they never showed it, never complained. I can't ever remember them really get annoyed or mad at anybody, or mad at each other. They were very social people but they certainly never expressed anger at anybody, perhaps with one exception where
Mom…the World War came into Chilliwack…I’m getting ahead of the story here…and she bought a pail and they advertised the things for five and ten cents, or fifteen maybe, but she bought a pail and she went to pay for it for ten cents and he says, “Well, the pail is ten cents and five cents for the handle.” I remember Mom saying, “I never paid separately for a handle and for a pail in all my life.” That was the closest I can remember her getting annoyed at anybody. I’m sure she did quietly, but she never expressed it. Certainly she never expressed any feelings for Dad besides understanding. They seemed to be very happy in what they were doing and even though they there were great adversities, they seemed to never reflect any of it on us.

**Life in Rosedale**

I recall getting off the train in Rosedale at four o’clock in the morning when the transcontinental went through. That train ran up the same pattern for years and years. We used to get up at three in the morning to catch that train at four; we went as far as Vancouver. We got off the train and Dad and Uncle Will got the box and the suitcase and anything else we had off the train and there we were. Uncle Will was the station agent, so they gave him, as part of the station...there were living accommodations for the station agent. And we got off and went in the house, it was dark but it wasn’t long. And of course everybody was so excited to meet each other we didn’t get to bed for a while. In fact, we...well, I don’t know when we got to bed. But I do remember coming up in British Columbia and seeing green. And we looked down and here was green grass and trees. This was April, of course it was apparently spring, but nevertheless things were green and we had come from the land of snow and cold. We stayed with Aunt Edith and Uncle Will for just a few days I think, and then we moved across the tracks where Uncle Will had bought a bit of property and Grandma and Grandpa, this is Grandma and Grandpa Kern now, mother’s parents, were living. And we moved in with them and that was a very small house and I thought after, how we got four more people in the house for two, I don’t know. But it was typical of the early days, the pioneer days I guess, where the people were...just had to get along with very little. But
again, I was happy to move over there, and we did, and we stayed there for a while and then we...Dad was trying to get a job and I remember he just went out and did some plowing for somebody. And then I think the first regular job he got was at the lumber mill, McNair and Graham, it was called. And this was just on the outskirts of Rosedale, which wasn’t a very big place at all. In fact, the center of town was referred to as “The Corners” because two streets crossed there; they were kind of major streets, I guess. But in any case, there wasn’t very much else there, but there was the mill and a few stores and the railroad. In those days this was a very important factor because the railroad was just going through, this was 1925, and they...and it was not a big place at all. But in any case, we got there and after a couple of days Dad took us down to the school where we were enrolled. We did. And the school in there provided...that municipality provided everything including workbooks, pen and ink, readers--it seemed like they provided most everything except pencils. You had to...Dad had to buy a pencil for each one of us, which we took to school. I went in grade three and I guess Jean would have been in grade five, I guess. School was a lot of fun; we enjoyed it. ???.

There was a house on McGrath Road that was unoccupied and some way or another Dad and Mom were able to move into that house and we bought a stove, which was a very important factor in any community. It was on the stove that people cooked. And they got this stove and didn’t have much else. I think Mom and Dad had a bed. We had guinea sacks they used to get from the farmers to put food and stuff in and they fastened some of those together, cut them and made them in a shape like a mattress and put straw in them. And that was the first beds we had in BC. In any case, we moved down there into the house; that was really a very pleasant place. It had two bedrooms at one end and a living room and then a little parlor divided by just an opening, like going into a hall, and Mom and Dad had one bedroom and Jean had the other, and I had a place in this parlor which was open into the other room, the living room. It was the only other room to get together. And then there was a small kitchen, too. So that’s where we moved in. And Dad got the job in the mill and that was going along very well, except the mill went broke and they had to close. And people weren’t paid for their...sometimes for working there and Dad got together with some people in
some way or another, maybe the people, some of the others that were owed money, and they got some kind of a settlement where they did get some of the assets that were sold. But that meant Dad was out of work and then I remember there was talk about him going to the railroad. He always had a great desire to work on the railroad. We recall that he started working on the railroad bridge on the prairie, I guess before I was born. You have to remember, the railroads were very new and exciting, even when they first came into Drumheller. (Interruption) I was saying that the mill went broke; it meant there were many people out of work, even though the business of the community was agriculture. And they went for... so...oh, I was speaking about Dad working on the railroad, even in Drumheller, I remember going out to someplace on the railroad and I think Dad was looking for a job on a B and B gang, bridge and builders, they were certain carpenters and people who traveled up and down the railroad to build structures and repair structures and things. But in any case, Dad decided to go to work as a section man on the railroad and everything worked by seniority and on the date you were hired, that was the date that your seniority started.

Well, there was quite a lot of movement, I guess, among section gangs. They were not very glamorous jobs at all but they did start there and they only...for the first two years they only worked in the summer because they put extra people on in the summer and then the ones that had more seniority worked during the winter. In any case, he worked there for a number of years and while he was getting started at that they did all kinds of things to try to get extra money. I remember that Rosedale was a very rich agricultural area, it seemed like you could grow almost anything, and so there was lots of vegetables, lots of fruit and things. And in the driveway of our house there was a bunch of fruit trees, cherry trees. And so, the first summer when the fruit started to get ripe, the raspberries and the cherries, Mom would just put stuff in bottles. They called it canning; I don't know why. But they put it in bottles and sealed it and people kept it for the winter. And I can remember sitting down because we never had so much fruit in our lives on the prairie, just sitting down, eating out of these quart bottles...sometimes we'd eat a whole bottle-full in one meal. That was...but in any case, they put them on crates and took them down to the railroad station where they sent...
them to the prairie on consignment. You’d send them to some distributor there and they sent you a check for them. This was a very open and fluent thing but they seemed, everybody seemed, very honorable about it. People did send money back to us for the checks. Jean and I picked the cherries. Sometimes we’d have some other kids come over and help us. And we made crates, special fruit crates, and Mom sorted them and put them in the crates, and then we took them down to the station. But before the cherries came in, there were raspberries and strawberries and we used to go and buy those, or get them somehow, it wasn’t like we had very much money to do anything. But in any case, we had lots of those and the kids in school got...as soon as school got out, they went picking fruit, picking it and packing it, and that’s where they made some money. And likewise, it was cherries, and then pears, and apples, and prunes, all kinds of fruit that they picked and sold, largely by sending them to the cities on consignment.

**8th Grade: A Teacher to Remember**

All the while we were going to school. It started sometime after Labor Day, like it did in many places, after the crops were in and went through to June. And I had a happy time at school. I didn’t do very well but got by and enjoyed the many activities that school brought on. And the principal of the school was very--D.H. Lauder was his name--he was very anxious to have the kids involved in sports. They certainly didn’t need any exercise because they always worked out; but it was fun in the school yard. We never knew quite when we were going, there were three other classes in the school, each room had two grades and it was one-two, three-four, five-six, seven-eight, and he taught grades seven and eight. But we’d get out there fine. Sometimes we used to...sometimes we’d stay out all morning or all afternoon just playing sports and we figured out, I’m not sure it made any sense, that if he was winning he played with us, if he was winning we stayed out longer. So we always thought we were maneuvering things so that he’d keep winning and he’d stay out there. But it was a great time, a big school yard. During school hours somebody, maybe the PTA, I don’t know, bought a lawn mower, so we used to go out during school hours and mow the lawn. It wasn’t a
lawn, it was like a field, but in any case, we kept it very well mowed so we could play baseball, football, all sorts of sports out there. And when it was raining, which was considerable amounts at the time, we used to play in the basement. It was a small basement; it was under the whole school, we’d get down there and play there. We had one goal at one end which was...it wasn’t a very big area at all, but one area, one goal was, I think, the stairs that went up to the rest of the school on the boy’s side and the same on the girl’s side. They were separate; they had separate entrances for the boys and girls. And one entrance was the stairs going...or not entrance...one goal, we would kick this ball towards the stairs and the other one was the entrance to the toilets. In any case, he was a great teacher. Also, the other thing was you’d get doing a subject in school, maybe geography, and if you didn’t or if you weren’t going fast enough he’d do...he’d maybe do geography all morning or do...or arithmetic, or history, or whatever all the subjects were. If people didn’t seem to be doing well, he’d just stay there until it was done. You never got excused by the bell; there wasn’t any bell separating time periods. So we’d stay there and we’d work away at it and that was just his way of doing it. And he certainly did very well because grade eight had to take government exams, all the exams were given to the grade eight kids, and they...the papers were sent away and marked. And in due time, sometime in the summer the finals for the grade eight, the results were published in the paper and that’s how you found out whether you passed grade eight, which meant you could go to high school if you did. I might add that there was a policy of recommendation that the teachers...the principal could recommend you so you didn’t have to take the exam at the end of grade eight. But some of the brightest kids obviously would be recommended, but they would sit for the exam and that way get...have grades that were eligible for the awards. There was awards given for the top student for the whole province. What I was going to say earlier was that while I was in that school for a few years, three students were on top of that...for the whole province, which was really a tribute to the kids, of course, but also the teacher, Lauder, who had his unusual ways of teaching. He got you...enough to get you through school. But that was...the school was...and then periodically they’d have a Christmas party, of course, and that was the whole community that got involved in the
Christmas party. And the only place...sometimes the only place that you could have it was in a garage downtown on McGrath Ave. And cars were becoming increasingly popular and so they needed people to fix them, sell them gas, one thing or another. And so come Christmas, they cleared everything out of this garage, which wasn’t very big, but there weren’t many people either, and set it up with some stumps and some boards for people to sit on. It was a great time, of course, a big celebration and everybody in town came, it was...the school kids put on a performance. Another event in the school, too, was May Day and in May they had an election, one of the kids, one of the girls in grade eight would get elected and she was the queen of the May, which was quite a thing. And sister Jean was the May Queen one year and Mom made her a nice dress. It was a big thing, a big honor, to make May Queen. But that was also put on by the school and rehearsed at the time on school time usually and was held on the school grounds. There were all sorts of activities. I can remember that we spent our time picking strawberries just about that time and the farmer’s kids would milk the cows and get milk and people would give the strawberries and cream and then they sold them for, a dish of them, for fifteen cents. I always thought it was rather odd that we spent our time picking these things to go down to get them to eat, but that was the way they raised quite a bit of money I guess.
The Rosedale Community

It was during this time that Dad was working in the summers and then sometimes had to work in the winters when somebody was off or something and gradually got to work permanently by moving from one section to another. Rosedale was one and then in the east there was Sandview and Laidlaw and the west was Chilliwack. And so each section was about seven miles long. And so when he worked at Sandview he had to find some way to get up there to get to work. We had this Model T, which he had taken up there sometimes. You'd just… just was a three-wheeled thing that ran on the tracks and you had to push and pull on the handles that were there to make it go. But it was a long day for Dad and a long… not really a long day working but he had to take all his time to get there and get home. But he did and then unfortunately came the Depression and everybody laid off people. Not the farmers so much, of course; they didn’t have anybody to lay off. But they did all right. But anybody else that had other jobs, a few people in the store and the mill got laid off. What it meant was it did on the railroad, too, and so Dad periodically would be out of work on the railroad because he didn’t have enough seniority. But he moved up and down and in one way or another seemed to get enough money for us to live on. And in the community there were lots of activities for us kids to get involved in. There were stores, a blacksmith shop—I used to go down there and monkey around in the blacksmith shop and watch them shoe the horses and do other weird and wonderful things with the fires they had to heat the metal and stuff. And everybody in the community, several families, everybody was very good when it came to helping other people and certainly if the kids did something wrong on a farmer’s place he got after you and it didn’t seem much of secret if you did something wrong someplace; it didn’t seem long before it was all over the community and back to your home as well. But it was a happy community in most ways and we had a local church. The minister preached at three different places—one place in the morning, one in the afternoon, and one in the evenings, so at least three communities supported the minister. He was a
very influential person because he had...usually had a good education and a very committed, honorable guy.

I remember one time...in the community you weren't supposed to...there were dances but when we were kids we weren’t allowed to dance or play cards, but most people did. I won’t way a lot(?), some of them did. But it got so that you would...we did allow cards and dances and stuff. I remember one Sunday we heard from the minister who preached in the morning, the night before he had all the young people in and he let them dance ??. Well, that was very popular, of course, and he preached a sermon on it in the morning at this church. But he did the same in the afternoon and by the evening, we got the same service at night but we knew it was coming and people were kind of anxious about it, but it turned out very well and people did dance and they did play cards. Part of the reason for this restriction, of course, of card playing was that it was western. It was associated with gambling and drinking and various things, so it was all part of the same pattern of behavior that people tried to...standards that people tried to develop and adhere to. But they changed, too. When they did, I don’t

Remember...all I remember that Jean and I, we didn’t dance or play cards and all of a sudden, we did, we went to it. But I guess probably our parents just decided that there was going to be these things, they might as well let the children go, try to control it and hope the kids behave themselves. It was an interesting way things kind of evolved in the community.

High School Days

I was talking about school. After you graduated from grade eight, you could go on to high school and the closest one was seven miles away. Of course, you had to get there somehow and some people walked, some went by horses, and later on cars. But there was a fellow coming in who developed a bus and he had us...would haul us...drive around the country gathering up kids and take them to Chilliwack, which was seven miles away. And he charged three-fifty a month to take us in the morning and bring us
back at night. And Uncle Wallace, who was always very supportive of the children, very good to me and to all his nieces and nephews, sent us a check, Jean, one for twenty-five dollars and me one to pay the bus fare. So we were able to go to high school and go out in the morning, back at night. Kind of an interesting ride with all the kids, of course, we’d get horsing around and sometimes he’d make somebody get out and walk home. But it wasn’t too often; it was a long walk. And if you had to get home and do chores or something...I had to get home because I had a paper route and twenty customers, I had to go about ten miles. I didn’t make very much on it but I made more cash than most of the kids did. So I was very grateful to have the paper route and that gave me a little money for spending and I enjoyed it. So I had to get home after school to do these papers and after I got the papers done, I had to go split the wood and bring it in the house because we burned wood in the kitchen stove and in another little stove that we had in the other area of the living room, dining room, whatever, it was just one room. And I had to bring that in and so I had a long day. Then Dad would get home from work and we’d eat and about then it was time to go to bed. I remember always we used to pretty much go to bed at eight o’clock. I don’t know why eight o’clock, but anyway I did, and that was after I got the homework done, or one thing or another. The family were very supportive of our education. Dad had a lot more education than most people; he had gone through high school and was one of the few people in Rosedale that had done that. And he also went one year in medical school and I don’t know why he didn’t continue on, but he dropped out of that when they lived in Hagarsville, Ontario. But they were very supportive of our education and very seldom did they give me any orders or anything; I pretty much jumped in and did whatever I had to do, as did the other kids, and that was that. But I do remember once, he said, “You’re not doing very well in history. I think you ought to spend fifteen minutes every night of homework just on history.” Well, that was that. Well, a few days later he came back and said, “I was talking to the principal and he said you were doing okay, so we don’t need to do the history.” I always admired him for that, for even talking to the principal about it, whom he knew very well in the community. As I said, Dad was one of
the better educated people and most of them had just gone through grade eight. The teacher, of course, went through high school . . . (Tape ends)

**Family History**

I had previously mentioned my Uncle Will and Aunt Edith. Aunt Edith was the sister of my mother and she was a Kern. And when we got to Rosedale they met us and were living in the station. And so we stayed there for a while. But I wanted to comment a little more about how really very generous they were and kind to us while we were in Rosedale. My parents got a long very well and they...whenever they went someplace they generally took us, particularly to a place at Caldus Lake(?) where they had a lot and built a shack, or a beach house, or whatever, and they used to take us out there particularly on weekends when they went out and it was sometimes just for a Sunday. And they were...that was very fine for us children and we thoroughly enjoyed the place and the company. We had many happy hours with them. They also used to take us around to various places, like over to Harrison Hot Springs. They were one of the few people that had a car; we didn’t have a car when we got to Rosedale. And I remember the day after we got off the train, they had just bought the car and it was sitting in the garage and Dad took Aunt Edith out to teach her to drive. She was one of the very kind of progressive, early feminist I guess you’d call her. She was very much forward and very much an active person. And she and mother went out west from Hagarsville out to Alberta, as I’ve mentioned before, and that was pretty daring in those days for two single women to go traveling across the country. In any case, she learned to drive and she’d drive with a zip too, and everybody was kind of amazed.

I remember another thing that she and Mother both got involved in. They were sitting in their kitchen one day in the station and Aunt Edith started talking to Mom about getting her hair cut. Well, they monkeyed around and I don’t think that was the first conversation, but Aunt Edith was one of the first ones to get her hair cut in this town in Rosedale and it was kind of a daring thing. But I remember she talked to Mom and Mom finally went over and sat at the table and Aunt Edith got a pair of scissors, I
guess it was. Anyway, she cut Mom’s hair and there was great laughter. And then she
gave Dad and Uncle Will one and everybody was watching. This was kind of a major
event to get her hair cut. It soon became very popular but Mom was just one of those
people out front. Another thing I remember discussions about, when all kids were
together; there was plenty of room to sit in the house usually. Well, the kids and
everybody were sitting there; we’d just listen to what was going on. And Aunt Edith had
had her skirt cut short; she was the first woman in that area to get her skirts cut. They
all wore the long skirts, as was the custom. She got hers cut and she was quite the
discussion in the town. Not only did she get it cut, she got it cut very short as I recall,
and that was the second discussion of the same issue. And then when she talked to
Mom and they finally talked Mom into getting her skirt shortened, which she did, and I
don’t remember just all who was involved with it but I mean she got it cut, but not
nearly as short as Aunt Edith.

Grandma was kind of a very active, forward person too. But at her age, she was
not was you would call a feminist, but she was very vigorous and had lots of jokes with
Mom and Dad. Dad was a very jovial person. He had all kinds of chatter and everybody
liked him very much and he was always the life of the party wherever we went—in the
car, on the train, wherever we were. But he was…Dad…as I mentioned before,
Grandma lived across the street and I don’t know how far it would be, maybe a quarter
of a mile down the road from where we lived, and we used to go down there
periodically and go into this little house and Mom and Jane used to talk to Grandma, and
I used to go off and sit with Grandpa, and Grandpa was not nearly the outgoing person
that Grandma was. Grandma used to go with four of the Hughes and four of the
Charters wherever we went, there were nine of us that used to be in the car. Grandpa
very seldom ever went. He used to come join us for Christmas and for New Year’s and,
of course, he stopped but Mom and the rest of us went out there. But I used to go…he
had this little room where he sat and had a bed. And I remember he used to get a plug
of tobacco of his pipe whenever the time was…whether it was once a month or
whatever it was, but they got some money from someplace. I think what they did was
that Grandpa ran the farm and they sold the milk, but I think that they didn’t depend on
exactly the amount of milk there was. I think Uncle Will got the checks and gave them a certain amount of money out of it, whether it was every week or every month or something. But I remember he used to get...he was very active, got up early in the morning, worked all day, and went to bed at night. He was, of course, very kind to me. He didn’t have too much to say but I used to be amazed at the way he cut his tobacco. I remember one night he had a toothache and he took his jackknife and some way or another got that tooth out; I can remember that very clearly.

But I remember also, I keep saying “I remember,” which is what I’m in the business of doing now. But we were sitting up at our house on McGrath Road and some woman came and said something to Mom. She was still in bed and we were there with her early one morning and this woman said she better come down, that Grandpa wasn’t very well. And I can remember the woman saying to her, “Why don’t you make a cup of tea?” And Mom said, “Oh, I’ll get one when we get down there.” She said, “Well, I’m not sure.” I don’t know whether she got the tea or not, but I remember the occasion; we got down there and Grandpa had died in the night, very suddenly I guess. Well, obviously it was suddenly. And the way they found out, which was typical in a small community, that a fellow, Bryant, who lived relatively near there said that

there...he called Aunt Edith and said there had been a fire over at the...at Grandpa’s place. And so...and said also the cows hadn’t been milked. So Aunt Edith went over and found Grandpa. But everybody kept...obviously if there wasn’t any smoke coming out of the chimney, there wasn’t any fire and that’s one of the first things that farmers did in the morning was light a fire, do whatever they did. I don’t know whether they had tea before they went out and milked or not, but they went out and milked and came back into the house for breakfast. In any case, we all trekked over to Aunt Edith’s, where we sat around, and Aunt Edith walked in with Grandma. And the first thing Grandma did was, she called me over and said, “Grandpa wanted you to have his watch.” In those days, a man’s watch was his...frequently, his most valuable possession and one that they prized very dearly. They had to keep the time but also it was sort of a prestige thing; it was his most valued possession. And they used to give it to
somebody that they admired and respected or something. I remember when Dad worked on the railroad he, of course had to have accurate time down to the second for the train movement and when people...when some of the railroad people died, they gave their watch to somebody, and I remember Dad getting one or two watches from people. In any case, Grandma gave me the watch and she was there and she had some black clothes on and from then on, this was a sign of mourning, and then from then on she wore black clothes. I never saw her in anything else after that. But as the custom continued, I don’t think so many people did, but that was certainly…and she was a very good looking and smart woman and always looked dressed up in the black clothes she had.

**High School Days Continued**

I’ve spoken before about Chilliwack, where the high school was, and it was seven miles from Rosedale and there was a place that was sort of a shopping center where the doctors were, and the dentist. And they had them there; it was a good size place, maybe two thousand people, which was certainly a large place then. And they also had a movie house and that’s where the high school was. As I said, I went to high school and I enjoyed myself there and I was quite active in the school. I was elected to student government. One thing that seemed very common or very normal to our school, but later found out that it was quite different, that when I was in senior...we didn’t call them senior...we were just fourth year, grade twelve...we called ourselves grade twelve, which was the fourth year in high school and we had elections and officers and we elected a girl as president and I was elected as the secretary. There didn’t seem anything unusual about this at all, but I remember that later on, always hearing women talking about being secretaries and men president, that was a common thing and I learned that it was particularly common, but I didn’t think anything unusual about it when we were in school. I was very active in other activities like the debating society and...
Rosedale: The Community

I wanted to look back for a minute at Rosedale. As in most small towns, there are some people that kind of...people would seem to have a bit more money than the others and had quite an influence and Uncle Will was one of those; he was president of the Athletic Club that led to the building of a new community hall, which was great. And then there was Reverend Turpend, who was the minister of the local church and I’ve mentioned him before about the three rounds. But I remember one of the things that he did was he ran a camp one summer and he asked me to go and I didn’t have to pay. He said I had some work to do and I didn’t know exactly what work was but, in any case, he was very generous. And I was active in the church, in Sunday school, everybody went to Sunday school. But I, when I was in about grade seven or eight, I decided I didn’t like Sunday school. So I decided I wouldn’t go. Well, I had to do something with the church, I guess, so I used to go over on Sunday night and go to church. And I was the only kid that went to church, and got to be quite the person that would leave the gang on the corner and go over to church and then come back and join them again at the center that was kind of for the men particularly, and the kids. The garage that Walter McGrath ran, who was I think half Indian and half white, but I remember he had this garage that sometimes he would use as a community center, as I mentioned before, for the Christmas play. One of the things that I mentioned, of course, was the...we didn’t have electric lights in the town and he got a small plant called the Delco to heat his house and the garage and the church was only, I don’t know if it was the next building or a couple of buildings down, and he got the guy to wire the church and so one of the first buildings in Rosedale that had electricity was the church.

Dad was very active in the community—he was president of the PTA and very active in most things. And he was also the one that went and got farmers and people to sign so they could get the power company, the electric company, to run a line out to Rosedale. Very successful when he did that and...so we got electric lights.

A lot of the people in the area were of English descent and some of them came out after World War I and they were given farms. If they were veterans, they were
given or got access to farms in the community, which gave them a living, although some of them weren’t particularly farmers and others came out who were called people that people in England sent them out and sent them an allowance. They were probably...they were apparently considered as not quite up to the standards of England. And I remember they always said they had great homes in England and maids and butlers and everything and this was...and they started a guide group, which was part of the Church of England and, of course, that’s where but they were always considered themselves aloof in their seemingly general behaviors and things. And then we had now, after World War II, I was talking to some of the children who during the war had joined the military and gone over to England and they commented that they looked up their families and they weren’t very aristocratic at all. They said they were struggling to get along, like a lot of people, and they had just...the parents told this story about having such a fine life and ...but I guess they were happy saying it and we, as kids, used to wonder about it and sort of accepted it, and they always referred to England as the old country. Everything they did, “That’s what you did in the old country.”

There was also the people around; they’d crowd the trains from one side to the country to the other, back and forth in distance. They set up camps and people didn’t have much idea where they were going. I thought they may have not having any destination in mind when we were down at The Corners, as we call it. There was a fellow in the main ?, he was just standing there and he didn’t have anything to do. In fact, he was standing there and a car came in and started circling around and headed back the way they were going so they would be closer to the gas pump, where he got a couple of gallons of gas or something. And this fellow asked them if he could have a ride and the fellow said, “Well, I’m not going this way; I’m going the other way.” So the fellow said, “Doesn’t make any difference to me, I have nowhere to go.”

**Decisions: From Cook Car to College**

There was always talk along the line that maybe someday I might go to university. It didn’t seem too possible; on the other hand, I never really questioned I
wouldn't be going. I remember graduating from high school and we had to take the same government exams across the province to be eligible to go to university and I did get eligible to go, not at all distinguished, but I did. And I planned to go when we got out of high school and Dad said I could maybe get a job, he knew the people on the railroad, and he took me down and put me on the train. I guess there's always that we could get a pass on the railroad to go anywhere we wanted and that proved great for our family, especially just for us kids. We used to go down to Vancouver once in a while, it's something that people, other children, didn't have an opportunity to do. And we went back to the prairie once when Grandpa and Grandma were having their golden wedding anniversary, and we all went back there and brothers and sisters came and it was a great time. And then we...in any case, he got me on the train and I went up to Blue River to get a job and I got off...got to this place out...Blue River was the name of the town, where there was an extra gang going. In the summers, they did it to work on the railroad and they'd hire extra crews. I went up there and there were scab men around waiting for them to hire them. I don't know how many they hired. I asked somebody there and they said, "Well, just wait until tomorrow and you can go in and eat in the dining cars," so I did that and the next day they picked everybody out, picked out what they want, and I was left there and I said to, Jack Perkins was his name, and I said, "I don't have a job." And he said, "Oh no, you can't handle this work. You go work in the cook car." So I got myself a job in the cook car. Well, I was sort of a flunk. I didn't know how to do anything in the cook car. It was a pretty primitive arrangement where they had some cars where the men came and sat and ate, and then there was this one where they cooked all the food. And Jack was the cook's name and he was very good to me and we used to work long hours. They had to get up...men went out and worked for an hour, about six o'clock, and then came back in and had some breakfast and went out and worked long hours again. They worked twelve, fourteen hours a day, every day. So I did whatever he wanted me to do. There were a lot of very humorous situations because I didn't know what I was doing. I had a great big pot on the stove and he turned around and he said, "Go strain these peas." So I didn't know any better, I had a heck of a job doing it because the pot was so big. Anyway, I
got them strained and everything was fine. And he come along and he said, “Well, those peas you got there that you just strained,” he said, “throw them out.” I said, “Well, I just strained the stuff. I threw the juice out.” He said, “What did you do with that juice?” That was soup; they always gave the men soup for lunch. That was the end of that soup business. But I worked very, very good and finally there wasn’t anything...they just slept in bunk cars where there were ? on the railroad cars and boards and we slept on those. Mom gave me a little blanket to take with me, so I had that and that was very good, although it was very hot up there at the time. You’d need a little bit of it just on the board but most of them didn’t have anything; they slept in their clothes on these boards. I finally got a letter from Dad that said...he said, “If you’re going to go to college, you better come back down and go.” So I did. It had been arranged that Uncle Walt would give me a hundred and fifty dollars a year to pay tuition, and Mom and Dad had to pay my room and board for eight months or nine months a year. Room and board was, I think, twenty five dollars a month, which was a great sacrifice to them seven or eight months out of the year.

**An Isolated Incident: The Nickel or the Egg**

In an isolated incident, I used to go across the road, this was in Rosedale, and I remember working for the farmers and sometimes they’d give you a nickel or something if you worked. Anyway, one day a farmer told me, I’d worked, he said, “I’ll give you an egg and hatch it, or I’ll give you a nickel.” And then I went home and talked to Dad. We decided...Dad said, “Well, if you have a nickel, you only have a nickel, but if you have an egg and hatch it,” he said, “you’ve got a chicken.” And that turned out to be much more than a nickel. So I went back and got this one chicken and he gave me a Rhode Island Red rooster; I remember that very clearly. Well, we had hundreds of chickens and thought we might make a little money at that. It turned out it didn’t make very much at all. Back then they’d ? feed for the chickens. But in any case, we did. But I had this one rooster I used to take care of special and took him to the state fair
to...not the state fair, the municipal fair, and all of the farmers would? their animals and things, got ribbons and it was a great, great event. And so I took my rooster down and entered him in the contest and they...and I remember after the judging my rooster won second prize. I was so proud of that rooster. But the thing about it more than that was that I always remembered that it only takes one, if you got the right one. And I remembered that throughout my life. You didn’t need a whole hen house to win something if you had the right thing or did the right thing. All it needed was one.

There were a lot of sports and activities around Rosedale and in the high school and I played most of them. There was, of course, no league because there weren’t enough people hardly in any one town to play, but we used to exchange visits like baseball and basketball. Not so much baseball because there weren’t many...enough players to field a team, although we did go up to Hope frequently, which was about twenty miles I guess and we used to play there; they always had a good team.

The University of British Columbia (UBC)

Well, as I indicated, I got back from Blue River and was getting set to go down to Vancouver to go to UBC and I had had all my checks, there was no place to spend money up there, in any case, but I had an arrangement with Dad after I got through baseball that if I needed some money during the summer when I was working that I should just ask him for some money and he’d give me a bit of what I needed and then we kept the checks in tack without squandering it away, or not squandering it but spending it a little bit at a time, which was a very good idea and it worked out very well. To get ready to go to Vancouver, to UBC, I went down into Chilliwack and I had to get some clothes, like a suit of clothes and a pair of pajamas, and a shirt, and sort of the essential things to wear and just to live. But I came out very well and did have presentable clothes to go to Vancouver and felt comfortable while I was there with what I had had. I had mentioned what I had because that...well, at Chilliwack High School we had to wear a shirt and a tie. And, incidentally, the boys were addressed by their last name, in my case, Charters, and the girls as “Miss,” and in my sister’s case, “Miss
Charters.” And I never know the first names of some of the kids by graduation time. In any case, I got the clothes and in a couple of days went down to Vancouver. As I had mentioned previously, we were very fortunate to have passes on the railroads anywhere in America. In the summer before, we had gone out to... we had taken a trip out east. We got the money we had to pay for the ? on the train by picking fruit and taking it to the station on consignment and Uncle Will, through his station he kept track of it and kept the money there and we were able to get ? on the plane and had a bit other money, I guess. We went down and spent the time with mother’s sisters, Bertie, Ethel and Nora and it was fun with them and all the cousins. It was great and when we were there they kind of made a point in taking us around and seeing various things in Buffalo and out in Attica and other places. At that time, I think all of the men were working, all the husbands, which was very unusual, but they some way or another managed to keep jobs. But the cousins, some of them weren’t so fortunate and didn’t have jobs. But we had a great time. And, oh, then while we were there we had to go to see Uncle Wallace who was at Yale University, and we took the train from Buffalo into New York and then took the New York, New Haven and Hartford, I think it was, up to the university at Yale up in Connecticut and we had a fine time for several days there; he was very hospitable to us, took us around and did the sightseeing. And then on the way back he decided that he would take us down to New York City, so he took us down and we spent a day in New York City. And he arranged for us to see more things--we went on the Staten Island Ferry, out to Coney Island, 42nd Street, the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center--just about everything we could imagine. And it was just great! And we had a fine time and went back to Buffalo again.

I was talking about going to UBC and we got...I did take the train down and got down there. Dad and Mom had gone down a while before and arranged for a place for me to stay out in Point Gray. But I recall getting off the train and they told me to take, I think it was the Number 1 Streetcar that I was to first take. No, that couldn't have been right. Anyway, what I didn't realize is that it was the...I wanted to take it out to the university but I didn't realize the streetcars went both ways the same number and I ended up way out in East Vancouver and had to get off at the end of the line and get off
and got back on again and had to pay another fare, which was I think seven cents at that time to go the other way. But I certainly learned to get the streetcars straightened out after that. And the streetcars were the main means of travel while they were there. In any case, when I finally got out to this house in Vancouver where I was to stay and it was a comfortable place. There were several other guys in the house, too. It was during the Depression and many of the people that had these fine homes around the university in the Point Gray area didn't have any income, so they rented the rooms out, usually with board, and so it was a very nice house and everything went very smoothly. I went from there, I’d walked down to take the bus out to the university and that cost three cents each way, or we could walk, but it was a good walk, a couple of miles. In any case, we’d save three cents.

I immediately went out to the university to have a look and get myself registered, which I did. It was my first visit to the university. No, that isn’t right. I had gone down before and met a fellow Uncle Wallace had told me about, C.B. Wood, a man who was a professor there and I did get to know him and knew him for the rest of the college days and he was a very fine gentleman and very helpful to me. In fact, he was always around and he kind of helped me in many ways, he used to have me out to dinner. He was a single man and he had an apartment and he had lots of books in the apartment. I remember I saw all these books by John Dewey, I said, “My goodness, you've got all these books.” He said, “Well,” he said, “if you want to understand what a man writes, you need to read all he writes.” And I remember that. And he also once in a while used to take me down to Vancouver to a symphony conference, or something of that kind, to sort of give me a new look on life. I said it was the first time I was there, but I had been there when I went to meet C.B. Wood. The streetcar ride seemed like the first time. And also, while we were in high school, the principal, Etter, decided to go down and hear the Saturday night lecture at UBC, which were quite famous and they were quite intellectual types of things. And the principal, Etter, was going down to one and he took two of us with him. So we drove down one afternoon, Saturday, went to the lecture and came back home that night and he drove me out to Rosedale. It was one of the things in high school that I appreciated. In any case, I did get out to the
university, trying to find my way around, and went in to register and realized that I didn’t have the money from Uncle Wallace. So I didn’t know what to do, so I went all the way back out the railroad station and sent him a telegram, which he responded to immediately and sent me an extra five dollars; I always thought it was to maybe pay for the telegram that I had to send.

But I did get registered and it was right at the beginning of college, so they had certain restrictions on the freshmen. I don’t know what we had to do as boys, there were certain things we had to do, pay respect to the upper classmen and stuff, but I remember one of the things the girls had to do was wear a placard on their back with their name on it and also... (Side ends)

And I was talking about out at UBC all the freshman girls had to wear a placard on their back with their phone number and their name. It was all kind of really new and novel to me of course, having come from a small town, to see all of it, especially with their phone numbers on it because at that time we didn’t have a phone where we lived in Rosedale and so that was kind of impressive. But they assumed everybody had a phone.

This is the second side of the second tape and I was saying that out at UBC when I first arrive as a freshman, the first time I had heard that term, we had to...they’d do certain things to pay homage to the upper classmen and one of the things the girls had to do was wear a placard on their back with their name and phone number on them. It seemed like an interesting idea to me. But one of the things that impressed me was that they assumed that all these girls had phone numbers and where I lived out in Rosedale we didn’t have a phone. We had one when we were in Drumheller but we didn’t have one when we lived in Rosedale. All the way through high school we didn’t have a phone. We’d have to go down to the corner to a phone, in the store there was a phone, and we were able to use that. And, of course, we used the phone at Aunt Edith and Uncle Will’s.
There was also an activity they called a snake parade where we had to... everybody, all the freshmen went downtown and formed a single line and wandered around town and tied up the streetcars and traffic and everything because we kept our hands together. I was kind of impressed by this but it seemed like rather unusual behavior to do that and sort of against the law. Well, maybe it was but they just wrote it off as something that college students do and nobody was arrested and we all had... it was really a lot of fun. We got back on the streetcars, we went back out to Point Gray and... I might mention that the university was on the University Endowment Land. The government owned all the land, most of it out in the Point Gray area and they got this... were given this land and they were able to keep what they needed for themselves and sell the rest for people to live on and run little businesses and various things with the... and they got the money for that, which helped run the university. It was called the University Endowment Land. But the streetcars ran out to the end of what was called Chancellors Boulevard, which was the main road down into the university and the streetcars came that far and then there were shuttle buses that ran from there out to the university. And these buses cost three cents each way. But we used to go out and stand on the corner where the streetcars ended and some of the students drove out, they had cars, and they would sometimes stop and pick us up and give us a ride out, which was great. It certainly beat the bus and it was kind of fun to meet some of these people, even for a little bit of time, and some of them drove everyday and we could... or on certain days and we got to know which ones they were, so we kind of waited around to see if we could... if they’d take us on the next trip. But it was... the next trip on another day. Sometimes we used to walk just to save the three cents, which was something I did frequently. I had enough money, really, I didn’t do it out of desperation, but it gave me three cents to do something. And I smoked at that time and a package of cigarettes cost ten cents and so once in a while I’d get a package of cigarettes and smoke those.

You have to remember that this was the Depression era and everybody was in the same boat and those that had a little more were very generous and very appreciative of what they had. And there wasn’t much money made of all these
hundreds of people...thousands of people were out of work just wandering around. They could get some money from the government and there were camps set up in various places across Canada and the men, not women, went and stayed there and they built sort of very little...well, kind of little, pre-fab bunkhouses and places to eat and they worked there on projects, roads and buildings and various activities.

As I look back, I kind of got off the track of what I was there...I was talking about what we were there for and that was for classes, steady, but so much of this was new to me and even now I kind of recall how new it was while we were there. But we finally got assigned to classes, which wasn't a very difficult thing at all, I mean in the whole university there were less than two thousand people and...but I do remember talking about the professors and I'm even more amazed that, in retrospect, they...how good they were. For example, they...I took a class in economics the first year and the classes went for a whole year. And the class was taught by the chairman of the physics department, Dr. Shrummer, a very outstanding physicist. And the economics was taught by Angus, who was chair of the economics department. English, there were many sections of English and I had Professor Sedgwick, who was also chairman of the English department. Other people, classes, they all had to take English. There were only twenty or twenty-five of us in a class so many of them had other professors; they all couldn't have the chairman of the English department obviously, but I had...and Gauge was the professor of mathematics; he was a really outstanding teacher and later went on to become the president of the university as a matter of fact. But strangely enough, he didn't have a doctorate degree. There was one more class, I can't remember...oh, French! I had to take French. We had already taken two years of French in high school and two years more of a language is required in the university. The program was pretty well set for [you] if you were in liberal arts, which I was, and it was called arts... in any case, they were very outstanding professors. A great sense of humor, many of them, and it was really enjoyable to me to raise my sights into areas that I never even thought about. And it was truly a great experience as we went through the prolonged...went to classes and the labs and all the rest of it, it was just thoroughly enjoyable and fun for me. It was a way of life.
But the classes went all the way through a year. We started in September, after the crops were in or after the crops were out and stayed through until May. We used to get quizzes and things and we would go through the whole year and you pass the whole year in not one subject—you either passed the freshman year or you didn’t and you went and took it over, you didn’t do it subject by subject. I don’t quite know how they...what averages you had to have or what you had to... I’m not quite sure what it was all about, but fortunately...well, they did have something they called a BAC degree and that...they had some way of evaluating students and at Christmas if you weren’t satisfactory they kicked you out. I don’t really know anybody that was kicked out but, boy I’ll tell you, in the fall we certainly worried about it, whether we’d get kicked out or not.

**UBC Extracurricular Activities**

I also decided to get involved in some of the other activities and I...one was that I played basketball and was fairly good. I was known as being a “good shot” as it was called, making baskets. So I went out in the gym and I went out there where there were a lot of kids, but a lot turned out, but one of the things I did notice was that it was...most of them came from Vancouver high schools and they all knew each other. It didn’t seem like it was a very good arrangement and I felt I wasn’t going to get to go anyplace because I didn’t know the right people. But I remember that and from then I got involved in various activities. I tried to get associated with those that were doing the right things and had control over the student activities.

The whole experience was new to me and I had mentioned that I had gone out and tried out for basketball. I didn’t see me going anywhere and I thought that there was something about crew and I’d heard about that. And mostly what we heard about universities was a lot about Oxford and Cambridge. And I had recalled that I heard about this crew race at Oxford, so I thought I might try to do some crew. So I found out where it was; it was down...you had to go down...it was in Berard Inlet, down off of Point Gray where Vancouver...Royal Vancouver Yacht Club was, I think. In any case, we
I went down and...I went down and we used to row in the rain and everything. And I was very faithful about turning out for that. But I guess that was in my second year because I was in a different boarding house than the first year. In any case, I turned out and rowed and was doing pretty well and there was going to be the race on the Saturday. Well, Thursday, of all things, I got measles. This was the second round of measles. But in any case, I went out and that was the end of my career as crew. I thoroughly enjoyed it; it was something different and it introduced me to another phase of university life.

One of the stronger groups on campus, it seemed in many cases, supported certain people for elections to student government and other activities. It seemed a very big organization and I thought it was rather interesting that it was the Student Christian Movement, called SCM, and I sort of got involved with that a bit. And, well, one thing, when I first got down there freshman year, I went out to a church, West Point Gray United Church it was called, and I went there and they had a young people’s group in the evening, many of them university students who were just boarding in houses around like I was. Anyway, I got involved with that and found it very interesting and, lo and behold, I was elected chairman of that, which reminded me of days back in Rosedale where there were only half a dozen of us young people and we had a young people’s group and I happened to be president of that, too. But in any case, I got involved with the

SCM...oh, no, what I did was I hadn’t joined church when I was in Rosedale. I had dropped out of Sunday school...I didn’t exactly drop out; I got out by design because I wanted to do it. But I went to church every Sunday evening and went down and got involved in going to church because it was something to do, something to connect with people, which I rather enjoyed, so I got involved with these young people who joined the church and worked in the...but that was not related to the SCM on campus. It was a group that had all kinds of activities and was a
very...had a large number of students and I got associated with that and enjoyed the relationship there and later on, as I went through college, they supported me for various things. And one year the SCM was a national group, decided to have a national conference and each university in Canada was allowed to send some, I don’t know, six or eight people I guess, to this conference, which was to be held in Winnipeg. And the thing that was unique about it was not only ??? but I also was...the Catholic students from the Catholic universities also were invited to be there and that’s the first time something like that had happened. There was quite a strong division in Canada between the Catholics and the Protestants. In fact, there were schools established by the government even, some were Catholic and some Protestant, and there was sharp divisions in many ways between them. I can remember even in our town, although we didn’t have a Catholic church, but there were one or two Catholics there who had to go into Chilliwack once in a while; they went in, they said, to say mass. Uncle Will was a very ardent Protestant and he...they started this...the national anthem was “The Maple Leaf Forever” and that was what was sung but gradually "O Canada” seemed to becoming a popular thing, and Uncle Will wouldn’t even stand up when they sang "O Canada.”

Well, let’s see, I was back at activities, like the SCM...oh, and talking about the conference in Winnipeg. This was a very impressive thing and I was able to get there...I was nominated to go and some way they might have been able...I don’t know whether they provided trains there or not, but I didn’t need it in any case because we had a pass, so that was another thing that was valuable there about having a railroad pass. It was a great conference during the Christmas holidays and I thoroughly enjoyed meeting students from all of these universities that we’ve heard so much about in Canada, like McGill and the University of Toronto, Dalhousie, just a great number of fine institutions. But I remember one particular thing, one day when I was walking down the street in Winnipeg that supposed to be the widest street in the world, or the widest something, and this was in the middle of winter and it was very, very cold and I was walking across the street and the sole came off my shoe. This was a real tragedy because I obviously didn’t have a second pair of shoes but I had a couple of dollars, so I had to go down
and I think take a couple of dollars to get a new pair of shoes. And that sort of wreaked havoc with my budget, but I did get a pair of shoes and I was able to survive the winter, and came back through Drumheller to see Aunt Edith and Uncle Walter and their families.

I was involved with history and decided to take a major or minor in history and English and graduate, and one of the things that I got involved with was the International Relations Club, which was a typical club where we invited speakers in. And after a year or so in that I was invited to be president or elected to be president. We were...the university was invited to send one or two representatives to a conference in Moscow, Idaho and I was designated to go down there and this was...again, I was able to get a pass to get there, which helped. While I was in Moscow, I visited the Beta Beta Phi fraternity. When I first got to UBC, Les Barber, who was a person from Chilliwack, had gone a year or two before and he belonged to a fraternity and as soon as I got there he invited me over to his fraternity house. But I wasn’t in any position to join a fraternity, I wasn’t asked either, but that was obviously the idea. But I didn’t really know what they were and didn’t have any money at first. But I did later on, in sophomore year, get associated with a fraternity called Sigma Alpha Phi and I did decide to join that, and at that time their fraternity was...Sigma Alpha Phi was a local and were considering joining some nationals and one of them was Beta Beta Phi. So when I went down to Moscow, in Idaho, they...I was told to go around to the fraternity house, the Beta House, so I did and I was impressed with the mammoth size of them. One of them, I think, was...in Pullman, Washington was where Washington State was and it was only about seven miles from the University of Idaho. In any case, they took me around and visited these fraternities and I was impressed with the comradeship, not only in the individual fraternities but among the various chapters of the fraternities. So later on, we did become members of Beta Beta Phi and I thoroughly enjoyed it and stayed in the house for a while, and was it was recorded that I was the house manager, but I didn’t know...I didn’t think much about it, I was very active.
While I was at UBC, I kept moving around from boarding house to boarding house and one year I stayed with Keith Porter, who lived up at...his family lived there but his dad had a job managing...an accountant, I guess, in a fishing village up the coast. They had to go in by boat and his mother decided to go up with him and left the house. She arranged to get a house keeper to stay with Keith and I went over there and stayed too, and paid my rent there. So one year I stayed with Keith, and he was a member of our fraternity as well, and indeed we were able to keep very closely associated over the years. He later became president of Lipton’s Tea. But some of those others like John Shaw, who is a lawyer and worked in Vancouver and out of Vancouver, went on selling insurance. And Bob Parkinson, who became deputy administrator for old age pensions in Ottawa. And after we came to Vancouver, every year those three fellows, we had been in school together, and their wives, used to...and they were all members of the same sorority and they used to come down and visit us. Another good friend, best friend, was Bob Davidson, that I knew all the way through college and he was a very good friend. Among other things, he had a car so we could leave. We went to university parties, fraternity parties together and he used to take me. Unfortunately, he was in social work and then he decided to go into dentistry and went down to Portland, Oregon, to study dentistry. I never did get the facts, but apparently he died and I never knew quite how but he was certainly good to me. He was...but this just indicated some of the very good friends that I formed and some of them lasted through life, at least we all grew old together. As I’m dictating this, the other three have died as well.

Whenever students ask me about joining a fraternity, I've always given the very simple answer, look at the pledges the same time as...in the class that you’re going in because they are the people you’ll be living with for the next three or four years and they are the one that you’ll probably find closest associates. So you need to look at them more than the seniors in a fraternity when you’re being rushed.

The Prime Minister of Canada, Turner, was a Beta and the national fraternity decided to give him the senior award and they were going to do this in Toronto and
under the auspices of the Toronto chapter, the first Beta chapter in Canada. Well, some of us went on—some if these people I just mentioned, Keith Porter and John Shaw and Parkinson, we went to this ceremony in Toronto because Keith had lived there and we were sort of the hosts there. I guess we all stayed at his house, a rather large house. And we went to the ceremony, which was a very fine affair and it gave us an opportunity to meet Turner, who had been a member of the Gamma Omicron Chapter, the chapter in British Columbia to which we all had belonged.

A Passion for Academics

While I was involved in a number of different activities, I was always conscious of the fact of why I was at UBC. I was really interested in learning and the total academic life. I spent time in the residence or fraternity house, wherever I happened to be staying, we always had a small desk for people where we could sit and study and I also spent a lot of time in the library. My feeling was that even if I didn’t learn very much, at least I was there trying and not using my time somewhere else. But I realized later on, and perhaps not until I even got to Chicago, that I really didn’t know how to study and had to really improve my study habits. But the academic life was always exciting. The professors, in my estimation, I always accepted as knowing much more than I did and I enjoyed learning from them and they seemed to be much inspired in telling this. We had a good relationship with some of the professors and some of them used to, practically all of them once a year at least, invited us out to their home where we had an evening of conversation and sharing and some usually very good food. Most of the professors had been graduates of English University, notably Oxford and Cambridge, and they continuously reminded us of that with stories and with various references to their universities. I can’t just off hand remember one who was not a graduate of one of the universities in Europe. The professor of French went to the Sorbonne and I assume there was...well, yes, that’s true, there were a couple of professors that had gone to Eastern American University for advanced degrees; one was
Jennie Weiman-Pilcher and another one was Joe Marsh. In any case, they were mostly of the British strong race tradition.

I mentioned that when I first went to UBC I went down to turn out for basketball people but...were trying out for teams, but I didn’t feel comfortable with it. But later on I did find out about a group who were the managers of basketball, they had the ?? I think and I got associated with that group and in a couple of years became the senior manager. Our job was to arrange some schedules of the team, usually with American universities, and to attend league meetings in Vancouver for a city metropolitan league of Vancouver, New Westminster, and a few others. It was also our job to sell the tickets at the games and otherwise just be kind of manager and team representative. The year...I guess my fourth year, the basketball team did very well and they went on and won the Canadian championship.

Decisions for Life after UBC

At the end of our fourth year each class, I was the class of Arch ’38, we elected officers which supposedly remained the officers for that class for life. I was honored to be elected as the literary and scientific representative. I’m not quite sure what that meant and I didn’t have much opportunity to find out later on, but it was a fine honor.

While I was studying history and English I began to wonder, especially in the fourth year, of just what I was going to really do for a living and I more and more came to the conclusion that probably I would go and take the teacher training class which is a one-year program but did not award a degree. It later became known as education...I don’t know if it was a bachelor’s...anyway, an education degree.

During my senior year, Dad sent me a note about Frontier College which is a college, which was a college...which had a major concern for the education of immigrants, such things as learning to read and write, do simple arithmetic, and generally prepare them to be citizens. Many of these were what was called Ukrainians, which for the countries around there, that was sort of a generic name. And a lot of
them were from Sweden and Scandinavian countries who worked in the logging camps. Well, after a series of interviews by one of the board members, she was also an Episcopalian or a Church of England priest, interviewed me and accepted [me] and so right after graduation we met and we were provided transportation, my class, to Franklin River; Lodell, Stewart and Welsh was the big logging company; I went up there and got a job as a spark chaser on the back rigging. This was hard work in the sense that I did a lot of climbing. I had to be to my post up the side of the mountain, which was about three thousand feet, I had to be up there by eight o’clock. In the evening, I provided some instructions to some of the people that unfortunately there was a danger of fire and they closed the camp, so I left there and got a job that summer at the...on the railroad. I thoroughly enjoyed the brief time I was there at Frontier College because you really had the feeling you were helping these people to become adaptive to their new life in Canada.

I mentioned that all the way through college I worked the summers on the railroad gangs, section gangs, and as I mentioned previously in the summers they hired extra people and so I was able to get a job on a regular section gang and had to move around from various places, wherever I was eligible to work, seniority, and those included places like Tranquil, Laidlaw, Rosedale, Cheviots--these were...I went to these places, worked all day and stayed in the bunk car at night and tried to save my money, which I did because Dad suggested not to cancel the checks, but he had given me a little extra money that I needed to buy whatever I needed to buy. It kept the checks in tact so I had them to go to college in the fall for extras. During this time in the summers, I worked...well, I worked sometimes and stayed in bunkhouses at the various locations. I was also spending...able to spend... (Tape ends)
My attendance at the university was a real effort on the part of my parents, who didn’t have very much and contributed twenty-five dollars a month to me for room and board. I was always grateful to them, as I was for many other things they did in life, and I’m not sure that I’ve really ever in any way repaid them for what they’ve done for me and I’m not sure how much I even said “thank you,” two of the things that I really regret—that I wasn’t a little more expressive in this way. But anyway, that’s past history.

In some ways it was really a sacrifice for my sister, Jean, who was in the Depression and [had] taken a secretary, of course in Chilliwack, but then tried to get a job and she did finally get one at Lipton, which was very good and in those days paid very well. But at least she had her own independence and she later went on down to Vancouver to work and for one year stayed with me in the boarding house. She was very ?. She had to do the cooking and I went to school and she looked around and finally got a job and was very happy, finally, in the doctor’s office. And she enjoyed that and I think made a very fine contribution as well.

After working the summer, part of which was at Frontier College, I finally went and decided to take the teacher training course and, as I indicated, I think we got a certificate but it wasn’t a degree. Now it has been changed order and the degree is awarded for that year. But I went back and thoroughly enjoyed that final year and looked forward to getting out and getting a job and doing things. That year I did some practice teaching because we had to do a little bit, but nothing like what is required of teachers now. We had to go out for a few days to practice teaching in elementary school--went to Kitsilano Junior High School, North Vancouver High School and a school out in the endowment lands run by the provincial government. But I thoroughly enjoyed the year and I was also elected president of the class, so that was a little more interesting for me to have something to do other than just study. But I also got to know
C.B. Wood better, whom I spoke about, who was one of the great mentors for me. And he was elected honorary president of our class.

Being out, I can’t remember very clearly what I did during that summer after I got out. I remember we had to apply for jobs. One of them was I went down to Vancouver, everybody always wanted to be in Vancouver, of course it was a big city, they paid well and it was an excellent school system by all standards. So I went down to see if I could...I applied there, which was routine because Vancouver said that you had to wait...go out and teach two years and then come back and see what was available at that time. Well, I went out and...said I’d go out and get a job at an elementary school because I said that’s where they started people when they came into the Vancouver system. And I remember McCorkendale, the superintendent, a very fine man, who said, “Now go out and get a job at a junior/senior high school if you can. You’ll make more money, and when you come into Vancouver you’re going to start in the elementary school anyway.” So I did and I was around that summer and I remember applying for a job, but I can’t remember very much about what I was doing for a while. And I was staying with Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Vining, who had been...Dr. Vining had been a classmate of Uncle Wallace’s at McMaster and I got to know them earlier on and they were very kind; I used to go out and see them periodically and they had a place, so I was staying there. And I didn’t remember where I had applied even, but I remember I got a phone call from somebody that asked me if I wanted a job in Fernie and I didn’t know anything about Fernie and I was kind of hesitating for a minute. And he said, “Well, isn’t that enough money?” and I think I said...I think he was offering twelve hundred dollars a year and I hesitated and he said, “Well, we’ll make it twelve-fifty if you want.” Well, I agreed to take it. As it turned out, it was the first and only offer I got to teach that summer. So, I did get...I got ready to go up to Fernie and did go there to . . .

It was during the time that I was in the university that I got a...while I was in the university, Dad was still working as a section man at Shanview, I think it was, and they had moved there and he fixed up a bit of a house, so they were living fairly comfortably
but certainly not making much money, part of which they had to send...they gave to me to get through the university. While I was in Vancouver, I got a call one night from Verdant Watts, who was a good friend of my dad’s and they worked together on the railroad, and he called me and said my dad had just got a job as foreman at Alberta ??, and he said that was a great thing because he said the train stopped there. Well, I hadn’t really realized too much but a lot of the section places, the trains never stopped. Well, the weigh freight would stop if there was something to get on and off at these places, but basically all the trains went through, the freights and passengers and express trains, and all the others. So he got a job there and that was a great thing because there was a station agent and there was a little post office in Alberta and there was also another man who was an operator. So there were a couple of dozen people around there in one way or another and this was great because the trains would stop and it gave them a chance to talk to people going through, mostly the train crews. And they all got very friendly of course to what was going on in the outside world, with somebody else to visit. And that was a great thing for Dad, to get the section foreman. He got some extras as well because he had to keep the water tank heated and they had...the water tank is the big tank where the water comes down and they take it onto the engine to part of the process in making steam, so it was an interesting thing. I spent quite a bit of vacation other times there, but it was fine. It wasn’t the greatest place in the world but it was certainly better than a section man at Shanview. Dad also, when working with the railroad, was...I don’t know what he was called. In any case, he had in effect ran the branch of the union of the...he used to go up and down recruiting members. They were allowed some time by the railroad to do this work and he used to go up and down the tracks. He’d get off at one place and the section crew foreman there took him along to the next place, maybe kept him all night and talked about...stayed all night, maybe it went onto the next one; they went along. And he was very active in the union and he did a good job. He also...and then the railroad decided to have what they called co-op and these were people that they appointed, men of course at that time, to travel up and visit with the section crews to see what they could do to not only improve the efficiency of their work but also to get suggestions for other
things that might be done. So Dad was the co-op man and he made several trips over the years, up and down the railroad, to fulfill his job as co-op man. He was very good at it and was very glad to have this special assignment from time to time. I think it was only a few days at a time.

**Teaching School in Fernie 1939: A Country at War**

As I indicated previously, I received an appointment to go to Fernie in the junior/senior high school. I was told that I was to teach physical education, health and English. It seemed like a very reasonable assignment to me and I looked forward with great joy and happiness to do this. I had never had any formal work in physical education but I did do a bit of reading, and from what I understand from some people that were teaching it. I moved up to Fernie with enthusiasm. I got on the CPR train on the ? line, which went up through Fernie and in the mountains to Calgary. I arrived in Fernie with a suitcase with what clothes I had and some books, and things that I thought would be helpful to me. When I got off the train, I went to...talked to people at school and they suggested that I might want to stay at the home of Mrs. Corson and her daughter. Dr. Corson had been a physician there and they had had three sons but they were all killed in World War I and this was a sad place in many ways, and especially as we were approaching World War II. I was also told that there was a woman, Mrs. Golightly, who served lunches and dinners, and this to me seemed like a fine arrangement. She served to several of the teachers so we had an opportunity twice a day for the teachers to visit and socialize and it was a very happy occasion socially and it was a very happy occasion as far as the food was concerned. And this was very close to the school so we could go over there easily for lunch and back. And for breakfast, Maryann Corson agreed to give me, I guess, just a very simple breakfast of eggs, toast, something like that; it was enough to carry me on my way and I felt it was important to get something to eat before I started out. Also arriving at the same time was John Stewart who had the assignment to teach science in the junior high school. John stayed with Mrs. Corson but he did not have breakfast there, I don't think. In any case, we
visited quite frequently while we were there and he also had lunch and dinner with the Golightly’s. I might say that Mrs. Golightly was a very fine cook. She spent a lot of money getting food, it seemed to me. There were months in the middle of winter she had fresh strawberries and that was very unusual at the time. And I once said to her, “You know, Mrs. Golightly, you shouldn’t buy all these things for us, it’s a little too much for you to be able to and it’s a lot of work to do this, and you’re not going to…it’s expensive.” And she said, “Well, you know Alec, I know I can cook.” And she said, “I just want you to know that I feel by cooking for you people I’m doing a service and helping you and that’s all I have in mind. I’m not in it to make any money.” I guess she didn’t say she wasn’t in it to make money, she just put on a positive vein of what she could do and she was glad to do it to help some other people. She was a lovely person, too.

Well, I went to the school and I got my assignment. Mr. McPhee, Angus McPhee was the principal, a very tall Scotsman. He turned out to be very strict but very pleasant; I never had any difficulties with him. I got my assignment and that was a full schedule for the week. It was teaching all of the boys in grade seven, eight and nine; and nine, ten, eleven and twelve in classes in physical education. I also had the same group, teach health. And then there was the teaching of the grade nine English. I was given the homeroom and they had divided the grade nine students into two groups—one they sort of assumed, I guess, that they were the brighter group and the others were not quite so bright. In any case, I got the brighter grade nine students and they were a joy to have as homeroom, and we had lots of fun with them and they were very cooperative. I didn’t know too much about teaching but finally got a government syllabus of what was supposed to be taught and I...in some way or another, I guess it was assumed that I’d have charge of the boys’ sports teams except the grade...except the senior basketball team, which the shop teacher had been coaching for years. And that was all right with me; I didn’t mind. They, at the same time, decided that I should coach the girls’ basketball team. And this was a rather interesting relationship because we had exchanged visits to various high schools, like Crest and even went up to Trail once, Cranbrook, and various schools. And the pattern was that we would leave Friday
and go...arrive at this time at night, or sometime at night. We had an arrangement whereby each of the team members would stay with a member of the team from the other school and...we played the game on Saturday night and after the games, the boys’ and the girls’ games, there was frequently a dance or a party and then they went back and stayed with the other people. And they ate their meals there too. So this was the arrangement and it continued for several weekends during the year. I also had responsibility for some of the other teams I remember, soccer. And I went and I...we went over to Cranbrook to...I guess it was Cranbrook...no, I don’t think it was, but it was another coal mine town about...I think only about fifteen or twenty miles away. I went over there and played in the afternoon. One of the boys said he’d like to stay there and visit some friends and I said, well, I guess that was all right. But as it turned out, this was the only time I let anybody stay away from the team; we traveled as a team and came back as a team. And we...but that he should call me when he got back into Fernie. So this I let go, but he didn’t show up and the next Monday I asked him why he didn’t show up and he didn’t have much of an excuse at all. So the boy was a very good player, one of the best players on the team, next time we took a trip I left him at home, and that certainly made a point to all of the other team members and it made a point in school.

Well, I got off on some of the sports teams...well, I might as well go ahead and comment about the other. Also, I was responsible for the boys’ hockey team, ice hockey, and that was a very important sport there and they had very good schools, but they also had a coach that knew something about the game and so the coach was appointed, but I sort of acted as a manager and thought I should go over to all of the practices and everything, which I did. And out turn on the ice was, I think, five-thirty in the morning. So we used to get up, trek there and walk over to the ice hockey ring.

When I arrived there, it was assumed...I assumed and I guess the other...the principal assumed that I would have sort of charge of the athletic program as far as the boys were concerned. And soon after I arrived there, we were going to have a soccer game at Creston. So we drove over to Creston and after the game one of the boys
asked me if he could stay there and visit with some friends and then come back and I said, well, I guess that was all right, but he should call me when he got back. Well, I didn’t hear from him when we got back and on Monday morning I saw him and asked him why he didn’t call and, boy, he didn’t have much of an excuse. And all the boys knew [what] he was supposed to have done. So it got to be the next game, I didn’t let him go. We didn’t take him with us and he was a very good player, and it was kind of a blow to the team, too. But I thought it was important to make the point and glad I did it and I never had any trouble with any of the boys on trips after that, concerning their behavior.

I mentioned about going on the trips, the boys’ and girls’ basketball teams. I just had two rules--one was that they show up at the games or show up when the cars were going to leave to drive them to the next place, and the other was that they stay out of the beer halls, the pool halls, and that was, in those days that’s where there was a lot of trouble for adults and so I just thought I’d keep them out of…and we never had any trouble as far as I know with any of them going in there. It was a very good arrangement and the rules were simple and everybody seemed to obey them and that was fine. Oh, there was only one rule for the girls and that’s that they show... (Side ends)

This is the other side of the third tape and I’m recording for all the time that I was in Fernie teaching school.

Whenever the weather was fine, I used to take the boys in physical education outdoors and play games on the field. And if not, we just stayed in the small gym, which was adequate. I tried to make the experiences happy as possible for the boys and I didn’t have really any difficulty with them at all. I had a simple rule; that if
wanted to get their attention I blew the whistle and they would all look toward me, put
their hands behind their backs and listen to what I had to say. If we were out on the
field and it was time to go in, I simply blew the whistle and got their attention and then
we came in. It was a very simple rule but it gave a sense of, I guess you’d call
“discipline” for the activities. I had very little trouble with the boys in the physical
education classes. And fortunately I don’t think anyone ever got hurt, so this was a real
plus.
Teaching School in Fernie: Continued

This is tape 4, the first side of tape 4. I’m discussing my experiences in Fernie, BC, as a teacher. I’m not quite sure where I left off on the other tape, but one thing I wanted to emphasize was that when I got to Fernie, within a few months, war was declared. World War II was declared and this fact was to preoccupy the minds of everybody in one way or another. And it affected the school and all the business and everything because some things began to…economics started to boom and it just pervaded our whole lives.

This is tape 4, side one of tape 4. I’ve been discussing some aspects of my life while I was in Fernie, British Columbia, as a teacher. I would continue on.

Perhaps I should emphasize that war had been declared soon after I got there and I mentioned that the war just pervaded all aspects of our lives. Everything in the schools, the churches, and the community…it was just a terrible feeling that we were at war and there wasn’t much we could do about it, except try to win it.

Soon after I arrived in Fernie, I decided to identify with some church and this I did with… it was called the United Church of Canada and I participated and wasn’t very active until later on; I decided I would volunteer as a teacher in the Sunday school. This I did, but I really wasn’t very successful at it at all because I felt the great inadequacy of the…of not having enough knowledge about the church of the Bible. But I did continue to do it for a while and enjoyed it and I think the students did.

Fernie was at a strong Italian immigrant background and these people were pretty much associated with the Roman Catholic church and this was the first time that I had been in a community, I think, where there was a strong Catholic church or church of any kind. But this particular community was sharply divided between the Protestants and the Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholics had schools up until grade eight and then they came over to the public schools. But many things in the community indicated a strong feeling of division; at least I sensed it. When the children transferred in I was
teaching grade nine, and so they came directly after leaving grade eight and I remember there were many customs and habits that these children had. I remember one was at the end of each assignment that they completed, they put letters M, J, J or J, J, M or...in any case, they signed...and I said to one of them, “Well, what’s your name? I see you’ve got initials on here.” And they told me that this was the custom in the Catholic schools where they just come to put these letters and they stood for Jesus, Joseph, and Mary and other religious initials. I didn’t have any problem with it and certainly we never raised the issue in the schools, but I gather that the priest in charge often called various community activities, including the schools, to indicate the position of the Catholic Church. I do recall a very moving experience, though. One of the students in the high school had died very suddenly and, as I recall, very tragically and they were having a funeral service at the church. And I’m not sure whether it was during a school day or not. In any case I went there, as a lot of the students did, and I was so impressed with one of the other students in the public high school who sang “Ave Marie.” I was really deeply impressed with that ceremony and with her singing.

Another event that was totally noticeable was that the Salvation Army on Saturday night gathered downtown and had a service on the streets and then marched and moved off back to their hall, where they continued the service. I always admired these people. I particularly admired the high school girl who went out there and sang and participated in the service and that she had a lot of fortitude.

I was teaching physical education and I tried in various modest ways to try to make exercise and things meaningful to them in their everyday life. Once a year I had each of the classes in physical education bring their bikes and we went on a bike hike for the duration of the class period. The idea was to have them learn how to behave with bikes out in the community. I worked with the manager of the golf course so that I took each of the classes one period to the golf course where we had a talk by the manager of the golf course about golfing. These were, I guess, just grades ten, eleven and twelve that I took there. The idea was to get them to see the other physical education activities in the community that they might want to participate in. And then
for the grade twelve people, for the second half of the year, I had them sort of develop an individual exercise program for themselves which they could participate in during the regular physical education period. If I get them to have some sense that perhaps for exercise they ought to have some program that was useful to them after they graduated from high school...these were quite successful but not very outstanding, of course.

In the school system in British Columbia, they had a group of inspectors who were assigned to certain areas and those inspectors went around and had to visit each of the teachers’ classrooms and make a report. I had rather amusing (to me) meetings with the inspector. One was that when I was appointed there was a teachers’ convention...after I was appointed...there was a teachers’ convention in Vancouver during one of the breaks and I was attending the conference and a couple of people said, “Why don’t we go to the Georgio Hotel and have a drink?” Well, I didn’t...I guess that was all right. I didn’t drink, but I went down with them and while we were down there we met the inspector. And that was fine; I didn’t see him again until one time when we were at some kind of a meeting. I don’t know where it was, maybe Cranbrook. In any case, we went in to...we had some meetings and at one of the meetings was the...in one of the bedrooms in the hotel and the fellows were having a drink there and after that I...I didn’t think I had a drink there and I certainly didn’t have one in Vancouver. In any case, I just didn’t drink. And I remember the inspector getting me aside afterwards and saying, “Charters, you’re a good guy. You’re going to go a long way if you don’t drink too much.” I certainly thought that’s how people can generalize from a particular situation.

Social Activities while Working in Fernie

There were a few social activities in Fernie that I...which I participated. One was there were certain dances...well, the formal, and one of them was the Bobby Burns Night dinner and this was a black tie affair, very dressed up affair, and a very lovely affair to that. And that was before one of them...I was...one of the first times I had a dinner party. I had been invited to one of the teacher’s places, he was married, to his
home and we had a dinner for four of us. I went with some girl who was always also invited to these. This was a rather big social event in the community; they were like all other places, very lovely affairs people look forward to. It adds a little luster to life. We used to quite often go to the movies in town and there was not a lot of other social life as far as I was concerned. We did have the chance to visit at lunch and dinner with this group of teachers, which was a very cordial and very pleasant and happy affair.

The second year I joined the curling club, which I found to be interesting. It didn’t involve any social activity, as far as I was concerned, but it was a pleasant time to go down and learn how to curl and participate with the people that were at the curling rink.

As I had indicated previously, my father had been a union man and was actively involved in the union activities. While I was at Fernie, I joined the union and went to one or two meetings, but for the whole school there were only, as I recall, three or four teachers went to the meeting and it certainly didn’t strike me as a very impressive or influential association, but at the time of this...I don’t know whether it was spring or...anyway, there was a break in the school year and I went down to Vancouver and that’s when they had the meeting of the Teacher Federation. It was rather a large body of people and apparently was very effective, although I had little occasion to use it and no occasion where they had any criticism about me.

**Summer of 1940: Beginning of the Second Year in Fernie**

Like in all school systems, the summer, July and August, were free from teaching and the first summer, that would have been the summer of 1940, I went down to Vancouver and... went to Vancouver and took some courses in physical education. I had never had any, so I thought it would be useful to do some, have some experience. And I went to one out at the university that was put on by a fellow named Lee, who I think maybe worked for the...I don’t know if it was the Vancouver school system or what but, in any case, we had these courses that I took and it was helpful. And I also went over
to Victoria and took a course on golf and something else...oh, and also took a life saving certificate, which we took the examination in the pool of the Empress Hotel in Victoria. In some way in the summer too, I got involved, I don’t remember how I got involved, but anyway somehow I ended up over at Heels Range on Vancouver Island and took a short course with the military. This was some drilling of some kind and apparently I was sent there, as the other people were...were there as cadet officers to teach the children, the students in the schools, the rudiments of some military training. So I went there. It was a very happy occasion, we did a lot of drills and none of us seemed to know why we were there. In any case, we got back...this was now the second year or the end of the first year when we got back to school, in my case, Fernie. I started to be a little organized and taught some of the rudiments of marching and that sort of thing to all of the children, all of the boys, who were required to take some military training from grade eight up. I don’t remember, however, there was an occasion when there was some activity put on by the schools, I guess in the theater in downtown Fernie, and it was suggested that the cadet corps, the boys and that, should march down to it. Well, I had given them some basic training in how to do it, so they went out and marched down and I was very impressed at how well they did, and it was very well received by the people in the community. Even the principal of the school said, “You did a lot better than I thought you would,” which was a fine compliment from him. He was rather a strict disciplinarian and rather set in his ways, which was fine. He was not always entirely popular for his discipline, but I found him very cordial and generally helpful in all of the activities that I was involved in, in the school. One time when John Bucken died, who had been general of the city...of Canada, the principal asked me to speak for the school at an assembly. It was one of the few assemblies we had, and I did speak and I guess it went very well. Another occasion, when we taught narrative poems in grade nine literature, I had trouble thinking how to do an evaluation of the fact that I hadn’t been taught much on how to teach poetry anyway. But I went into it one day and I said, “I’m having trouble trying to evaluate the students and what they learned about these narrative poems,” which was a major part of the year’s training in grade nine. And he said to me, “Well, just go ahead and let them enjoy it.” He said, “There’s no
way to evaluate that stuff anyway.” And he said, “Go ahead and let them enjoy it,” which I did and tried to do some kind of evaluation of the students. The cadet corps went along fine that year. It didn’t involve very much except during physical education periods and giving them a little training in marching mostly.

**Summer of 1941: A New Chapter in Life**

In the second summer, when I went down to...this would be the summer of 1941, I went down to Vancouver and the first thing I did was go into the superintendent’s office in Vancouver and said to him...I met with the assistant principal and I said, “You told me after I graduated, you told me to come back in two years to see about a position.” And he said, “Oh, yes,” he said, “I have your application right on the desk here, Charters.” And that was that. And I didn’t hear any more from him for quite a while during the summer and I went out and then I was invited again to training camp, which was clear it was to do with cadet...becoming cadet officers, which were attached to the regular Army. In any case, a half a dozen of us from each of the provinces of Canada, maybe the western provinces, were taken out to Sarcee, which was a big Army camp just outside of Calgary. And I went there for training and while I was there I got a telegram from the commissioner of Fernie. Fernie was under receivership and the province was run by a commissioner appointed by the provincial government. He had strict run of the whole economy trying to get it back to, I guess get it back on budget, I guess. I don’t know, but he seemed to have charge of most everything. There was no mayor and no council so he was in charge. He said, “I see in the paper that you had been appointed to the Vancouver school system.” He said, “Am I to assume that you are resigning from Fernie?” Well, I went down and got myself on the phone and called Fernie and said, “Well, I don’t know. I didn’t see the notice in the paper and I have not received a notice from Vancouver, but I know that I was on their list.” And well, in due time I did receive a letter appointing me to Vancouver to teach at Lord Nelson School. This was an elementary school that didn’t have any cadet training.
at all and so I didn’t have much use of the cadet training I had to practice in the school system.

My experience in Fernie was overall a very happy one. It was a time when we were preoccupied with the war and it seemed to continue to escalate with no sign of a truce in sight. I felt very sorry about...I felt very sorry for some of the people in Fernie because they were predominantly an Italian community and Canada was at war with Italy. And this was a very trying thing to me and I’m sure the people of Fernie felt it very deeply as we tried to muster enthusiasm in the school and the patriotic spirit. But they seemed to survive very well and, however, I felt deep down a very sense of sorrow.

There was no great pressure for people to enlist in Canada, although many did, and there was no conscription. In some ways Canada was divided about their interest in the war. The French Canadians seemed to be very opposed to war of any kind and would not permit conscription and finally some sort of registration was imposed. I think the thing was that there was conscription but the French Canadians would not have to go overseas. But I’m not...I just don’t recall exactly what that was now. But I carried on my business and several times I inquired about enlisting and I did not sense too much sense of enthusiasm for me to do it. They seemed to think I was doing a good job working with the boys in the junior/senior high school. There did not seem to be any great outpouring of patriotism in Fernie, but there was certainly no opposition that I detected. The favorite items on the news at that time was Churchill’s speech; he was prime minister of Great Britain and he was a very forceful speaker. They needed a sense of whooping people with some enthusiasm to win the war and had great praise of the people in Britain, which was very much lauded and appreciated in Canada, even though they had to sleep in the subways at night.

During my time at Fernie, I had the great desire to do graduate study and, in fact, I got enrolled at the University of Washington which was nearby and I did get accepted there. I also enrolled at the University of British Columbia for a master’s
degree and paid my full cost over the course in advance. As it turned out, when I decided not to go there the University of British Columbia returned my money, for which I was grateful. Some way or another, through various regions, like McCorkendale, the superintendent of schools kept saying I should go to the University of Chicago. And I had some sense of commitment to the University of Chicago through Uncle Wallace, who had taught there and seemed to have a great respect for it. In any case, in retrospect, my enjoyment and satisfaction of my experience in Fernie was really top-notch. I enjoyed the school and the teachers and, as far as I know, there was no conflict among the teachers. Everybody seemed to get along very well and had respect for the principal, who was principal not only of the junior/senior high school but the elementary school, and those two units were kept quite separate, especially at release time so there was no conflict in the corridors or anything, no jamming. I enjoyed the teaching; I felt a good deal of satisfaction and enjoyment in teaching the health and physical education, and also I enjoyed the students and thought they were very good and very committed to learning. I also very much enjoyed the residence with Mrs. ? and her daughter. And I enjoyed all the lunches and dinners with Mrs. Golightly. These were fine ladies and seemed committed to helping the teachers in the schools.

I had previously commented...I had spoken on this record as receiving an appointment in the Vancouver schools. I did finally get a letter and all was set. During the summer, I stayed in various places and started mostly with Dr. and Mrs. Vining, as I said. When I knew I was going to stay there, my sister Jean knew of a place where four guys had an apartment and one of them left and she suggested that I might stay there. I met with the fellows and we worked out that I would move in with them. They were Bill Linton, Tom Pink, and Doug Panguin. And they were a fine group of guys that I kept in touch with until they died. Well, Bill Linton is still living in Halifax. They were a very cordial group and I spent the time...we had dinner together at night and they had hired a man, John, who was of Chinese decent who did the cooking and the cleaning in the apartment. He had responsibility for purchasing the food and the general taking care of the place. He was a real fine fellow and we enjoyed visiting with him. We ate together every night for dinner and then many other times we sat around in the
evenings or Saturdays and Sundays and visited with each other. Doug worked in one of the banks and always prided himself that his father and grandfather had been bankers and he referred to himself as a member of a family of bankers. He continued to work there and later on he joined the Navy. Tom Pink was a...he was a member of the family of Pink Company in the east, particularly in St. Catherines, and they had a branch up in Vancouver and he was responsible for that branch, although I think he had disassociated any financial interest. Then there was Doug Grant, who also worked in the bank and later joined up in the Army and was killed overseas. Bill Linton was...I think he was trained as an accountant. In any case, he was on the fast track at the Royal Bank of Canada and was in Vancouver, his home being in Halifax. He was in Vancouver and was not able to join the service. I think because of his bad eyesight.

**Lord Nelson Elementary School**

It was that summer, 1941, that I was assigned or got an opportunity to continue cadet training at Heels Range...no, not Heels Range, at Sarcee, in Alberta. And so there were six of us from British Columbia who went out there and joined people from each of the other prairie provinces. When I came back, it was getting on time to go to school, to get settled in the apartment and I was ready to go to work. I was assigned to Lord Nelson School after all this--two summers of cadet officer training--there was no cadet corps there. But I did teach physical education and some other subjects to fill in. The principal was Jay Bryant who had come from England, as many of the teachers and professors in the schools and educational system did. He was a very fine gentleman and ran a good set up at the school. There was no conflict, it was very easy. Many of the teachers, most of them I guess, except me, had been at the school for some time. They did their work and then we had lunch together in the teachers’ room and I felt some obligation during the lunch hour to go out and supervise the boys’ playground and I thoroughly enjoyed working with the boys out in the schools. It was not a very good playground in the sense that it was cinders and the boys were always getting scratched and bruised. I finally got an arrangement with the school nurse to leave the
office open so I could go up and put bandages and treat the kids for minor injuries. I had no major injuries in the school while I was there teaching physical education or supervising the ground. There was only one other man on the teacher staff, Mr. Deveraux, and he not only taught but some of the kids stayed for lunch at school and so he would have them into his room and they sat and had lunch with him. But he did not take much responsibility for supervision outside. The principal, he went out and he took every lunch hour off and went to a little restaurant near there, near the school, drove over and spent his time eating lunch and came back. And once or twice he took me over and we had a very fine visit. He had been active in the cadet training program years ago and finally ended up with a regiment and became a major. He was very proud of that and he was an ardent British citizen.

**Joining the Canadian Officers’ Training Corps (COTC)**

It was during that year that I decided to join the COTC at the University of British Columbia. I went out there and got admitted to the program and started training out in the field the same afternoon. I was really not very enthusiastic about this COTC because we had some training, physical training and parading and such-like, and then we had classes one night a week. I was not at all enthused about... (Side ends)

I was speaking about my experiences in Vancouver, where I had a position teaching in Lord Nelson Elementary School. I was speaking about my lack of enjoyment of being in the COTC, Canadian Officers’ Training Corps, which were attached to the University. I was down walking in Stanley Park one day and I went by and saw the sign “HMCS Discovery”--His Majesty’s Canadian Ship Discovery--and this was a base for the Vancouver area. So I went in and met...I was met by a seaman and I was explaining to him that maybe I’d like to join the Navy. I knew nothing about the terms or positions or anything. He asked me what I might like to do and I said, “Well, maybe be a signalman.” And he talked to me for a while and he said, “I think you ought to talk to somebody else.” So he took me and introduced me to an officer who was talking about joining. We talked for a while and he said, “How would you like to be a sub-lieutenant?”
I said, “Fine, sub-lieutenant and signaling are fine with me.” He kind of laughed a bit and I hadn’t realized that sub-lieutenant was an officer and...a rank below the lieutenant. In any case, he talked to me and told me to fill out an application form, which I did, and so that was that. And then later on, I was called in to be interviewed with a couple of hundred others, four captains...I guess three captains sitting at a desk. There wasn’t anything else in the room except a comfortable chair and an ashtray. And I can remember going in for that interview and it was obviously rigged some way or another and I thought, well, I won’t sit back in that chair and be comfortable; I’ll sit up straight in the front of the chair, which I did. And although I smoked, not a lot, that time I didn’t smoke at all. And I went through the interview and I can remember it seemed like I had to say “no” to every question. Finally, one of the officers said to me, “Why do you want to join the Navy?” I remember saying to them, “I don’t know, sir, I just want to join.” And they were all laughing.

As time went on, I was still teaching and I was down at my sister Jean’s place, she was there with Andrews, they weren’t married at the time, but she had an apartment down there and they had a pay phone out in the hall, but some way or another she went out and answered the phone, came back in and said, “Somebody wants to talk to you.” And I can remember picking up the phone and he said, “Is your name Alexander Charters?” And I said, “Yes, sir.” He said, “I understand that you’ve applied to the Royal Canadian Volunteer Reserves. Is that correct?” And I said, “Yes, sir.” And he said, “You’re accepted.” And he said, “Report Monday night down at HMSC Discovery.” So I joined the Navy and went down twice a week to train at the base there. I went down, Waddy Robertson and Al Smith picked me up at the apartment, drove me down twice a week. It was very kind of them and I got to know Waddy very well and spent a lot of time with him in the service. There were, I think, about twenty of us accepted as probationary sub-lieutenant, about the lowest rank you could get were probationary sub-lieutenant Royal Canadian Volunteer Naval Reserve.” That was about as low as you could get. The training base was in Halifax and we had to wait our turn to get admitted to a class in Halifax. Each province had a pool of potential officers, such as the one that I joined, and each month they took a few from each of the provinces.
and sent them back to Halifax as a class. That way they had a national group. In any case, I didn’t get called up in the summer of my turn and I went back and taught school at Fernie...excuse me, at Lord Nelson School, not Fernie.

As I indicated, I had a very fine time at Lord Nelson School. I spoke about the teachers, who were very cordial and helpful, and the principal, who was also very cordial and very helpful to me. I really enjoyed the experience there with the boys because primarily I taught the boys health and physical education, and some of the girls in some of the other classes, but not too many. And I continued to, two nights a week.

**Summer of 1942: Helping the War Effort**

The summer came along and I thought I ought to be doing something to help with the war effort. I got a job out at Vancouver Airport digging ditches and there were a number of university boys there and a number of other people. In Vancouver it rained a great deal and it seemed like we were down in the ditches and thick in shovel type of work. And that’s what I did for quite a while. And finally one day, the superintendent was...come over and I was down in the ditch and all the other guys called me up and said, “How would you like to be a foreman?” I said, “Fine.” I had worked on railroad gangs and had some experience in the logging camps, but I never had an experience as a foreman. But anyway, he said, “Well, I’ll take you over and I’ll give you...” I think it was fifty-five cents an hour; we were getting about forty, and that seemed fine. He took me over and he had a group of men there, about twenty-five men, and he said, “This is your crew.” And he looked over and there was a barn and he said, “Tear the barn down.” Well, I guess he could tell by the look on my face that I had never...I didn’t know anything about tearing down a barn. He finally took a couple of guys and went up on the roof and started to do it himself. And the other guys that were around got the word, so they started tearing down the barn. So we did various things like building fences. He was a very fine fellow and he was very good to...oh, right after we started tearing down the barn, he came back to me and he said, “I’ll give you sixty-five cents an hour.” And I said, “Fine.” I really didn’t know why he changed that. He must
have gone into the time keeper’s office and they said, “Well, you pay sixty-five cents for…” because I had certainly done nothing to indicate that I had additional qualifications in those twenty minutes or so. But anyway, he was a very good guy. We worked Saturdays and Sundays all the time. We were trying to get...it was on the Vancouver Airport and we were obviously trying to get it built; everybody was just working long hours and everything. One Friday he said to me, he come up to me and he said, “Take the day off tomorrow.” I said, “Well, what do you mean take the day off?” He said, “Well, I think you ought to take a day off.” He said, “Why don’t you go out...take the day off and go out to the races.” I guess he felt it was about time I had a break after all this time doing that and he knew I was training for the Navy some nights a week.

In any case, I took the next day off, Saturday, and did go out to the race track. The first time I had been in a race track all my life, horse racing, and I thoroughly enjoyed the day. I remember about one of the guys that were selling something for a dollar on supposedly the horses that were going to win. Well, I bought one for a dollar and the one I bet on did win. And so I thought I was pretty good, so I went back next time only I didn’t buy any more tickets I just picked a horse out and, sure enough, I won. And some of the guys that were around, they were starting to watch me and they came over when I bet on the third horse, they said, “Which horse are you going to bet on?” I said I had no idea, but I did pick one and I won. I kept betting for the afternoon and did very well, not knowing anything about horses except they had four legs and they were running around that track. Of course, I had to have some experience with horses back in the days on the farm, and in Rosedale, but they weren’t much help to me at betting on the horses either.

Finally, I went back to...end of the summer...I had to take a couple of days off and went back to Calgary to visit a girl there that I had met at the...during the SCM seminar that was held in Winnipeg.
In the fall, I hadn’t been called up so I went back to teach at Fernie again. To my surprise, ?? the teachers that were there. But it continued on. I continued to do the training in the naval reserves. I was able of course to stay in the same apartment with the fellows, where I had stayed during the summer. But things started to break up in the apartment. Doug went over to Victoria and we just...gradually our lives began to center more and more on the war and not on the civilian world.

1946-1948: University of Chicago and Dawson School

This is the beginning of another section of my recollections. It concerns the University of Chicago where I spent three years from January ‘46 through December of ‘48 and took my doctorate, went back for graduation in December of ‘48. Actually, I spent one and a half years there, considering that January to August is a half year. When I got off the Queen Mary in ?, I was to be discharged, they were certainly very efficient and trained effectively in the process. I got off the train and went up to Cornwallis and spent twenty-four hours there. I guess I was one of the first that had gone through the process, but they were set up so that you could get off the train one day and get back on it the next day and do all the examinations and discharge materials that were necessary. It primarily was concerned around health, the health examination and other matters. I officially wasn’t discharged until I got out to Vancouver. While going through there and deciding what I wanted to do, I was given a train ticket to go to Toronto where I wanted to visit the University of Toronto, and then I was given one out to Missouri to see Uncle Wallace and Aunt Jessie; that was at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, and then on to the University of Chicago and then back home. I visited the University of Toronto. They were not very enthusiastic about recruiting students, or it didn’t seem like it to me and I had a very good three hours there but soon decided I didn’t want to do it. I mentioned that I was, of course, eligible to go to university under the veteran’s bill. It was to pay our tuition, books, and monthly living allowance.
From Toronto I went out to Columbia, Missouri, and I didn’t have any institutions to visit there but I wanted to visit with Aunt Jessie and Uncle Wallace, which I did. It so happened, Uncle Wallace was in the hospital with a broken appendicitis and the new drug had just come out at that time and he was treated with it and got over it okay. I stayed a couple of days there and visited with Aunt Jessie and I also had a chance to meet Sandy, her son, who was not able to participate as a military person in the war, but was there writing for a local newspaper.

I remember when I got ready to get off the train at Columbia, the trains were so crowded that I was sitting on my suitcase for all the ride with my Burberry, which it means light overcoat, and the train stopped to get off and my coat was caught between the two cars. And there I was, caught. And all of a sudden the train shuffled again and it had come free. I could still see myself looking for that coat somewhere.

I had a very good visit with Uncle Wallace. I talked about my plans and he suggested immediately that I at least go look at the University of Chicago. He gave me the name of Ralph Tyler who had been one of his students and Tyler was, at that time, chair of the Education Department at the University of Chicago. I had a good deal of information about the university; I’d heard about it from Uncle Wallace who had taught there for a while and he was a strong advocate of the university. The principal in our school at Chilliwack had known Uncle Wallace and also knew of his work in Chicago and kept talking about that. And when I got ready to [go to] UBC, I had a letter from Uncle Wallace introducing me to C.B. Wood, who was a professor in education at the University of British Columbia. “CBS” he was called. He became a very good mentor to me, friend, and talked about the University of Chicago, too. In some way or another, I always had it running through my mind was being a student at the University of Chicago. I had also thought about Oxford and of course that was a fine institution, well known to people at the University of British Columbia and elsewhere because many of the professors at the university had come from England, in particular from Oxford and Cambridge. I mentioned also, that later on when I met McCorkendale, the superintendent of schools, he was very kind and friendly to me. The superintendent of
schools in Vancouver said that I ought to go to graduate school and he kept insisting that for a long time.

During the war, as we went weekends to various short courses and things, I went up to Oxford and was thinking of applying there. And then I decided that graduate work in the UK was not really my cup of tea and I’d be better to do graduate work in Canada or the US.

So when I got to Chicago I already had a certain amount of interest in Goddard as a place I would like to study, but never had been on campus. So I had a room at International House and was very much impressed with the place. Then I went over to see some of the professors, including Cy Hull which I had said was in the field of adult education, in which I had developed an interest, particularly because of my experience with Frontier College and with the many short courses and programs that were offered for adults while I was in England and other parts while a member of the service. I was much impressed with it as a field of study, although there weren’t many people I could even talk to about it because it was so new. In any case, I did talk with Cy Hull and had a very good visit with him. And then went down to see Ralph Tyler and he was very cordial in greeting me, partly because that’s the way he was with greeting all students but I think also because he had been a student of Uncle Wallace. I was impressed that they spent a good deal of time with me, talking with me about various things to do with the university and my life and I had somewhat the feeling right then that they made judgment on kids other than grades. After some time visiting with Dr. Tyler, he said if I was interested I could go and talk to the admissions personnel. So I went over there. He told me where to go and who I was to see. I got there and they were very friendly about welcoming students. I think they had made up their mind that they were going to welcome the GI’s after they did service. In any case, I get speaking to the gentleman that was interviewing me of the fact that I had to get a decision soon because I had to be back to Canada and there wasn’t...there was only a month or two left before I would get all my papers in order and get discharged from the Army as soon as I get back to Chicago, which was under a quarter system, one of them beginning in January of ‘46.
She was very cordial and asking me all kinds of questions, which she wrote down, and I kept saying to her, “I wonder what do I have to do to get papers and stuff to get admitted?” It didn’t sink in on me, but she kept saying to me, “Well, you are admitted.” And I was flabbergasted and she kept repeating. Finally I believed her and said, “That’s fine.” And it was just great because then I got the document I needed so that when I went back up to Canada, I could not only get a discharge from the Navy but also apply for educational benefits under the Veteran’s Act. I don’t know what it was called in Canada but it’s pretty much similar to the GI Bill. The bill in Canada had been approved long before the one in the United States but, of course, we were in war from the fall of ’39 when I graduated from the teacher training program and went to Fernie, and it was December of ’42 before the United States got into the war.

So after my visit to Chicago where I visited also with some people, Doug Arbuckle and his family, ???, visited with them and a number of other students to get the feel that I was really much impressed with the university; there was a certain dignity about it I felt, and also a certain warmth and just friendliness among the students and the faculty.

I also mentioned the fact that I was staying overnight at International House and I was very much impressed with it. It was a building developed by Rockefeller that was to get American students to know international students and vice versa. And fifty percent of the students were to be from the United States and the other fifty percent from other countries. I was able to get a room there, as it turned out, with my cousin Sandy who was beginning to study there in the sociology department.

So I got on the train back to Vancouver and I stopped off in Alberta to visit with Mom and Dad for a few days, as a matter of fact several days, and I…and when I went into the service, we were practically required to take out life insurance, at least they introduced you to an agent and an appointment was set up to visit with them. So I had some insurance. But also when I went in the Navy I had the idea that I should try to save some money to do graduate work. Of course, this was all to be ?? whether you
had a chance to use it or not when you got back, but I went forward with the idea that I would be coming back. And I put the bank account in charge of my father and then assigned...I think I assigned fifty percent of what the benefits were. In any case, when I got back to Vancouver and back to Alberta, I did have some money in the bank. I remember my sister Jean was buying a house and she wanted a fireplace and I guess she couldn’t quite swing it or something, but I remember I paid some money to buy a fireplace in this new house they were buying. I remember my mom and dad were moving down to ?? and I was able to give them a little bit of money. Not as much as I should have given them maybe, but I didn’t have very much there and I needed some money to go to the University of Chicago. In any case, it was all a very fine feeling of being able to help them a little bit after all they’ve done for me.

After visiting with Mom and Dad, I went down to Vancouver and about the second day, no, maybe it was the first day I was there, I went to see Mr. McCorkendale, the superintendent of schools, and I walked in the door to his office and he said, “Where are you going to graduate school, Charters?” And I said, “Well, I think I’m going to the University of Chicago.” He said, “That’s just great.” “That’s great,” he said. He said, “Go down tomorrow morning to Lord Nelson School...” not Lord Nelson, to Dawson School, I guess it was down in the inner city. He said, “Get yourself...they badly need somebody to work with the boys there in physical education.” And he said, “We’ll also get you some money to go to graduate school.” And I said to him, “Well, you know, I’m still in the Navy,” I can’t go and work with him. And he said, “Well, go down there...” and there and...it was in the Hotel Vancouver where the offices were for discharge, the old Hotel Vancouver, it wasn’t being used then as a hotel. And he said, “Go down there and get yourself discharged and get off to Dawson tomorrow morning.” Well, I didn’t know any better so I went from there over to the Hotel Vancouver and I went...asked them how I, do I get discharged and they said, “Fine.” And I had a lot of documents from Halifax ?? and had those documents. And sure enough, I got discharged and I started to process the papers to go to the University of Chicago in January. This was about the middle of November, I think it was.
So sure enough, I got down to Dawson School the next morning. It was really kind of an awakening to me because this was down in what would be called the inner city where the playground I was to teach physical education...the playground was sort of cinders, it was rough and apparently they had quite a long line of physical education people who knew these boys were pretty rough. And they kept telling me, “Our father had been a boxing champion,” and all these physical things of their fathers, and uncles, and cousins were doing physical-wise. But I kind of took it in stride and it didn’t bother me that much. I also had to teach...I forget what I taught. Oh, it was something with the girls and the boys and I had a homeroom and it was grade eight. I remember it was a very tense situation that I went along with and did the best I could. But I remember one day one of the boys took a bottle of ink and dumped it in the pocket of the coat of one of the girls. So I said to this boy, “Tomorrow morning you bring back thirty-five cents to get this girl’s coat cleaned.” Well, I can remember the next morning he did bring thirty-five cents. I was...I didn’t know whether I was surprised or what but I guess I was certainly glad to see him bring the thirty-five cents because I had the idea that he had no intention of doing anything about this. But he did and that was...so we went along until it was time to prepare for Christmas. And I remember sitting in the homeroom and it was time to say goodbye and people usually brought presents and things, and I [was] completely disappointed when the girls gave me a present and the boys didn’t do anything. They just sat there and never said goodbye and the girls gave me a present and wished me “Merry Christmas.” But I was really disappointed, not so much, maybe, that they didn’t give me anything but they didn’t go along when the girls did. So anyway, I got out of there and walked down to the corner to take the streetcar and the boys were all gathered there and they came up to me and one of them handed me a wallet. And they said, “Please won’t you stay?” I don’t know when in a half hour I felt so alone. And before the half hour was out, about half an hour it was, I am not quite sure when I ever felt so high; it was a half hour I’ll never forget. And so I left Dawson with really, overall, a great feeling.

While I was in Vancouver and getting discharged and getting admitted to the University of Chicago, I really had the feeling that I was beginning to leave my war
experience behind and maybe start to do some things that might make for peace in the world. And so, I had a happy time over Christmas with the family and friends that I hadn’t seen for a long time. And I got on the train to go to Chicago.
Adjustments: Life after the Service

This is the first side of Tape 5 and it concerns my life at the University of Chicago. I think I ended up my previous tape by saying I got on the train to go to Chicago.

Well, the train trip to Chicago was somewhat uneventful but I did arrive in Chicago and immediately went out to International House, where I had already made reservations. My academic life at the university seemed to be, in retrospect, to be divided into about seven different items. The first one was taking the courses that were given. Chicago was on a quarterly system and we generally took three courses a term. I worked hard as a student because I knew I wasn’t as brilliant as some, but I was determined to make good on these courses so I worked with a lot of vigor and late at night and decided that I wasn’t going to spend my life doing other things, that I needed to just concentrate on the courses, which I pretty much did. Sandy, my cousin that I had spoken about before, was also there and we were in a room together. Although we didn’t spend much time eating or doing anything together, we just had a very cordial and pleasant time together. I knew that it would be hard to settle down to academic life after a rather active time in the service, so I was determined to go in and sit on the desk in a room at International House and just sit there. And even though I didn’t do much work, at least I was not doing other things and learning to concentrate on the courses that I was taking.

I ate all my meals, with few exceptions, at International House and they were really quite satisfactory. There were a lot of international students in the house, as the name would imply; about half of them were American and half of them international and I guess I, being from Canada, would have been classified as an international student. Soon after I got there some of the people whom I got to know fairly well as the year went on, having stayed at International House for two and a half years you got to know people fairly well, they advised me not to play bridge. I used to see them...they got up from the dinner table in the dining room and [would] go and play bridge. And they
advised me not to play there. They said I could play with them if they wanted, but don’t get started on that routine. And so I didn’t. But also I didn’t play bridge very much anyplace.

I remember sitting at the desk and looking out the window and seeing a sign, “Hotels Windermere,” and I wondered if I was really going around the bend at night after too much sitting at the desk and studying, working, and it wasn’t until after a month or so I realized there were actually two hotels. And the sign said “Hotels” in the plural, which was correct. And this really was quite a relief to me.

The university, of course, had a very strong library; it was in Judd Hall and there were sort of carrels, open carrels, desk type, and each of the graduate students as far as I know was given a carrel. So we were able to leave our materials out in the open because that wasn’t any problem and go back and forth. So that was another study place that I went to very faithfully.

**Academic Studies and Examinations**

I was bound and determined to forget the war and devote my life and effort toward establishing peace. And I was all prepared to do this and was sitting down and went over to the first class and the professor mentioned that the first university, I think that’s what he said, the first university was in Salerno, Italy. Well, that immediately brought back visions of our invasion there, early in the war. But I still stuck with my belief, trying to forget it, which I did, I think fairly well. The second thing about it was that in general they certainly were...the professors were international in their perspective and not geared solely to the United States. I was impressed with this. One of the examinations at the end of the quarter, it would have been in March, one of the examinations said something about analyzing the university, the educational system of Illinois State...I simply wrote on the examination that I was from Canada, I didn’t know anything about the examination. I don’t know whether that may have had some attention to the faculty. In any case, the first quarter went very well. I was very happy;
I was learning a lot and getting a start on a new way of life. I guess we got examinations. I don’t remember what I did, probably not too good, but I don’t know. But in any case, I was able to continue there and I was happy about it. There probably wasn’t any question about it, but I always had some question about whether I was doing adequately. This continued on for three quarters and then I started to think about taking what were called the preliminaries, which was the second phase of life at...these were examinations not set by the professors but based on their courses I guess, and were set by the Board of Examiners of the university. And I assumed that was a very fair way of doing it. They were certainly comprehensive; we sat and wrote morning and afternoon for several days, at least three. I had the feeling when I was through that I had written everything I knew. I certainly had a chance to express myself, and I felt very good about it and thought it was a fair examination.

About a week after the exams, we were able to get the results. Well, I might say that after the exams were finished, ordinarily you’d think you’d want to go out for a celebration or something. I didn’t feel that way at all. I was so tired. I went up and just had a good sleep. We were told to go into the office about a week after the examination was complete to get the results. We found out from somebody else in advance of course, that you walked in and they gave you an envelope which gave you grades and your status, what they thought about you continuing. Well, that time, at nine o’clock on a Friday morning, we were all there to line up and go in and we, of course, were all very much concerned. But I remember just as the girl was handing me my envelope, she sort of whispered to me, “You’re all right.” So it wasn’t so [much] tension from then to open the envelope, but I did. And I did okay, I guess, anyway.

**Inspiring Professors**

I later went in to see the professor, not too much later I might add, I went in to see Cy Hull because usually after the preliminary they apparently assign you to do...to take additional courses or do additional work to make up for gaps in what they perceived in our response to the prelims. Well, I went in to see Cy Hull who was my
advisor in adult education, and he said, "It isn't necessary for you to take any more courses. But you should do three things." He said, "Go over and sit in on a class by Fermi." Fermi was a great physicist who developed the atomic bomb at the University of Chicago. He said, "Just go in there and sit for a semester. You can't take the exam, but that isn't necessary." And he said, "Go in and sit in a beginning class in chemistry with Schlesinger." And Schlesinger was a Nobel Prize winner, so I went over and sat and took this course in chemistry. The third one was to go and sit in another class to learn something about Freud’s Psychology. Apparently the University of Chicago counseling, at least in the School of Ed, centered around a fellow Carl Rogers which was fairly open psychology. And he said, "Go and sit in on those three classes."

I recall it was a wonderful experiences sitting with those professors, talking. And it seemed to me that what they were saying made a lot of sense to somebody who even isn't in the field. I could understand part of it, obviously a great deal, but I didn't know what it was about. But I did get a sense of the way scientists think and their general philosophy of life. It was truly a wonderful experience to sit with those great Nobel Prize winners, or at least two of them, and see what they had to say about their field. So the third stage was what I called the

preliminaries...or the extra...the extra assignment. Mine certainly wasn't very rigorous but certainly in the spirit of the University of Chicago to give you a broad perspective on life and on the total academic field.

Pursuing the Field of Adult Education and Fulfilling the Language Requirement

I found out about the language requirement and that we were to take one language at what they considered the high level or two languages at the lower level. Well, I had only had one language other than English and that was French. So I decided I had better try to hit it at the high level rather than go back and start to learn another language. So I did, I started to learn it, went to concentrate on that for a good
part of the semester. So I devoted my...really concentrated on it for several weeks and got to the stage where I could take it after...it was about two-thirds of the way into the quarter. The language exam was written and it was given to all of the students in the social sciences. The examination had a lot to do...the subject of the examination had a lot to do with pre-senility. In some way or another I never got the word that pre-senility meant “before senility;” I just struck a blank on it. But I wrote like mad and...maybe they thought that I wrote so much about it that I really knew what it was. I did have some idea, of course, but it would have been a lot simpler if I had just realized it.

In due time, we got the results of the language and fortunately I did pass it at the high level and then was prepared for the next part of the exam, which was to go to the library and get some languages in French related to my subject, which in my case was adult education. Well, I went down through in the stacks of the library and looked through the French literature and I couldn’t find anything about adult education. And I went back and reported a couple of times I couldn’t find it and he said, “Well, keep looking. There must be something there.” Finally they decided, I guess, that I had done enough work and they said, “Okay. That’s okay. We’ll certify it as being complete.”
Dissertation in Motion: Decisions and Development of Ideas

The language was the fourth stage. The fifth one was getting the dissertation approved. I misspoke, getting a dissertation proposal approved. At that time in Chicago, and indeed across the country, the nation was feeling the impact of the Ford Foundation and the things they were proposing in the field of education. They set up three funds. One was the fund for the republic, one was the… I forget what the other one was and one was the fund for adult education. Hutchings and Adler…Hutchings was the president, a great scholar, very worldly, made his great impression on the University of Chicago and did a number of things. One was that he created the college starting at grade ten and going through a bachelor’s degree. He took kids in at the high school level. They had to pass examinations to where they stood and developed the college of the University of Chicago and that had a lot to do with the so called great books, the classics. Among other things, he incidentally raised a lot of money for the university and was very strong and somebody, Walgreen, who ran the big drug stores, accused him of being a communist, I think it was. In any case, Hutchings took him to court and defended himself. Before he got to Chicago at the age of twenty-seven or twenty-eight, he had been dean of the Yale Law School. He defended himself; it was all over. Walgreen gave the university a million dollars.

One of the things that the fund for adult education did was started a series of discussion groups all across the United States and even some up in Canada where adults went in and read a book a week and then met to discuss it. And the unique thing was they had two discussion leaders and they were not allowed to give any information. And so the discussion took place among the adult participants and were spurred by questions from the two discussion leaders. This was a great thing and it took off across all of the United States and Canada. The books that they read were printed in a special series so they weren’t very expensive, and they were run by all sorts of groups and in most cases I don’t think they charged anything because there wasn’t any charge. The discussion leader did it for nothing; what administration was done by the sponsor like
the library(?). I went and attended some of these groups and thought that I would
develop a dissertation around that. And after much discussion, drafts and stuff, I finally
got a dissertation proposal together and [it] was an evaluation of the development of
thinking in the Great Books Program. I developed an instrument during the summer,
which was a great job. I realized after I got...well, I went in to...no, I went in to Tyler
one day and I handed him this and I said, “This is about the fourth draft of, I suppose,
about twenty-five that I have on the...that I have to make before I get one approved.”
He took it, read it, went over and looked out the window, came back and said, “It’s
approved.” And that was really amazing that someone could get a dissertation
approved so quickly. But in any case, the idea was I’d get twenty-one of these Great
Books Programs from the Chicago Public Library and examine them, develop this
instrument, which I gave to all of them at the beginning, all twenty-one groups. After
three months we gave it to seven of them and that sort of established a benchmark,
took out the idea of practice and things like that. And that became the standard. Then
I gave the exam to another seven at the end...no, another seven after six months and
then another seven after nine months. This was really an interesting dissertation and I
was helped greatly not only by Tyler and Hull, but also Chet Harris, who was a
statistician. This dissertation, of course, I got all of it approved in the library. The
results showed that after six months there was some improvement in their development
of their ability to think, and after nine months even more than [that] at the end. The
first stage of the development of the dissertation was the gathering of the data and the
preparation of the instrument and then the writing of the dissertation.
**Coming to Syracuse University**

It was during this time of the gathering of the data and the writing of the dissertation that of course I started to look for a job. We made numerous inquiries back in Canada and Uncle Wallace wrote to some people, various people, trying to find a job there. And I wasn’t able to get one. In the meantime, I was interviewing some people in the United States and one of them was at the University of Illinois; they were looking for an assistant dean for their big extension program. I wasn’t…didn’t get very far along with this but some time later, a year or so later, Bob Brown, who was the Dean there said to me, “You know,” he said, “sometimes we’re just afraid to take a chance.” That was about me trying to take a chance; I had such little experience in the field. But I also had contact with Ken Bartman and the National University Extension Association...let me start over...the National University Extension Association was meeting in Chicago and that’s where I was a graduate assistant. I had a graduate assistantship with Cy Hull and he was the host of the conference, so obviously I got a lot of work to do with it and met lots of people. I was so naïve; I didn’t understand when he said to me, “It would be nice if you met the people...or if somebody met them at the door.” Well, being in the Navy, if somebody said you meet the people at the door, you met the people at the door. So I spent a lot of the time at the conference greeting people at the front door of the hotel, trying to figure out who they were. As a matter of fact, it was a very usual thing because I met all of the deans and everybody and they were surprised to see anybody there of course from the institution that they kind of remembered me being there, too.

But in any case, it was a great experience and while the conference is in session, Cy had arranged for me to meet Ken Bartman from Syracuse University, who was Dean of University College at Syracuse. Well, I did meet Ken and he started to talk about Syracuse University. Well, I had no idea where Syracuse University was, or Syracuse, and we were going through this exam and I kept wondering where the heck Syracuse is. The last I knew was we were moving in on the invasion in Syracuse in Sicily and I didn’t
think that was the place. So I went out in the hall and stopped a few people and said, “Where’s Syracuse?” And he kind of looked at me and said, “You never heard of the Boys from Syracuse?” Which I guess had been a successful play on Broadway. But in any case, I found out where it was, went back and started talking to him and it resulted in Ken inviting me to Syracuse for an interview. Well, I did and I had a very successful time I guess. But I remember two things particularly that were out of the ordinary.

One was Ken. We were in his room about five o’clock and he said, “The chancellor told me to call him when he got out of the Board of Trustees.” So he called his chancellor and said I was there, did Ken want...should Ken bring me over to meet with the chancellor? And Ken got off the phone and he said, “He’s going to come and get you and take you around campus himself.” Well, this was, of course, a great...these professors had great expectations of the students. Of course, they were real outstanding themselves, but they were pushed very much...they pushed very much the academic side of things. (Tape just running) Remember when you go applying for a job or anything, the only thing you have is a bachelor’s degree, nothing after that, no certification. Well, I figured if I was going to not be able to get the doctor’s degree, then I better change fields because I seemed to be making progress all right. (Tape ends)
**Drumheller Recollections during War**

This is the beginning of a new tape, number six, first side. This is a continuation of my recollections and these refer to the military, the war, and peace—a very troubling set of experiences, but this is how I recall them.

I recall when we were in Drumheller, I was looking out at a train passing on the railroad that went by in the front of our house. There was a road that separated us from the railroad, but it was very clear. I remember seeing something on the railroad cars and I said something to my mother and she said something about them being cannons for the war. These were, as it turned out, later I realized that these were cannons that were being sent back after World War I to various towns where they put up a cannon and had a ? or something to remember the soldiers, the military personnel who had fallen in World War II; they were war memorialed. I had not known much about the war or heard any particular discussions of it because I was pretty young when I left Drumheller and I was born in 1916, which was a time when World War I had been going on for two years. As it turned out later, my father and some of his friends around there had not gone to the war, I think because they had to farm and raise wheat to feed the people.

**Rosedale, BC, Recollections during War**

The next thing that I recall with any clarity was after we moved to Rosedale in British Columbia, we went down to Chilliwack for, I think it was the sixtieth anniversary of the Confederation. In any case, at that ceremony there were soldiers marching. These were veterans who had spent time in World War I, come back home and they were out parading at the ??, for the sixtieth anniversary of Canada’s Confederation. I recall very clearly that these uniforms were very ragged and dirty. I guess...well, I wouldn’t say dirty, but they were very much in disrepair and I remember thinking this was a sorry thing that these people who had walked very slowly at that time and said
they were parading, it was more like just walking by. But I remember them and not impressed at all with the military and wondered why they had to go to war.

During the next period of time, I recall the veterans telling about their experiences one way or another, particularly their experiences in Britain, where they had gone to right before they went over to the continent to be engaged in the war. I also remember there was a Legion Hall and there was the Canadian Legion had been formed, I guess to preserve the memories of the soldiers and all the military. But mostly it was Army; I didn’t recall any Navy or Air Force particularly. One thing that was distinctive about the Canadian Legion Hall was that they were able to serve alcohol, or at least beer, in the town where no other place [was able] to serve it publicly. And this was the…the veterans could be in there, have beer for which they paid no doubt, and I think they were allowed to take some quota or some arrangement of friends there. This is only ten or fifteen years after the war, so there were lots of veterans there. But they did not all join the Canadian Legion for one reason or another.

**UBC Recollections during War**

When I went down to UBC there was…I heard of the COTC, the Canadian Officer Training Corps. This was a group on campus that perceived certain benefits, maybe financial, if they joined COTC. I remember the professor of physics that we had, Dr. Shrum, had been in World War I and had headed up the COTC. He was something of a hero as well; I think he had won some sort of medal of something. But the COTC were kind of non-intrusive on campus, except we used to see them around the fraternity house once in a while. The fellows who had belonged to it come in dressed and took off to go to their parades or whatever they did. They also had a dance once a year which was a very swish affair and it was sort of one of the main social events.
Fenie 1939: World War II Officially Declared

After completing the teacher training class, I went to Fernie and I recalled some of the experiences there. But from then on, the sense of war pervaded all aspects of life in Canada. As soon as I arrived in Fernie in the fall of ’39, war was officially declared and I became very much aware of it. I was staying in the home of people called Corson—Mrs. Corson, a very lovely person, a daughter, Marian, where I had a room. It was a very...a time of great remembrance because Mrs. Corson had had three sons and they were all killed in World War I. So she had a great sense of dignity, remembrance about the war and I remember it was a very sort of sad thing when I talked to her about her having lost her children.

I got involved in the activities in the community and I was teaching physical education. By law, we were supposed to train all the kids for some sort of aspect of military service. Since I was doing physical education, I was in charge of this for the boys, and I didn’t do a great deal about it except parading. And as I’ve mentioned previously, in the summer of ’40 after one year at Fernie, somebody got in touch with me and I was sent to Heels Range, as it turned out, to be the beginning of training the group of six of us to be cadet officers with military rank. I wasn’t quite sure why I was there at the time and it was later on that I found out it was part of this plan to train physical education teachers as cadet officers. And I had been one of the six in the province that was sent over to Heels Range near Victoria to start my training.

While at Fernie I was very conscious of the war, as everyone was. In the schools we used to have certain patriotic events and in the music classes they sang current patriotic songs and I had a little feeling it was kind of forced; there was no great sense of being forced to go to war. Canada did not have conscription and people volunteered and went and that was it. Although, I don’t really recall very many people who volunteered and went, but there was obviously a considerable number who did. But that was the early days of the war. I remember hearing of the war on the radio and particularly what was going on in Britain. And Churchill, who was the Prime Minister of
UK, used to give speeches every once in a while. These were very forceful, very strong and in a sense were part of whipping up enthusiasm and...well, I wouldn’t say “whipping up” but reminding us that we’re at war and to do what was required of us to further the war.

During our early education of things, it was quite important that we be reminded that we were part of the British Empire which was part of that great red line around the world, of all the colonies and dominions and we had to study about all of those and did so with a certain amount of pride and enthusiasm for the British Empire. But I remember a lot of the history that we had to study of England and about the Empire. It was all to build on the idea of war--they won wars and conquered and this was a continuous expanding thing through all of my time in Canada. As I have previously mentioned, all of the people in the British Empire who...well, I can’t say all because I don’t know, but many of them, we all studied with the same geography books, the same history books whether we were in Ghana, Australia, or wherever it was and I remember recalling the experiences with them, with other people from these other countries, dominions, what we frequently called colonies.

During the time I was in Fernie, there was no great pressure to join the military, as I’ve previously mentioned there was no conscription in Canada. And then I left Fernie and went down to Vancouver. It was during that summer of ’41 that I was sent off for the second training session at Sarcee, Alberta, which was a big Army training center. I don’t recall much experience about why I was sent or to contact with me to do it but, in any case, I went there and we were joined by some people from each of the western provinces of Canada. I guess there were six or eight of us from each of the western provinces that went through a series of drills and it was a fine experience. I enjoyed the life there. It was only for a week or two, but it certainly gave us a strong training for working with cadets, particularly the parading.

While I was at Sarcee, I got a call from Fernie saying that they had seen in the paper where I had been appointed to the Vancouver school system and recorded
elsewhere that when we graduated from college from the teacher training class, the superintendent of schools, Mr. McCorkendale, told us that they would not take people into the Vancouver school system until they had two years experience. So I got myself a job up in Fernie and then at the end of two years, which was the summer of ’41, I went down to Vancouver and said to the assistant superintendent, “I had been here and you suggested I come back in two years. I brought an application to teach in the Vancouver school system.” He simply said, “Yes, Charters, I have your application on my desk.” And as it turned out, I think he was telling me that I had been appointed, but I didn’t realize that and when I got this call from Mr. Connock, who was the commissioner, assigned commissioner of Fernie, assigned by the provincial government. He was assigned because the city was in difficult financial and other problems and he was there to run the whole shebang and the mayor and council had been temporarily disbanded. In any case, I was out at Sarcee when I got this and I called him and said...I called Mr. Connock that is, and said that I had not had word from Fernie about...in any case, in due time, I got the letter and went back to...and we arrived back in Vancouver and I was assigned to Lord Nelson School which was an elementary school, and there wasn’t any reason to use a cadet officer there because they weren’t required to do military training.

**Lord Nelson Elementary School and COTC Recollections during War**

I spent the summer there and taught at Lord Nelson School and, here again, the principal of the school, S.J. Bryant, a very fine gentleman, had come up through the cadet corps and had become a major in the regular...one of the major Army units in Vancouver and he was interested that I had taken that. But in any case, I taught school and during the year I frequently went down and got some...went to the seaport, islanders and various places and got involved in the training, although not a member. And then later I decided I better get involved in some way or another. I really didn’t feel any great pressure to do it or feel it was the patriotic thing to do. But anyway, I
went down and saw Dr. Shrum who was the heading up of the COTC and got into the...a member of the COTC. We went out on the parade grounds and it was once a week, marched around and then some evenings we went and got instruction. I wasn’t at all impressed with the instruction. It seems to me they were worried about the composition of the Italians and it kept changing during the war and they kept informing us about it and I wasn’t at all impressed. It seemed like it was a waste of time but obviously that’s what was required to become an officer through the COTC, that’s what I did. And we were given...I was given a uniform like everybody else and wore it to the classes and to the parades. I do recall clearly, walking down at Stanley Park where the HMCS Discovery was located and I thought I would go in and inquire, so I did, and went up and saw the entrance and told them I thought about joining the Navy. And he talked for a while and asked me what I wanted to do and I said, “I don’t know, maybe be a signalman.” I don’t know. I didn’t know anything about the Navy, what it was, but I did know it had to send signals some place and receive them aboard ship and elsewhere. But he told me...he said, “Well, I think you better wait a minute and I’ll go and talk to somebody.” So he came back and he said, “I’d like you to come over with me.” So he took me over where there was an officer, and made it clear it was an officer, because he said that to me. I had no way of really knowing by the uniforms or any other way unless he told me. But I had a long talk with this officer who was really a very fine person and he asked me what I wanted to do. He said, “Maybe you would like to be a sub-lieutenant?” And I didn’t know what a sub-lieutenant was. I didn’t realize that was a Navy rank. And I said, “Well, I’ll be a sub-lieutenant or a signalman.” I was all right and I was just interested in inquiring. “Well,” he said, “I think you’d be interested in inquiring about being a sub-lieutenant.” I said, “Fine,” and he gave me a bunch of applications for it, which I took. As I talked around a little, I began to realize that this was...being a sub-lieutenant was quite a different thing from a seaman or a signalman, but I spent a lot of time filling out the application for them, which was quite involved.

The procedure was that they were going to take...they took applications regularly and then that certain periods of time during the year, maybe only once during
the year, I don’t know, they looked over the applications, selected people they were
going to interview, and then conducted interviews. Then you waited around until there
was a place at officer training school to go. These were at Royal Roads and in Halifax.
It seemed like they had a policy of sending the people from the west to the east for
training and the people of the east to the west, but I don’t know whether that was true
or not. In any case, I submitted the application and all the data. In the meantime, I
was becoming a little more enthused about being an officer in the Navy. Finally, I was
called up to...got a letter to appear for an interview and I went down to HMCS Discovery
for the interview and I was really impressed with that interview. Three men sitting at a
table in a room and about the only other furniture in the room was a comfortable chair
and an ashtray. And, well, I’ve recounted this experience before on some of these
tapes. I went in and they were sitting up there and they asked me to sit down, so
obviously I did. And I was given a rather rigorous examination and it seemed to me
that I had to say “no” to every question. They said, “You’re from the prairie, can you
run a thrashing machine?” And there were other things. They said, “You played a lot of
sports.” And they said, “Have you ever played water polo?” which I had never heard of,
and again I had to say “no.” It seemed like a whole series of questions to which I had
to say “no,” and I was getting a little discouraged. Anyway, it went on and I remember
I...this was a comfortable chair, but I got the word that I didn’t think I should sit back
and relax during this, so I sat up straight in front of this chair and looked at these
officers. And also there was an ashtray and although I smoked quite a bit during that
time, I decided I would not smoke during that interview. Well, the interview went on
and I was impressed with the way they conducted the interview and the thoroughness
of it. But finally it seemed to be over and one of the captains that was doing the
interviewing said to me, “Why do you want to join the Navy?” And I was beginning to
wonder a lot of things and I remember I said, “I don’t know, sir. I just know I want to
join the Navy.” I remember they all laughed about this, but I felt a little better that at
least I got a laugh out of them; something other than this idea of having to say “no” all
the time.
So that was the end of that interview and then nothing happened for a while until I was down visiting my sister, Jean, in the Bay area where she had a boyfriend, and she was there with Angus Rumsfield, whom she later married. And some way or another, they found out I was down there and I don’t know whether they called the apartment and one of the fellows in the apartment told them where I was with the phone number. I don’t know how they found out what the phone number was either because it was a pay phone in the hall. In any case, I was sitting there and Jean went out and answered the phone, came back and said, “Somebody wants to talk to you.” So I went up, picked up the phone, and said, “Hello?” And the fellow said, “I understand you have applied for a position in the Royal Canadian Volunteer Reserve.” I said, “Yes, sir, I have.” He said, “Good, you’re accepted.” He said, “Report to HMCS Discovery Monday night at...” I think he said seven o’clock. And that was the end of that conversation. So, on Monday night I went down to report and realized... there were about thirty of us I guess...that I had been put on this list. They said there were over two hundred applications, they accepted thirty, and we were to wait around until we got a turn in Halifax in the next division. Apparently they took in groups every three months in Halifax and they recruited people from each of the provinces. They had a quota, and we were recruited, we were assigned to go to Halifax. And a few of us went every three months. I thought...this was in the spring and I thought I’d be going during the summer, but I sort of said goodbye to all the people at Lord Nelson and I was one of the later ones selected to go to the HMCS Kings and...so we weren’t accepted during the summer but we went down two nights a week and paraded and had lessons of various kinds that sort of gave us a real introduction into the Navy, which I found to be...in two parts. One was the discipline and the instruction that we got in class and the second was the way they treated us [as] gentleman when we were in the gun room. The gun room was a place where you can go and socialize, buy drinks and things as an officer in training; the wardroom was a place you went after you had become a full member and received your commission. So I went through the summer training and we got uniforms and various types of examinations and instruction and I went back and taught at Lord Nelson School in the fall.
Oh, during the summer too, I thought I ought to be doing something useful and so I got a job on a construction gang out at the airport and went out there and worked in the water. It seemed like most of the time they were putting pressure on to build Vancouver an airport and some other fellows that I had met at college and other places were out there doing the same thing as I was...just working around, working long hours and making a bit of money. I worked along in the summer and finally the superintendent called me out...a bunch of us that were down in the ditch up to our knees in water, called me up and asked me if I wanted to be a foreman. And I said, “Yes, of course,” and I remember I got this job as a foreman and [was] in charge of about twenty-five guys to do various jobs and...so we went through the rest of the summer and I went back to Lord Nelson School to teach and waited for my assignment to go to Halifax, which came through that fall.
Experiences in Halifax, Nova Scotia, while in the Navy

Well, we boarded the train for Halifax and I had known all the guys a little bit beforehand, but I got sort of acquainted with them; particularly I was grateful that Waddy Robertson, who had...he and Smith had driven me down to practice...or down to HMCS Discovery in Vancouver two nights a week. I was grateful for that and got to know Waddy very well. Well, he was also on the train going to Halifax in the same group and so I was grateful for that. But there was nothing very eventful on the train. One thing I did notice was that some of the fellows had rented a suite on the train. I guess they had paid the difference between what the Navy paid and what was ordinarily charged. But it indicated to me, as I was to find out later, that a lot of the boys who went into the Navy had come from rather substantial backgrounds and had funds available for other things.

The CPR train went as far as Montreal, where we changed later to go on to Halifax. We got off the train in Montreal and I went up to visit the parents of Doug Grant, who had been in our apartment in Vancouver, and he was the vice-president of the CNR as a matter of fact and we just went up to see him. Doug had already gone ahead of us, I think and was overseas, but I went up and visited with them for a few minutes and it was very pleasant indeed. We also, Waddy and I, got in touch with his sister who was in medical school there and so we sat around in one of the hotels and I remember we had something to eat in the Piccadilly Room of one of the hotels.

Well, on we went to...got on the train that same night and went on to Halifax. We met at the train and we were taken up to HMCS Kings, which was named such for...because Kings College was in Montreal and the Navy had taken it over and, as was their custom, they named

It...gave them a ship’s name--HMCS--His Majesty’s Ship Kings. The Navy gave everything a ship’s name to base it. For the next little while in Halifax we just moved
exactly the way we were told to move and it was not obnoxious at all but certainly gave us the idea that we were to follow orders pretty strictly.

We were assigned to a room in the residence hall and I think there were two of us in a room. But, oh, there was a second room where we could study and we were assigned rooms, told to make our beds, which we did for a couple of weeks and then we were relieved of it, but it was expected every day to be just the way it should be. We were also told that we had to stay in our rooms, cabins as they were called then, until...well, we had to stay in our rooms in the evenings and particularly ten o’clock, but I don’t know whether we could go anywhere after ten, I don’t think so, but I don’t ever remember having enough ambition to do anything. So we had to stay there until ten o’clock at night and sit at our desks, supposedly studying. And we did stay at our desks and they came around periodically to check and make sure we were there, particularly at the beginning when some of us were, I guess, inclined maybe to wander off somewhere. But we stayed there as we were told. When we were awakened in the morning we were to get dressed and then go out to physical education. We took it outside, spent most of the time running, as I recall, around the campus of the college. I’m not sure what time we got up, but every night it seemed like the middle of the night. But in any case, we had physical education and then we went in to have breakfast in the dining room, a sit down breakfast; we were always served as officers. And I remember the people who waited on us, they were wrens. They were taken in the Navy as sailors and they apparently had strict instructions of what to feed us and how to do it. One thing I do remember was that we had a lot of milk and if you took a sip out of your glass, they were right there to fill it up again. We did not have coffee or tea at breakfast or any other meals. We were allowed to go from there over to the gun room, which was the equivalent of the officers’ club for probation or temporary officers and, for all intents and purposes, it was run like a boardroom and there was no particular discipline there; we just pretty much did what we liked and behaved ourselves, as they kept reminding us--behaved ourselves as gentlemen.
Navy Training

After breakfast, we went out to learn signals. It reminded me when I first thought about going in the Navy. I thought I’d be a signalman. My idea of what a signalman was didn’t turn out to be much like it was. In any case, we had to go out and there was a pole with a light on the top and they flashed a signal with the light and we were in pairs--one of us had to write down what the other one said and then we had to submit those written documents. And the signal was sent in Morse code at the same rate for the whole period of time and we just had to keep looking at it and when we got able to read it correctly, the signal, then it was stopped. But it started out if you didn’t pass it in the morning then you had to go back in the afternoon again. As soon as you’re able to pass the signal at a set speed, we didn’t have to go out anymore, at least in the evening. I don’t think we did in the morning either; I think we were excused.

After signals we went by bus to HMCS Cornwallis, which was down on the water, and we spent most of the day training there in various subjects, which we did. The whole program was to go on for ninety days--it was called the Ninety-Day Wonders--and we...I remember going down back and forth on the buses and we used to sing. Frankly, I didn’t think much of the songs we sang but it was a relief after a long day (chuckles) of rather strict...sometimes, as I recall, we went back up to HMCS Kings by bus to have lunch and sometimes we stayed there. So we were moved around to various locations on the base for whatever particular instruction we did. We came back in the afternoon, had a bit of free time and then went over to have dinner. The food, in the whole time that we were in training and, indeed, even on-board ship, was very good and tasty and we didn’t have too much trouble with it at all. After dinner we’d go back over to the gun room usually to have coffee or, and before dinner too, we were allowed to go back and you could buy drinks of various kinds, including alcohol. After dinner, we frequently had special classes and that’s when the commanding officer of the base would give us lectures on various topics, often how to be gentlemen. What I remember is that it seemed very unusual to me. They even taught us how to write “thank you” notes and gave us instructions. Every time we were invited out anywhere, we were to write a
“thank you” note expressing our appreciation to the host. During this time we were to keep a journal, which was supposed to record most things that we did and we seemed to get along and, as a matter of fact, they checked them every once in a while to see that they were appropriate, whatever that meant. But in any case, there wasn’t anything with it, to do it.

**Life while in Halifax**

We did have...Saturday night was off and we could go and do what we liked. I frequently went down to the two hotels...one of two hotels. The only places we could go to eat were in the two hotels and they were very fine hotels. I’d eat with Bill Linton, whom I roomed with in the apartment in Vancouver. He gave me the name of some girl, Edie Murphy, who used to invite me over once in a while and also it was where we took our...I took her down to the dances at the hotel on a Saturday night.

On Sunday morning we were free to eat there, but some of the fellows decided they’d like to go down to the hotel for breakfast so they hired a cab and went down on Sunday morning and some of the rest of us ate mostly on the base, but occasionally went down for breakfast. Sunday was sort of a day off and we could eat and do what we liked there and there was events of various kinds. We frequently spent some time sleeping; trying to catch up on our sleep. But at whatever time it was Sunday morning, ten or ten-thirty, or eleven, we had to go out on the parade ground and we had a service there. The Navy was built on the Church of England, the Anglican faith, so the whole ceremony was Anglican. They did, however, at the...announced fall-out the non-conformists. And they told us the Protestants could go some place on the base and the Catholics could go some place else, and I don’t know whether there were others that went some place else or not. It was interesting that we fell out and we had to run over to some place and find a place for service, where they had a bit of a service and then go back. It was noticeable that each Sunday there were less and less non-conformists; it was just easier to stay there and have service with the rest of the ship’s company. As a matter of fact, the service was very appropriate. There wasn’t any great obligation to...
We were there in Halifax until Christmas time and we were told that at Christmas we could have two days off at Christmas or two days off at New Year’s. Waddy and I, like some others, knew we had no chance to get home so we decided to volunteer for the New Year’s event and leave time for those who were closer to home to go on Christmas time. So we stayed there for Christmas and at New Year’s we found out that we could go over to… I forget the name of the town… there was a very fine hotel there, the Cornwallis Inn, and we decided to go over there by train and spend a couple of days, which was a good break and we enjoyed it, I guess. After Christmas we kept looking forward to the time when we would graduate and get on with the war, as we used to say. So, we… all during the time in training we had white caps… we had regular uniforms but we had a cover, a white cover, to put over our caps and that indicated that we were in training and we were called “jeeps.” And we’d walk down the street and the kids, sort of under their breath, would say “Jeep, jeep, jeep, jeep,” kind of making fun of us. But in any case, it came time for graduation and we were? in and given all kinds of instructions and everything. And the commanding officer was present and he sat and read off where we going to be assigned, what ship and where and one thing and another. And he went down all the lists and then he got to the end and he paused for a minute and said, “We have seven volunteers for the Royal Navy.” In the Navy you volunteered for everything. When you volunteered, you’d go in and they always said, “Well, if you don’t like it, remember you volunteered.” Well, we also volunteered, apparently seven of us, to the Royal Navy. He read off these and I forget what the name of the ship was that we were assigned to, but after we got through we soon found out. But after we got our assignments and everything, there was a ceremony and we could… we took off our… the covers for our hats, the Navy hats, and threw them up in the air and that was the sign we were through our training. I found out that, it didn’t take long, I found out where the ship was. I forget the name of it. It was actually in New York City. So the next morning we got up and, of course, and we were given tickets to take the train down to New York City. And when we got there, we were to report to this ship, which was the… it turned out to be the Barbizon Plaza Hotel, Fifth
Avenue. Well, we got on the train and went down and Waddy was one of those, too, that was sent to the Royal Navy and we took the train.

**Experiences in New York City while in the Navy**

When we got to New York City, we decided to take a cab up to the Barbizon Plaza Hotel. On the way up to the hotel, the taxi was stopped apparently by a group of inspectors or something who were...I guess it was the cab company representatives who stopped them and he said to us, “We’re going to charge you a dollar to go to the hotel.” Well, apparently he didn’t have his meter on and they were watching him for taking advantage of people like us who were new to the city and didn’t know our way. Well, we got by that and did get to the hotel and it was easy to find the directions to the Royal Navy, so we got upstairs and they met us. It was very cordial and everything. And the officer who met us greeted us and had a few comments. He said, “There’s three things you need to do.” He said, “The first thing, go down to the desk and register. They will be expecting you.” And he said, “Secondly, you go to some place and you get some money for living allowance.” And that we did. And the third thing, he said, “There’s a club upstairs where there’s hospitality by many people in New York City, including a number of attractive young ladies.” We did all of those things, got our room, and got ourselves cleaned up a bit and went down to the club where there were a very happy group of people, including the naval officers and girls who said they were acting as hostesses. They were all very cordial, seemingly very well educated and offering all sorts of nice things. We stayed around there for a while and found out that’s where they distributed free tickets to museums, plays, opera, whatever was going on, and this was a service that certainly Waddy and I took advantage of while we were there. Come dinner time, we went out to look around and see where there were places to eat and, as it turned out, we were going to be there several days so we were able to find eating places and things. And we were also...we found out that we had to stay in the hotel until noon. Apparently noon was the time that corresponded with London to about five o’clock when the offices closed during the war. But they were in the orders;
they would be there by noon in New York. And it turned out that for breakfast there was a hole in the door and the food service or somebody slipped packages in, in the morning, with some juices, coffee I think, and some rolls and things. It was really quite good and tied us over until noon, in any case. Sometimes, as it turned out, they would...the girls bringing the food around would sometimes slip two or three of them in the door for us and that was even better still.

When we reported into the office, sometimes, as it turned out, there would be lectures in the morning and instructions of various kinds and we would check there before we did anything else. We certainly took advantage of all the sight-seeing events there were and these tickets were free. And we also were able to find our way around. We visited the zoo. We visited about everything in New York City because we...Waddy and I made a point of trying to visit things. It didn't cost much money on the subway and we did have a fairly generous allowance, as I recall. In any case, we didn't want for money while we were there. One of the things that we did get lectures on was the recent discovery of the gyro compass and radar, and previous to that we had been given instruction on the magnetic compass, and there wasn’t any radar of course. But we got our instructions about them and how to use them; it certainly wasn’t very complicated compared to the previous ways we had for navigation and compass reading.

We did meet a couple of girls that were named Melba who were very attractive, very pleasant. The next week or so, they invited us to come out to their place in the country. They gave us instructions on how to get there. We go down to, I think it was...I don't know if it was Grand Central or Penn Station. And they said, “Go down to the end of track ‘so and so’ and there will be somebody there with a private car, a private railroad car, and they will take you on-board.“ Well, sure enough, we got down there and went to the parking lot and there was somebody to greet us, this porter, the man who was in charge...it was a private car and the business men took the train about five o’clock in the afternoon out there. We got on-board and we enjoyed the hospitality and the people were very friendly. We got out to this town and were greeted by the
girls, who were there with their own car, and they took us back to the place, which was a lovely estate. As it turned out, Melville was owner of a shoe factory that was there and they very heavily subsidized the restoration of the town. We got to this lovely home and greeted the lady in charge, the mother, who was certainly very hospitable and told us if we wanted to go up to our rooms...we got up there, had a few clothes with us or something. Anyway, we got up there and they were all unpacked by somebody who had taken them up, unpacked them. We went downstairs and the girls suggested we’d go out for a drive and maybe go to the bowling alley. Well, we just got started out of the driveway and one of the girls who was driving hit a tree. ?? wasn’t very significant. In any case, she called somebody and in a very few minutes somebody was there with another car for her. I presume they took the old one away. We had a great time driving around and we went into the bowling alley and went to get some ice cream or something; I don’t know what. But nobody would let these girls pay and I guess it was because their father had subsidized...had spent too much money on the restoration that they provided these girls with courtesy tickets or courtesy fare. It was certainly an elegant house and the lady came down, the mother came down for dinner and she was in a long gown and it was very sort of a...it wasn’t too formal but it was very proper and, I guess, just the way they had been used to living. But it was a delightful weekend. Later on, we found out that now the state university is taking over the property down there and taking over their homes.

Well, we certainly had a delightful time. Waddy and I really took advantage of it; every day we made a point of going and visiting something. And one place we visited, which was...it had a lot of interest for me later on...we went on to a thing called the planetarium. We had never been to one. I didn’t even know they existed. Of course, many other places existed in New York. And we got down to the planetarium, we went in, and we were amazed about what it was. But I also bought some books about the stars, the charts of the sky, because I happened to be interested in it. This was to prove very helpful later on because I had the midnight watch, which was twelve to four, when we were down in the Mediterranean. I got these star books out and I had spent the whole four hours on the bridge and so I watched the constellations and stars,
and I’d come up with one thing or another and got very informed about the skies, and stars, and planets. Anyway, back to New York City. Another day we went down to the Philharmonic and we were given tickets to it, box seats. Well, we went in there and we were very impressed with everything. Some woman was there by herself in the box and was very friendly and greeted us. We listened to the Philharmonic and we were certainly impressed with the whole building and the performance. At the intermission the woman said to us, “Would you like to come down and meet the conductor? He’s my husband.” Well, we went down and met her husband but it was just like that in various places we went, they were always very cordial. We even got tickets to a club, New York Club I think it was called, in one of the hotels up there in Barbizon Plaza; they had several floors of the club. We got in there and we were kind of wandering around. Some fellow come up to us and said, “Come on, get your belly up to the bar and I’ll buy you a drink.” He was very cordial. So I guess we did but...

After several days there we decided we ought to be doing something more, other than trolling around. So we saw a sign up for the Royal Indian Navy and we were in the Royal Canadian Navy and we were ???. And here we were in New York City and we saw this little poster upon looking for volunteers for the Royal Navy ???. In the Navy, everything you did as a volunteer, which was a very special Navy type volunteerism. In any case, we went in to see the officer and said we would like to volunteer for the Royal Indian Navy and got ourselves going somewhere. He said, “Look, you will never have it as good for the rest of the war as you got it right here.” He said, “Just sit around and enjoy it. You will never have it as good again.” How right he was. I guess he knew we were going down to get LST’s and hit the invasion on the beaches. Well, we said, “Well, okay.” So we stayed...not very much longer. I forget how long we were there. It must have been two weeks or so.

**Orders to go to New Orleans**

And finally we got orders to go to New Orleans. By this time there had been a lot of crews, ships’ companies, gathering in New York to go down to New Orleans, I
guess to pick up these LST’s, which we found out later. But, so all of us who were assigned to go to New Orleans gathered, there were quite a few officers there at the Barbizon Plaza Hotel, and we got on this train and went down somewhere and we picked up the ships’ companies, the ratings, and...as the seamen were called...and they had been stationed in Asbury Park. There was a US naval base and they had been assigned there. So the train went down and it stopped somewhere and all these men got on the train to go down to New Orleans. In fact, there were two trains, at least two trains, because later on we were somewhere out in the Mediterranean and Alan Trevor, who was first lieutenant on-board the ship, on LST 63, he got a signal. He was telling me, “Oh, I got a good signal.” I said, “Well, what is it?” He said...he read it to me and it was something about they had decided to pay from public funds. And I said, “Well, what are they paying for?” He said, “Well, we’re going through this town.” So on our way down south to New Orleans, we would have to spend all night on the train and it pulled in the station and he said, “I saw a train with a load of sleepers.” And I talked to the conductor and the engineer and they decided that they would take all of us officers on their train, put them on the train with sleeping cars and take us down to New Orleans. I don’t know how he did it, but he was very good at this I found out later. But I don’t know whether he really...the train crew thought that’s what they were there for, was their train to take this group down but, in any case, they rode down on the train and sleeping cars were...which were called Pullman in the United States. Well, we went through Chattanooga and the girls were out on the platform and they had given us Chattanooga Choo-Choos. Overnight sometime we got down to New Orleans and buses were the main transportation to get us out to the base where the ship was. We went out, there were several of us there that were being commissioned at the same time on LST’s. Nobody had...none of the ships’ companies, officers, had ever seen these LST’s before and were kind of amazed about it, that they were built for invasions. (Side ends)

This is...I just turned to the other side...the second side of tape seven of the recollections.
On-board the LST Ship

Well, we were taken down and put on-board this LST, which nobody had, at least none of the ship’s company had seen before. Obviously it hadn’t been very well publicized. In fact, I think as it turned out, we went on the beaches of Salerno and picked up a couple of German naval officers to take back somewhere. But they said they didn’t know anything about them, haven’t seen them, and they had not been advised that ships existed. In any case, we got on-board and this was, of course, an entirely new experience for me; I had never been on-board a Navy ship, except for a few minutes maybe as a visit or something. But we all got ourselves settled in. One of the things that, no soon as we got on-board, was that somebody had taken our bags and put them in the rooms, and this was fine. We got in the wardroom, sitting there, and the other officer said “Subby…” I was a sub-lieutenant, remember. I was temporary probationary sub-lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve. Well, in any case, they said, “You go out and get some supplies for the wardroom.” In some way there was money available, not part of the ship’s money or the Navy. He gave me some money and I said, “Well, good. I’ll go out and try to find some place.” And so I started out and they said, “Oh, no, you need to take a rating with you to carry it; naval officers don’t carry anything.” So, sooner or later a rating appears and we went out and wandered around and bought some liquor and beer, I’m not quite [sure] just what all. The interesting thing was when we came back I was in charge of the drinks and one of my jobs was to keep track of every drink that everybody drank. The stewards on the ship had little slips that we had to sign for each drink and I had to keep track of them for each of the officers and then assign them a certain amount for each one. Well, I didn’t know anything really about liquor (laughs) because I had never seen a full bottle before. But in any case, it was my job to keep track of them and the stewards had everybody sign something and they turned them in and then...you recall that the drinks were so much a drink a night and the stewards measured them out for each one as they served them and signed them. I might had mentioned this, mostly gin was the standard drink in the wardroom. But in any case, they did it...well, not only they had to keep track of each one but by officers. Of course, I didn’t know the officers
when we got on-board but as we went through that...but I also had to keep track of it in English money. And so that became quite an interesting adventure for me, right...the first day I got on-board the ship. Well, there was one other thing—that each officer was only allowed a certain amount, apparently. And so when they got ready to tally them up on how much for each officer, if someone had gone over their limits I had to add it on to somebody else's and keep track of it that way and straighten it out with each officer how much they were paying for real. So it was an interesting adventure. I hadn't particularly drank much before; I didn't really know anything about it.

Well, we were there and they kept bringing on-board just...a non-ending supply of materials, and food, and everything you needed to commission a ship. I wondered why there was so much they were bringing on. You have to remember that when we found out that there were...we were going to take many Army personnel and hit the beaches and all the time we were sailing to get to the beaches, we had to have provision to feed these hundreds of Army personnel, or other personnel, who were on-board. And there were big supplies of food. It seemed like very large refrigerators and...in any case, that was the job of the ship to provide, later on, provide all this food for all the people who were on-board at the time. And also I remember that ??, so the supplies in Britain were very limited and so they wanted to tool up and get provisions and everything else, whatever they could in America because they might be low in other places where we stopped to load personnel, and tanks, and whatever else.

We were very busy in New Orleans getting the ship ready for sea. I didn’t...it was all a very new experience for me and, for all I know, maybe it was new to many other officers to commission on their ship. But we did it and it was a very enjoyable time. We were busy and really getting very much committed to the war effort. Of course, most of the officer’s ratings had been on other ships and had been involved in the war. It was always kind of a new experience for me. I didn't even know how to...about the running of the ship at all. But, believe me, I certainly learned fast. One thing I remember, though, we were told to...given a certain amount of money and told to buy tropical gear. And we had these white uniforms. It didn't take long for the other
officers to realize that we were going some place where we wore summer uniforms, white, and it sort of gave a destination for our purpose. You had to remember, too, that no one had seen an LST before and didn’t know what they were exactly, but they had to learn how to use them and this was a lot of different devices and things that we had to learn. For example, the bow doors opened out and then a ramp came down. Well, there were instructions on what to do about these bow doors in case they jammed and we were given instructions on how to put dynamite, or whatever the charge was, on them so that if we got on the beach and the bow doors couldn’t open they were to just blow them off, and the same with the ramp which came down to let the tanks off of the main deck. On each port and starburst side there were just rows and rows of bunks in small compartments where the troops were to sleep. And then on the “tank deck” as it was called, was where the tanks went and they were fastened down there. And on the upper deck, we took the rest of the Army units, ?. There were some anti-aircraft guns, there was ammunition trucks, provision trucks. In Britain they call them lorries, a term which was soon to become very familiar.

And so, when supposedly we were going to hit the beaches, which we did sooner or later, the bow doors would open, the ramp would come down and the tanks could proceed out. And then there was an elevator to take the materials from the top deck...the lorries, trucks, and other things from the top deck, take it down to the lower deck where they could proceed to go out on the ramp, onto the beaches. They were designed for the LST to proceed up onto beaches and then to...at high tide and then to sit there until the tide went down and we’d go down and, therefore, the tank was sitting on the sand and whatever, it was on the beach and they’d open the bow doors and get them out. And then we had to wait until the tide came up again to float the ship so that we could use our power to get off the beaches. There was also an auxiliary overpower and that was, as we proceeded on the beach, there was an anchor on the stern of the ship which we’d drop off before we got near the beaches. We’d drop that off and it was on a cable and that...we’d go...and that helped pull the ship off of the sand, the beach, whatever the compensation was and then proceed out. All of this is kind of ahead of the story but it was a long time before we did that, but we had to be aware of all of this
equipment and ways of handling the ship so we could get into the beaches and then get off. Of course, we were still able to pull alongside the dock, which we often did.

In a short period of time, we were already going to sea and we got instructions to proceed out. And typical of the Navy, usually you go a certain distance, certain degrees port and starburst for an “x” period of time. And then when you got there you would, wherever that happened to be, it might be out in the middle of the ocean, wherever it happened to be, there were more instructions in the safe and you had to go down and open the safe and get the instructions out. The reason was, it didn’t give the instructions because if you got captured, they may be able to make you tell them what your instructions are and where you were going. And even though we at times, as officers, found out where we were going, we never told the ratings so that if something happened they wouldn’t be able to tell where we were or where we were going.

I was in a unique position, though, for all of this because I was from Canada and in many ways we knew pretty much the same lingo as the United States and the ship’s company. The officers were obviously English or some other colony but the expressions were quite different, and I had to learn those and in some ways I was a little bit of a translator for the Americans as they spoke to the British officers. Not only did I have that difficulty, but also I was new to the ship and I wasn’t always aware of the terms that were being used. In due time, we sailed out of New Orleans, anchored once or twice going down the river, and then headed up to...our ultimate destination was Halifax, to go across the ocean. So we got out and I think the first place we stopped was Norfolk, which of course was the big US naval base. I don’t remember much about it but, in any case, we got there and then proceeded up to New York. We went to New York and stayed there just for a day or two and I was able to renew a couple of friends that I had met there. And then we went from New York to...well, we were in New York for a couple of days, I guess, because I remember one afternoon I decided to take them out to a ball game, a baseball game. And I thought I knew something about baseball and how to describe it, but that was a really amazing experience. I tried...these English men...what the game of baseball was about. Well, at least we had a good time and I
don't know if they learned much about baseball or not, but in any case, we had a joyful afternoon. But I kept being amazed how difficult it is for people to understand things of a different culture and, to some extent, a different use of language. And I...well, I really had a good time with these people and the officers on-board. It was...oh, one thing...when we were in New York, asked for, just a courtesy, always went and asked the commanding officer permission to go ashore and he said, "What are you going to do?" And I said, "Well, I was just going to call a girl I had met and I might take her out for a drink this evening." And he said, "Oh," he said, "see if she's got a sister." Well, I went down and got on the telephone, went ashore and got on the telephone to this lovely girl who was free and I said, "By the way, do you have anybody else there with you?" The commanding officer was interested in having a date and going out with us, if you were interested." And she says, "As a matter of fact, my sister is here from Vancouver." These two people were from Vancouver, British Columbia. She said, "My sister's here." So away we went with the commanding officer out to dinner.

Well, we got whatever we were supposed to get in New York City, picked it up and sailed up to Boston, which was a stop on our way to Halifax. We were in Boston at night. Whenever you got into a port you were encouraged to let the ship's company, some of them, go ashore, and the same with the officers. So I happened to have the watch that night in Boston, so I had to...so I had to stay on-board ship, which was fine, you know, we took our turns. And I recall about ten o'clock at night some of the ratings came down and told me that one of the fellows had fallen overboard and they had him down there washing and cleaning him. And, of course, it [was] serious to have a man overboard. So I went down and they were washing and cleaning him up because there's a lot of oil apparently and finally I said, "Where did you...you walked off the end of the deck, off the end of the pier, what were you thinking about?" He said, "Well," he said, "I got walking by and I thought the pier was a lot longer than it was so I just...I walked off the end." Well, I guess they got him cleaned up and everything else was all fine but it certainly made me think that people had various reasons for doing these, and lack of reasons maybe.
The next morning was good and we sailed up to Halifax and finally got up there. And it, of course, was where I did my training and every boat in the harbor, the captain sent a signal ashore, he said, “Permission to land Canadian sub-lieutenant in Halifax.” That was fine, I guess. We didn’t know whether we were going to be anchored or what we were doing at that stage and permission was granted. But I thought it was a very unusual thing because actually we were in Canada. I think we were actually closer to England than I was to my home in Vancouver or Victoria up the west coast. As it turned out, we did anchor close to shore and many of the ship’s company and officers were able to go ashore. And I did. And one of the things that I did was I went up to the naval base where I had done my training, HMCS Kings, and I did my...by the way, I just remember that the name of the base in Vancouver was HMCS Discovery. But I did go ashore and I got up the next morning and we were supposed to go, first thing, back to take the...back out to the ship that was anchored. I got back down there and I thought I missed the thing but it happened it was still there and I went out and got back on board and reported in and the commanding officer said, “What are you doing here?” He said, “I sent word for you ashore that you could stay ashore for some more of the day; you didn’t have to get back on-board so early, so you could have a little more time in Canada before we sailed. Well, I can’t remember whether I went back ashore or not but, in any case, we waited around in the harbor there to go to...waited around to get convoy and so we finally went out and formed into a convoy, which was a new experience to me, to go across the Atlantic. I was much interested in the way they formed the convoy and everything. The convoys were very slow and I remember when we finally sailed, we sailed all day out across, presumably to England, and sailed all day. And I could still see the land as we left and I thought, boy, it’s going to be a long way across this ocean.

We got out there in the mid-Atlantic in March; I guess it was. It was so cold with ice all over the place. The water would come up and freeze on the bridge and it was quite a new experience and I remember I had to watch from twelve to four in the night, and all day it seemed like we were dodging around missing the icebergs. And then at night we sailed...I don’t remember changing course, couldn’t see the icebergs,
couldn’t see anything; we just sailed straight ahead and fortunately we didn’t hit anything. It made me wonder what we’d been doing all day dodging these things and where they went at night. But I guess that was the luck of the draw. But in any case, we sailed across and I remember it being so very cold. And we went out and watched the seamen; they were supposed to be out there. Of course, I couldn’t leave the bridge for four hours. I was just out in the open bridge. But I sent them in because I didn’t think they could do anything. And if we couldn’t see the enemy, I figured they couldn’t see us either. So I used to send them in to keep them warm and leave the guns unmanned.

It was also during all this time in the early days when we went to sea everybody expected me to get seasick, and all the new sailors that hadn’t been to sea before to get seasick, and they were sort of looking at me to see what was going to happen. Well, fortunately I never did get seasick and I don’t know why, but I saw so many people seasick I certainly didn’t make fun of anybody who was going to sea and just wait until we get to sea and you get nice and sick and feel miserable. But I never did and I’ll say it was a blessing.

So we sailed and sailed for several days and...finally, somebody in one of the look-outs hollered, “Land ahoy!” and we spotted Land’s End, which I guess was where we were supposed to be. In any case, fine, so we did and we got instructions and finally pulled into Liverpool. Right immediately they had dock men down to take the stuff off the ship because we had taken over and it ??? for the mission that we had for the ship, including a bunch of steel that they put on the main deck. So we got down and this was in Liverpool and I remember I was going to leave to go ashore for a while. Well, I didn’t know what in the world I was doing but I figured out, I got down, it wasn’t far, I went down to the railroad station and I got there at night and everything was blocked out. I could see the lights were very dim in the station but enough to find my way around. But suddenly we realized that we were really at war and we also wandered around to see the damage of buildings that had been struck down. I assumed it was by policy that as soon as a building got hit by a bomb or something, they cleaned it up
right away. And I think the idea was not to have a lot of damaged buildings which reflected...they couldn’t do anything about it anyway, so they cleaned them up and you had a feeling you were looking at really damaged buildings and whatever else had been damaged by the war.

But we were in England and I went ashore and down to the station and then got...I guess I was given a day or so leave; I didn’t know where I was, of course. But the first thing I did was get a ticket to London. We were issued “warrants” they were called; it was just a piece of paper with transportation to “so and so” and return. So I got a warrant, went down to London and I was very much impressed with it and it was the first time I had seen it. And we were down in the Mediterranean because they knew troops could ? and we stayed there for several days and I was given some leave. It was right near ? and that’s where my great grandfather had come from. So I went up and looked around but I didn’t know what I was looking for particularly. But I remember being there. I also had a day or two to go down to London, which was just great and did some more sights there and went in and saw a man, Mr. McDonald at CB, who had given me his name. And he worked for Lloyds of London. Well, I went down and went to his office and he took me out to lunch. And he said, “I want you to go to this place...I’m going to take you to this place that you may hear of.” Well, we got in and they served a drink called Pins #1. And that was the only place that was serving at that time that later became very popular and was marketed all over the world. Well, in any case, I went to this restaurant with him and had a Pins #1 and then he took me back to his office at Lloyds of London. And I recall one of the things was that he had this arrangement, I don’t know how long, when the ship was sunk, the bell rang and I saw the bell, which was a fascinating sort of thing for me to be actually sitting in that place where they had rung the bell and where they paid off the ships. And I wasn’t sure of some other arrangements they had.

In due time, we got back up to Scotland where we...the leave was over and obviously getting ready to go to the Mediterranean. And all of this time I had been more and more impressed with the damage and, to me, the uselessness of war. But in
any case, we were involved and truly had to deal with it. We were getting ready to go to the...I wasn’t quite sure where we were going, but we knew we were going south. But we were getting ready to go and the commander in chief, COC he was called, decided to have the captain and one officer from each ship appear on the deck of one of the LST’s because by now there were more than one of us. I think we may have been one of the very first...well, we were obviously one of the very first, if not the first, to get commissioned. But, so the commanding officer decided to take me over to this little ceremony. There wasn’t much to it, but it’s just, we got introduced to the COC, who came around and shook hands with each one of us. I was very grateful that I had a chance to do that. One of the things I did when we arrived there was...one of the officers, John Gordon Nixon his name was, he was one of the young officers on-board the ship, and he invited me to go up to his home in England. And so I went up there and I was grateful to him. I stayed overnight and it was the first time I had been in an English home. I was very impressed with their hospitality.

**July 20, 1943: D-Day Syracuse, Sicily**

Well, in due time we did set sail and obviously headed south. And all of this began another kind of a new experience for me at sea and for the rest of us, having all of this Army personnel on-board. And to some extent, I became a bit of a translator because--just local expressions and things--I was able to talk with the Canadians and so it was all a new experience for me. We went down and went through the Straits of Gibraltar. We were on fixed watches, as they were called, where we sailed...we had duty the same time every day. My duty was, since we were at a limited number of us, I had the two until twelve noon until four in the afternoon, and from midnight, twelve, until four in the morning. These were what we called fixed watches or merchant machine war, which is not the Navy watch, which used the dog watch system. The routine of the watches changed every day and that’s the way it was and there wasn’t anything I could do about it. But we sailed directly into for Syracuse, Sicily and we went into the harbor at Sicily. This was on D-Day, but why we didn’t hit the beaches, I don’t
know. It was not for me to say. I guess earlier in the morning maybe they had taken, captured the city of Syracuse, but I don’t...well, I don’t know what it was. In any case, we went into the pull along the dock to unload and just as we were pulling in, we had the first experience with bombers. They came over in two planes and each dropped one to our starboard...no, to the port side. Two of them just missed us. I don’t know how far apart they were, maybe fifty or a hundred feet. In any case, we were very close and this was the first experience of action there. Of course, when they come in, you ducked for...there’s no use standing out and being brave because there was nothing you could do about it and if you got hit, there was nothing more...you couldn’t be useful to the war. But in any case, they dropped these and they missed us but we made it and pulled in. The Calvary tanks were all ready to unload of course, and we put the ramp down and off they went. They were certainly glad to get off the ship. One thing I didn’t mention about, there were no port holes on-board LST’s because we didn’t want to have any lights going in. So there were no lights showing from the ship as we proceeded and therefore the enemy couldn’t identify us as well. But they were certainly glad to get off the ship because they were just confined inside, couldn’t see, although at certain times of the day they were allowed to go up and walk around on deck and exam their vehicles and make sure they were all fastened down and everything. But they were glad to get off and we, in a sense, were glad to see them get off. We did get there without any mishaps and that was the beginning of the invasion of Africa by the troops that were in Africa moving across to start the division of Continental Europe. So they came across the tip of Sicily and that’s where we went in on the first day of that--it was July 20, 1943. We immediately unloaded and proceeded over to Africa, where we loaded up again and came immediately back to Europe and we kept running a shuttle service back and forth for several months.

While we were in Africa, we just stopped there really long enough to reload the ship and sometimes to get water or something, but we just ran a regular shuttle service back and forth without much relief, although we did sometimes get ashore for a bit of time in North Africa, but there wasn’t much to do there, especially in the middle of this war. We kept doing this and finally it seemed like very routine. (Tape ends)
Salerno, Italy 1943

I was speaking about we were on the shuttle back and forth and we sometimes had a bit of time ashore when we would be back in North Africa at Tunis, ?, and various places to load. But it was not very exciting, we didn’t get ashore very much and when we did get ashore there wasn’t too much to see. But once in a while there was...I remember going into some harbor to load and I think...I think it was Casablanca, but I’m not sure. But we were walking on the shore and it was interesting that the girls were real busy just trying to help the war effort. In any case, they tried telling us that we ought to have a little fun and if we were going on another invasion maybe that would be the end of us. And they pretty much were friendly and courteous, with hospitality, with what they were saying but it was pretty clear that we were going someplace. Sure enough, we got loaded and then we went over to Salerno, on the coast.

My feeling during the war is I went into these new places and even Halifax, and New York, and New Orleans, and London that maybe this was the time I would ever get to see them, so I better enjoy them while we were there. And so I spent a lot of time going ashore visiting historic sites and things, which to the officers, the people that were experienced were interested in going ashore and having a few drinks and maybe having a dinner. It wasn’t that I particularly avoided those, but I was more interested in seeing the sights. So, sure enough, we took off and once we got on-board, we knew we were going to go to Salerno and enforce the troops in there. The idea was to keep moving just ahead of where the troops were and to ? the invasion. We went to Sicily, and then we went to Salerno, and later on some others. We just moved up ahead, advanced troops, put these people ashore. And the next morning, sure enough, we were in Salerno; we pulled into Salerno at dawn. We were fortunate that...this was somewhat a surprise, but not a surprise for too long, but we apparently landed a little south of where we were supposed to and so it meant that we got some of the German fire from broadside instead of getting it head on. But that’s all ? with the guns firing and various things. And again, we dropped...put the troops ashore and immediately took off, went back and got more troops and ran a shuttle there. Salerno was October
20, ’43, and so that would have been three or four months that we kept running a shuttle service, supporting the Sicily part of it. Fortunately, again, we were in Sicily and we did not [get] hit straight on, so that was very...we did get ashore and I remember going up to Carthage and I always said there were the best ruins of the world, because there was absolutely nothing left. Nothing I could see; there were just a little spot and no buildings, no anything. So we kept sailing onto the Salerno beaches and...sometimes as we went in, once we got to the beaches, sometimes we went to the harbor to unload there and pull out...well, I guess I’m wandering around here a bit...we did get into Salerno and kept on that run. We spent a lot of time at sea and we had watches; we didn’t have much time to do much of anything except read.

**Life Continued in the Service**

On-board there was one seaman from NAAFI--Navy, Army, Air Force Institute--they supplied him with a certain amount of reading materials for the troops and we did get mail. I was amazed at the mail system; they always seemed to get through and very frequently. I don’t know whether they...they had a system where they photographed all the letters on a special letter form and so they could just fill them and send them overseas and then print them out again. But even regular mail, it was very good and I had a number of people who sent materials to me. I remember Aunt Jessie and Uncle Wallace had told me that I could have access to this book store that had just been opened up in Glen Lake up in Michigan and that I could just order whatever I wanted from there and they’d take care of it. But they did send me the New York Tribune, part of the New York Tribune, the world events and various things and I got that regularly. The mail system really came through very well. To send it out, we had...every time we hit a harbor we took the mail ashore. But they had to censor all of the mail that we had from the seaman. We had to read it all and supposedly we used to read it upside down, and backwards, and forwards. We really were interested but the idea was that they were not to reveal their position at any time. But it worked out very well and they used to sign their name with X’s, I guess representing kisses, and there
was always some question whether the numbers was a code to the people at the other end or not, but sometimes we’d cross out a couple and sometimes I had a couple. There wasn’t anything to it; it threw it off the system. Of course, all during this time we were not allowed to have our radio on because this would indicate our position and so we had no way of knowing about anything by radio. We were constantly out of date. We used to say when we got a Christmas present; we weren’t sure whether it was from last year or this year, or next year. But the mail system was very good and we did get information through that. If there was someplace ashore with books in English, I’d pick them up and read them. I didn’t have much time for any activities and pretty much working every day.

During this whole time, though, the Navy had one advantage over the others. Sometimes we had to go to oxygen (?) stations and set up...it was really pretty smooth sailing and we had food and, in general, food all the time. Very seldom we ran out of the food and the expression was, “If there’s any food in the country, the Navy got it.” And we certainly did very well and the stewards would go ashore someplace and pick up some food or whatever. I remember one time this steward comes running on-board, he had a flower in his hand, and he came running on-board and right behind him was the sheriff patrol to arrest him for something. Of course we didn’t give him off the ship; once he was on-board he was safe. I just remember this big fellow running with this flower and saying, “Well, don’t you think it would be nice to have it on the wardroom table?” I don’t know what he had been doing. In any case, they did go ashore and frequently got some food and things and we’d pitch in. And at times we could go ashore and get some liquor. By and large, you could buy quantities for the wardroom. Of course, I’d assume the quantities were around. Then once it got down...so they put a quota on the Mediterranean, an officer could get a bottle of liquor every...each period of time. And so we went ashore to get...Waddy went to one place and I went to another. I remember going up to Ferryville, when we were down near Basurda, I went in to get my quota, which was one bottle, I don’t know. And he said, “How do I know you don’t have somebody the next place down there also getting it?” And I just said, “Why don’t you just phone down?” There was some sort of communication, and he said,
“Hey, one of your buddy officers down there, he’s looking for a quota for his ship, too.” And I said, “Well, let’s forget it. But why don’t you go down back with me and have a meal on-board ship.” The meals on-board ship were a great thing because the Army and all these people didn’t have very much food where they were and the Navy did pretty well and you could sit down and eat. So I said to him, “Why don’t you come down with me and we’ll forget this. It didn’t work, but just come on back.” So he said, “I’ll catch you,” and he also brought some liquor with him. He got back and got on-board ship and he just got settled in and in comes the other officer bringing in another supply. And he had the guy in charge with him, too, and he was giving him the same...went through the same routine, so we got double rations and they had free meals. That was just part of the...once in a while some of those things happened on-board. In all this time we were sailing back and forth, a shuttle, and doing all the things that you do with the war and keeping watches, staking out, watch for any air craft, other ships.

Once we were coming back from the beaches at Salerno and I was on the bridge and I got so I couldn’t navigate. I couldn’t see, so I sat down and got back ashore and, I don’t know, I had a fever, I can’t remember, but they sent ashore and got an ambulance to come out and they were treating me for diphtheria. And I think I had been trying to tell them I had diphtheria but I gave them the idea that I thought I did. But I remember getting ashore and they took me up to this hospital and took me in. Of course, the hospitals were full all the time but I got...I finally got into...so I got a place in the hall and I was there for a while in the hospital. Finally, I got into a room, ward, whatever you call it. I was there for a day or two and it ended up I got bed bugs...I had bed bugs all over and I got my share of them, I guess. But anyway, I got through it and I felt a little better in a day or two. I still wasn’t feeling good but they had to move me out for other people that were sicker than I was, I guess. I remember while I was there, they were going to have an inspection in the hospital and one of the nurses got fixed up and she said, “I wish you wouldn’t move for a while until this inspector goes by.” The nurses were trying to make things look nice and they were doing...they were doing a great job. So I did. I finally got out and they sent me up in the desert. There
was a train going up to this place. There sure wasn’t much there. There were a lot of sand and tents and we were end of the line. After a day or so, I got tired of this and there was a train going back, so I just went down and got on the train and went back and went to the coast and went down to the docks, and sure enough, a ship had come back in again to load or something, so I was able to go down and I got on-board ship and carried on as usual.

**Anzio, Italy 1944**

So we continued on the Salerno run, back and forth between North Africa and the beaches of Salerno, and once we were pulled into Naples harbor which had been taken by the Army, so we pulled into their harbor and what we found out was that we were going to load and go to Anzio, but first they had other new ships there that hadn’t been involved in the war much and they were going to practice for the invasion at Anzio, which we didn’t know where they were going to have a rehearsal. And so they sent up instructions and our commanding officer decided we should send some kind of a signal running to the beaches. We’ve done that so well, we didn’t need any practice or anything. I don’t know whether they were or whether we just go on the practice, I don’t know. But I remember we pulled in, in the morning, and they said we could...we pulled into the Naples harbor in the morning and they said we could have a...we anchored somewhere. Then when we were there, we were told we’d have...I decided, yes, I’d go to shore because I wanted to go up and see Pompeii and so I went ashore and I had a very enjoyable time. I had read a number of...I had been reading the ??? and also I had indicated before, I might never get back there, so I better see it.

Well, we loaded the next morning and, sure enough, we went up north. We were designated as the second command ship. There was always back up; if one got sunk, there was another one to take over. So we got up to...in any case, we sailed up there at night and got up there to the beaches in the morning and went in and didn’t meet much opposition the first day. And we had a miserable day, as a matter of fact, and it was too bad but I remember I said...I don’t know where the heck we are but I
was just sitting up in the bridge and I said to one of the seamen, "Flash on that radio and see what the heck is going on." It was strictly against the law because you could get your ship identified where it was, but I didn’t...I thought, what the heck, we’re up here, and we’re in on this invasion and we’re sharing all the mystery of where we are...not revealing anything of where we are. So anyway, we clicked it on for a minute and they announced that there was an invasion at Anzio and if there was any opposition it was yet to be seen and it was under blue Italian sky. But that was a little like somebody reporting Churchill had a group of people in...the reporters and they asked him what he could say about something. He said, “Say whatever you like. Just don’t all say the same thing.” And so here we were at Anzio, January 19, 1944.

We could observe a good deal of what was going on from our position on the ship and just outside the harbor we could view it. Of course, there was firing and various things going on and it was pretty...I was saying that the...we could observe the battle scene and the guns firing on both sides and there didn’t seem to be too much opposition but, of course, we were sitting back on-board the ship. We weren’t on the ground. But there was a lot of firing and apparently they moved forward with a good deal of keeping their schedule and they moved up to a certain position. Apparently, we got the word back on-board ship, I’m not exactly sure how now, but we got word that they had reached the targets they were supposed to be for the first day and so they stopped moving forward. As it turned out, this was a grave mistake because [it] got back...the commanding officer of the German forces had gone back somewhere for a wedding or something and was not present and whoever was in charge wasn’t highly organized. But we...so apparently they stopped and it was a mistake because if they had proceeded it would have been with very little opposition and got a little strong beach head. But that’s just my judgment and, of course, I have nothing to do with the Army, but I do know it became increasingly difficult to move on that beach head and we ran there for several months shuffling from Italy up and back. And it was a very rough affair, I must say. We kept hauling these lorries full of ammunition and supplies up to the beach head and we finally got word that we were to take back some of the lorries back with us every time we went up to unload a group of troops and that we did very
effectively. I remember going ashore at times, saying, “Hey do you want to go back somewhere?” And, of course, the troops couldn’t do; they just had to put the lorries on the ship and we took them back. But it was very concentrated and apparently got a lot of...not much room to move but...we kept running a shuttle back and forth from Naples and south of Naples and it was increasingly vigorous and they couldn’t get off the beaches apparently. I don’t know what the logistics were on the ground but apparently they weren’t able to advance. I do know there was...up on the hill it was one big gun, we nicknamed him “Anzio Archie.” And it was on a track and it ran into the hills or the mountains and was there sheltered and then it would come out every once in a while and fire at us down at the harbor when we came in to unload whatever we were unloading.
Casualties of War

This was really very grim and I can remember a couple of occasions when they brought the casualties on-board the ship and simply put them in bunks that we had reserved for the Army troops as we were taking them up to one of the beach heads--Salerno, Anzio, wherever we were taking them--and they’d just spread them out there and the guys were laying there with open wounds. I guess there was no way they could take care of them there, but it was really a very tragic, sad affair, I must say. In any case, we kept going and we get back to Naples and...sometimes we would anchor or tie up in little towns along the coast north of Naples where we could load the ship again to take it up to Anzio. I remember once in a while we would stay overnight. I might say, the routine was...all the way through was we’d go in on invasion usually early mornings, sail at midnight from wherever we were and...about midnight and sail out. And that was always my watch. It was a fixed watch, twelve to four in the morning, so I was on the bridge going up and we sometimes went up in convoy various ways. But I do remember it was usually night. And we got so we had a good sense of seeing, even though it was dark, and identifying certain things. Sometime after the war we went back up to Naples and we were going...I don’t know where we were going; we were sailing up to Naples harbor, going somewhere on a ship. It was with the DIPA students and I went up and asked the commanding officer if I could just stand up on the bridge and see what it was like, that I had done this a lot of times before in the war, and he agreed to it. But I remember there were lights all over and I...it was really strange because there were so many lights. I didn’t know where the lights were; I really didn’t know where I was in terms of orientation from the previous time where we always went up at night. But it does depend on your perspective and environment and...
The Routine: Surely There’s a Better Way

Well, anyway, when we were down in Naples sometimes we’d stay overnight and two days before we’d go back to the beaches…oh, I was talking about the routine…we’d go in at dawn or at light, sometimes we went in, in daylight, after a while but not in the initial assaults or anything, and we would go back to…we’d sail and go over and take the beaches, unload, go back and do it all over again. And this was our job. But sometimes…a couple of times we were able to stay down in Fagioli overnight and I used to go up the…into Naples and sit around and do nothing. I went to the opera and I remember I don’t know how many times I saw Cavalleria Rusticana and Pagliacci, but it certainly was a relief from sitting around aboard ship, or at a bar, or in a restaurant or something ashore. But I remember seeing those. Another time we went for a walk up on the hills there and met a woman and she was out in her yard and there was a lot of damage to it. And I said to her, “Oh, the Germans did that?” And she said, “German, British, all the same.” It certainly was to them, of course. It didn’t make any difference who was bombing them and killing their neighbors. It was just a sad affair. I continued to wonder as I went on, there must be another way of settling problems other than this.

We continued on the run into the Anzio beach head for several months and it was really a rough affair. One night we were down…I think it was right in the Naples harbor, we were just loaded to go back up to Anzio and we got orders to unload and we were going back to Britain. Everybody on-board was very happy about that because most of them were English people then going home to see their families and going back home. So, in any case, we duly unloaded and went back and started back for England. I remember during the time one of the fellows on-board, the ship had been ashore and he got a jeep, he saw a jeep, so he picked it up and brought it back to the ship. Of course, it wasn’t any trouble to get in on-board ship because we had a ramp. The same way that things went off; we could get them on. So we got this little American jeep and decided to paint it blue. I don’t know why blue, I guess just sort of a Navy color and we did get it painted and had it and ran around various things. And that’s for occasionally
when we had a little time off. But we decided we were going back to England, so we had this jeep and we didn’t quite think it was appropriate to take the jeep back, so the guys took it to shore. Well, they ended up trading it for a donkey and had the donkey back on-board, out on deck, and we were...it was on my watch and the donkey was braying and finally it all stopped and I called one of the seamen to the bridge and said, “What happened to that donkey that we had on-board?” And he said, “I don’t know, sir. I think it fell overboard.” Well, I guess it did fall overboard. In any case, that was the end of the joy of having a jeep.

**From England to France and Back Again**

The trip back to England was uneventful. We got back and we were sent into the harbor at Swansea. I remember getting into the harbor and it was...we went in at night and it was dark, of course; it was on my watch. I recall looking around and it seemed like there were ships all over the place and I thought I better call the captain, so I did, the only time I ever did call him on my watch, but there were just ships all around as far as I could see. He come up to the bridge and said, “What’s the trouble, Chate?” They nicknamed...I got the nickname “Chate” in the Navy; I think they thought my name was Chaters and they nicknamed me “Chate” and I carried that all the way through the war and still with people that I’ve known for more time. He said, “What’s the trouble?” I said, “Look, sir. There’s ships just all around here. I don’t know quite what to do.” And he said, “Go flick on the running lights,” which we very, very seldom do. The running lights were the masthead and the port starburst. Well, we flicked on the lights and all of a sudden all the other ships flashed theirs on and it just looked like...we used to think of a big major firework celebration. And he just looked at me and he said, “I don’t know, see if you can get yourself out of it.” So he left the bridge and strangely enough we were able to move around and not get damaged by any of the other ships or damage ??? as far as that goes.

So we were back in England and immediately some of the ship’s company were given leave and went for only a couple of days and we were there and we began to
figure out what was going on. We noticed that there were just...oh, after a day or two we got orders to sail around to...I think it was Portsmouth, we were, maybe Felix or Stowe...in any case, the south coast. We got down there and, well, it was quite obvious that something was going on and there were just troops all over the place and a lot of ships were loading. Well, we were given a few days leave and I, for a few days, went up to London. And we were about the only people in London. I went back up to the Barbizon Plaza Hotel where I had stayed and there was practically nobody there. Well, we certainly got the idea that the invasion of France was eminent and I remember one thing...by this time I never had the uniform and I thought I better go in and get another uniform. So I went in and I remember the tailor where I bought it...we usually bought our clothes at a place called Geeves, which is a place for getting naval uniforms. And he said, “Well, you won’t be needing it for a few days,” or I think he said a couple of weeks, and again it made me wonder what we were going to be doing the next couple of weeks. And Waddy and I...he was back again, too...we were very fortunate; we seemed to get together so very frequently. We...in any case, we were up in London and we were wandering around, not much to do except see the sights of course, but we were impressed with the attention of it and the lack of people in London. And I remember we were just standing there one day on the corner and we said, “Why don’t we go out to the zoo.” We didn’t have any idea where the zoo was and so this bus stopped and we said to the bus driver, “How would we get to the zoo? How do we get to the zoo? What bus do we take? How do we get there?” He said, “Get on.” There wasn’t anybody else on the bus. He said, “I’ll take you,” and we rode down to the zoo in this double-decker bus. I often wondered where all those people that were waiting for that bus to go to work or go to whatever they were going to do and it just never showed up. But in any case, we went back and got back on-board and went down and they kept putting all kinds of materials on-board and loading us with an Army corps and with the tanks and all their equipment and stuff. And I remember we got orders to sail, as always, at night and I was on the watch on the bridge. We went out and we set sail for France. I remember one of the things, the night before, we got all kinds of orders on-board, piles of materials of instruction and what to do if we got sunk or somebody
got sunk, and various positions depending on the number of ships that were there. We got all that, we never did get time to read it but, in any case, we went over and there wasn’t much we could have done about it if we could have read it. We sailed and we got over there before dawn, and we were shot into the beach and we went high on the beach and unloaded the tanks and stuff. It was really a swatter; it was just terrible what was going on, on the beach, everybody firing all over the place and tremendous casualties lying around. Trucks and tanks and lorries all strewn all over the beach. We got our...we went in and sank down and got our...got all the troops ashore. And I was down walking in the tank deck and I noticed something coming up through the bottom and it happened to be the...it was a tank that had gone in before us and sank in the sand and we went in and... (Side ends)

In any case, we were on the beach and I went down to look at the tank deck because, as usual, it was my job to load the ship and then to...I was to direct the people getting on-board the ship and likewise off. It certainly wasn’t any trouble getting them off because here were all these Army soldiers...I say Army because that’s mainly what we took with the tanks and equipment, but occasionally there were other types of troops or personnel moving. Not many other personnel going into action, that’s for sure. In any case, I was looking around and I saw part of the tank coming up through the deck. We had ? down onto it as the tide went on and so we just had to...I didn’t know it was, but we waited for awhile and gradually we started to float and got high enough above the water that we went astern and we were able to free ourselves of it. We got back onto the...pulled off the beaches and got set to go back to England with this big hole in the tank deck and in some way we got up enough so we didn’t take on too much water, but we set sail to go back to England and I recall everybody felt kind of happy because we’d go back...we have to wait around to get the hole fixed and we’d get some time off, we’d get a break from this terrible mess. But, in any case, we sailed back and this was the D-Day, we were off the...I guess we got free again in the morning...I guess it was the morning...yes, it was...and we sailed back to England, looking forward to a little leave because we had a hole in us obviously.
Well, we got back to England; we got signaled to go right into dry dock. The dockeys were not known for their speed in England and they kind of took their time. So we thought, well, this will be great to take a little...well, we went right into the dry dock and crews went to work on it. They were all, of course, geared up to do this and were part of the invasion thing and they went to work, worked very fast and got the hole in the bottom fixed, pulled out, loaded, and we went back over to Normandy the next night again. I always had a trouble which beach we were on, but I think it was Sword we went into. They were all in a row—Utah, Sword, Blue, Gold—they were all the same, just different sections of the beach head. So we got back over there and went in, hit the beaches again, and loaded the stuff. There was still a terrible mess, but it was not quite as bad as it was the first day; there were rigs and tanks and lorries and stuff strewn all over the beach, it was hard to say what was bad, what was worse, and what was terrible, but it wasn’t a very...it wasn’t the case.

We kept settling troops back and forth to that beach head and then got further north and started to run into Austen and various other places. Austen was a harbor that you could go into the dock there, but it was still a...we had to go around the wreck right in the harbor and that really slowed traffic down going in. In any case, we kept running back and forth, kept moving up, and for awhile we sailed out of Tillsbury, which was near London, went across the channel and it was...this was the peak of the war, of course, or the peak of the war as we saw it, at least, and we kept sailing back and forth and...we were able to get some leave, at least for the day, and we’d go ashore and then often had to get back at midnight to sail to get to the beaches in the morning. I remember I was not fussy about going much into the pubs and drinking because I felt that I had to take the bridge at midnight and I felt, well, if I had had a beer or something, which was about all I drank, that if something happened, they’d say, “Oh, the officer was drunk.” So I never did that before I sailed at midnight. Well, I think later it might have been a good idea if I had had a couple of drinks, it would have been a lot easier to maneuver around, but that’s another story. What I did do was I frequently went to plays and the plays started about six o’clock because people in London had to get off the streets and get into the subways where a lot of them slept at night down
there. So I used to go to plays and then come out and get back to the ship and sail at midnight. Of course, once in a while we had a little longer and...had a day or two...so I used to go somewhere on these...we had free tickets on the plane, they were called warrants, and we certainly got wise to the fact that we were going to be limited the number of warrants we could get. So I remember, I, like many others, got two warrants; one was from the Isle of Wight or the South of England up to Northern Scotland and I got another one from Inverness back down to south of England. But you’d get on and if you didn’t get to your destination, they didn’t take the ticket, they didn’t punch it, so we had these tickets and we kept going, never got to our destination and they kept punching it everywhere we went. And they really weren’t too concerned, I don’t think, about a Canadian sailor getting a free ride on the train, but some people did have to pay. And this was partly to keep appearance of normal things and so they used to take the tickets in the subway and still charge for them.

We followed the progress of the war very closely, of course, and when certain things happened it reflected on us, too. I remember being...getting a few days leave and we were back in London and we were somewhere in England and we were called back to go over. It was the time of the Battle of the Bulge, and we had to take some troops over to support that action. But generally, things were pretty routine.

**Nearing the End of the War**

As the troops got off of the beaches and moved forward, it soon became apparent we were winning the war, but what was end in sight was not quite clear. There were constant bombings by the British and American, the allied forces from Britain, over to the continent. The waves of bombers went over night and then gradually during the day, too; there were just constant convoys of planes going...dropping...it was...heartening to see them, to realize we were going to win the war. And then, in the meantime...this was a result of the...really the impact of the American air force that went over to fly all of these planes and they were, of course, active on the ground as well. But for some years, Eisenhower and America have been
put in charge of the allied forces and, well, we didn’t hear much about them. It was, whatever was heard, was certainly very positive and there seemed to be little friction between me and the British forces, although once in a while I heard the Field Marshall, Montgomery, there was [a] little resistance to serving under him, but certainly it all disappeared and there was a major thrust of allied forces. You have to remember, too, that while we weren’t involved the war had been declared in the Far East and all the battles were taking place over there, too. Although, it had little effect where we were. But gradually the British began to feel more optimistic and in Europe they started flying buzz bombs, which were just small airplanes with a charge and they?them and they just flew over and then whatever it was that propelled them ran out, they just dropped and they had the bomb and they just exploded wherever they were. They had no idea when they were coming and how to stop them and gradually the British put up nets in the English Channel to…they’d hit these nets and explode and that was the end. But it wasn’t entirely successful. They called them buzz bombs. You could hear them buzzing overhead and…whatever you were doing, you’d hear them go over and if they kept on buzzing, you knew they’d gone over and became somebody else’s problem. But there were many of them and the nets did something to stop them. And then there was also the bigger bombs, B2s as they were called. They came as a surprise. So did the buzz bombs, I guess, which we never heard anything about. But the B2 bombs came over and they were rather devastating and when they first came they weren’t identified as bombs. They kept saying that various factories had blown up and things. It became evident that these were bombs from Germany.

V-E Day

It was during all this time, too, that we got a new captain on-board, Alan Trevor, and Waddy and I would gradually assume the rank of first lieutenant, which meant second in command and I functioned as that for a considerable period of time. The ranks, positions to some extent, they couldn’t call them ranks, and if there was a younger person who came on board for a replacement, ?? to get that position. And I
remember Trevor, as we called him, always wanted to make sure that they didn't get any younger officers than me. There was also discussion about me going back to Canada to pick up other LST’s. They were building them some place in Canada, he didn’t say where, but I would go back and get...he was talking about being a first lieutenant on one of them. But as things moved along, finally, V-E Day did come, victory Europe, V-E Day came and there was, of course, a big celebration in Britain and I happened to be in London on that day it was declared and there was a big celebration in London. People came to London take part in the celebration. I happened to be up visiting in Stratford and got on to take the train back. I was coming back and more and more people got...at every stop they just kept getting on the train to go to London. And everybody wanted to be in London on V-E Day, so gradually we got a lot of people on-board and we did get back to London and have the celebration. Everybody was having little parades and big parades all over the place. One of the highlights was when, during the early evening, I remember the lights came on and that’s the first time the lights had been on, this was in 1944, the first time the lights had come on since the war began in ’39. Obviously there was great cheering and great happiness around.

**First Time Back Home: Then Back Aboard a New Ship**

And soon after that I was told that I was going to go back to Canada on another ship. I’m not quite sure why they picked me out to go back and none of the others, unless it was that they thought maybe I would be a first...I was the only one of the Canadians that became first lieutenant. We were in groups in the LST’s and I guess we got...well, anyway, I got sent up to Gork and Glenoch and picked up...the Queen Elizabeth was there and it sailed regularly from there across, without escorts, because it was so fast. They could beat the submarines, I guess. In any case, I went up there and got onboard ship and went back to Halifax. I got to Halifax, took the train across to Vancouver, but I got off at Alberta, where my mother and father were living, and so that was the first stop in Canada for me. I got off and had a visit with them and then proceeded on Vancouver, where I reported to HMCS Discovery. And they said it would
be maybe a few weeks before we needed to go over to Vancouver Island to where there were new LST’s, and I was to be an officer on one of those. In due time, I got down to Vancouver; I had a good time visiting around. Jane had arranged for me to stay with Eve and Walter Scott, her husband’s sister, and I stayed there for a few days and, finally, I went up and stayed with Rob Davidson up on 41st Street—a fellow that I had gone to college with and I spoke about him being a very good friend. He was not in the service for, I gather, medical reasons, although I never did know. But in any case, I had a good time in Vancouver. I kind of wondered why I was there. It seemed to me the war was going on and here I was back in Vancouver on leave.

In due time, I was sent to and listed on-board the new LST, and I was not the first lieutenant. There were senior officers and me being one of the recents, I gather, they may have thought I wasn’t qualified. I don’t know. But in any case, I just went on as a second lieutenant. We stayed there for quite a bit of time and for the first while we did not stay on board the ship. I got a room in the so-called rooming house. These were very fine homes where the owners took people in, military officers such as me and others, and I stayed there and went out to, where we boarded the ship and got it ready for sea. On-board the ship, these were all English officers for all of these LST’s waiting around to sail. We were told we were going to the Far East but for some reason or another we were going to go through the Panama and go to England on the way. I don’t know why we just didn’t go across the Pacific. I don’t know whether they had some question about the ability of the ship to go that far; I have no idea. Anyway, we set sail for Victoria from and went down south. We were finally told we’d pull in at San Diego, which was a US naval base. Everything went fine and we were just pulling into the harbor and the commanding officer said to me, he said, “Send the signal out ashore that there’s a farewell party onboard LST...” 2814, I think, was our number...I was quite sure. I just forgot for the moment. But [he said], “A farewell party on-board that night.” And I said...I kind of looked at him, I said, “Gee, we haven’t even gotten in the harbor yet and we’re going to have a farewell...” He said, “Go ahead.” Well, anyway, we sent the signal. Sure enough, a lot of people came on-board and we gave them drinks and they all felt very sorry for us that we weren’t going to stay longer and
hoped they would...they gave us all kinds of calling cards and phone numbers and stuff, that if we were going to stay to be sure and give them a call. Well, of course, we did stay, unintentionally, but we had all this time and we really had a pretty good time. The second that we pulled into the harbor and docked, we had this party.

The next morning, one of the fellows on-board the ships said he was going up to Hollywood to see Warner. Well, we thought, that’s a joke; just to go up to Hollywood to see the studios. He did go up, he came back that night and said he was going out the next day and he had met with Warner and Warner [and they] said, “Bring some...if you’ve got anybody else, bring them up tomorrow and we’ll show them around the studios.” Well, the other officer was very skeptical about whether he really had contacts with him or not. But I said to him, “Well, I’ll go with you.” And he said, “Fine.” He said, “We’re to take a train.” And he had an address where we were to get off the train and he said that Warner’s private physician would greet us there. Well, we got on the train and we got off and there was somebody who was a physician/doctor picked us up and took us out to the studio. And we got off and went in the building and all of a sudden coming down the hall was this fellow, Warner, who was the head of the studio and he greeted Ian as “Sir Ian” and I’ve never been quite able to get it straightened out, but I gather that Ian’s father, I think, was head of Warner Brother’s office in London and that’s why Jack Warner was so interested in treating Ian so well. And I never did find out if he had a title or not; he just didn’t respond. The fact that he didn’t say no, I think, implied that he really did have a title. Well, we were just standing there and Warner said something about his...he’d go to lunch or something and Ian said to him, he said, “Well, Alec here, he had never been around the studio. He wasn’t with me and he’s never seen around the studio.” And he said, “Well, fine, we’ll have this guy,” Dr. whatever his name was, he said to him, “Take them around the studios, take them to the green room, get them some lunch and be back here at 1:30.” So off we went on a tour of the studio, which I, of course, found very fascinating. And we went to the green room and various other places and got back there at 1:30 and Warner said, “We’ll take you out to the San Anita, to the race tracks,” he said, “I’m going out to the race track.” Sure enough, Ian and I got in his car, sat in the back seat; Warner sat in the front seat
with the driver. We did go to the race track and, of course, it was an exciting thing for me to do that. We got there and then when it came time to go home, we had been betting a couple of dollars on the tracks and we actually hit a little bit, Warner said, “We better go,” and Ian said, “Well, we’ve got some money to pick up. We won a race.” It was a dollar or two. And he said to somebody there, one of the assistants, he said, “Cash him in and give him the money, we’ve got to go now.”

So we went back into Los Angeles. We then took the train back out to the ship in San Diego. We also capitalized on our stay over because the ambassador...I think it was an ambassador, maybe just a council, I don’t know, but anyway he took us out one night and actually cooked some steak for us and we had a very happy time around Hollywood. We also got invited, some way or another, out to a party at Atwater Kent, who was the great producer of radios and was a very famous and popular guy and he used to have parties periodically. And we went out there and met a lot of...mostly...I think the party was for British actors because a lot of British actors were there, people like Cary Grant and others, and it was a very happy time in San Diego and we finally set sail to go through the Panama. And they decided to send some woman and her two children back to England who had been there during the duration of the war; they sent them back. They knew they were on an LST; they were glad to be on anything. But our commanding officer, he left his quarters for them, so the woman stayed there and the two guys, I don’t know where they stayed, probably some cabin somewhere that had probably been set aside for Army officers. But we sailed from San Diego, went down to the Panama Canal, all of these people on-board ship had not been on LST’s before and were interested in what I had done on an LST and the invasion and various things. It was on the trip some way or another that I got disabled and so we had to switch and go into fixed watches again. And that meant that I got the same job on this LST that I had on the previous one as having the watches from twelve noon until four o’clock and then again midnight, twelve to four. Well, in any case, we got out of San Diego, got down, went through the Panama Canal, which was a very interesting experience for me. I had never seen anything like it before and it was really fascinating to go through.
I remember we were standing on the dock and we wanted to go into town at one of the stops; we were going to be there long enough, a few hours, and we had a bit of leave and go into Panama, downtown. And then somebody on the shore side, one of the officials there, said we’d go over and take a cab and it would take you up to the city, to some building. So we went and I was meeting the group and we walked up to this cab and got in the cab and just as I was getting over to the other side, I saw the building where we were going. So I just got out the other side again and the other guys followed through and they got out of the cab, out the other side, because we could just walk over to where we were going. I remember looking back and this cab driver came around, we got in, and he was closing his door, he kept looking, he couldn’t figure out where his passengers had gone. Anyway, we went to Panama and spent the night...no, we didn’t spend the night. No, no. We had to go back and get on-board the ship and kept going through the canal to get over to the other side, proceeded across the Atlantic to go to Britain.

It was a rather quiet trip going back to England and all went well. There was a bit of friction over the fact that Ian, one of the officers I spoke about, for some reason he wasn’t able to keep watches and I don’t know whether it was his story or they made up what it was because he didn’t take his turn keeping watches. There had been friction on-board ship, but I wasn’t really part of it because I didn’t know what it was all about and the British officers wouldn’t particularly share it with me.

Things were moving along pretty well in the war and I was just there and I didn’t quite know why I was being sent back to Canada, come all the way back, and going back to England again. I hadn’t done much of anything unusual.

We got back to England and we were informed that we were going to the Far East and that we had a number of things to do and one of them was [that] there was a problem with the boiler of our ship and...I don’t know why I said boiler because I don’t think we had boilers...I think it was...well, in any case, there was some problem with the engine and that meant waiting around for several days, so we just went up and went
ashore and stayed in a motel for a couple of days. Then it was announced that the Queen was going to ride in state to the prominent buildings for the first time since back in ’39. And so they were getting all set up for that a couple of days in advance. So I went down to Portsmouth to see Trevor, who was employed as in charge of the base there. I went down to see him and we were really very good friends and he was my commanding officer, so we were very close. He was an interesting fellow. He had been trained in the Royal Navy and went ashore and became a commissioner of some kind out in Nigeria, he was called back and got in the service. He was from a pretty well-to-do country...his family had a country house called “Rodney Stone” and they were...he said they were relatively near Cannon Doyle, the mystery novelist. And he said one of Cannon Doyle’s first books was named Rodney Stone after Trevor's family. And also, not only that, but Trevor had three or four Christian names, first names, and one of them was Doyle. He and his family were also on stage and he had a couple of sisters who were quite famous. Well, sometimes we went down to visit them after a play in London.
Alexander N. Charters

Alex Charters, a pioneer in the field of adult and continuing education, is professor emeritus, retired dean and vice president at Syracuse University. He is founder of both the International Congress on University Adult Education, the Coalition of Adult Education Organizations, and the Academic Institute for Educators of Adults. He was a delegate to the International Conference on Adult Education sponsored by UNESCO, and The Alexander N. Charters Library of Resources for Educators of Adults at Syracuse University is an internationally renowned repository. Alex is a member of the Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame.