

UF 320

Interviewer: Samuel Proctor

Interviewee: William E. Emerson

P: I am doing an interview this morning with William Emerson, and we're working here in the Foundation building. This is January 9, 2003. This is part of the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program at the University of Florida. I am happy to be doing this, because I consider Bill an old friend and certainly a strong supporter of the University of Florida. Bill, let's start off by you giving me your full name.

E: William Allen Emerson.

P: You were born when and where?

E: Born in Columbia, Tennessee, on July 13, 1921.

P: And so you are...?

E: Eighty-one.

P: Let's talk a little bit about your family background. Do you have any siblings?

E: No.

P: You are an only child. What was your father's name?

E: Henry Houston Emerson.

P: And your mother's name?

E: Mabel Allen. Her maiden name was Allen.

P: Is that where you got the middle name?

E: Yes.

P: Where did they come from?

E: Columbia, Tennessee.

P: They were both born in Columbia, Tennessee?

E: I tried to trace my ancestry once, and I couldn't get out of Tennessee. They have lived there forever.

P: Do you think they came from Britain?

E: Yes.

P: But you don=t know when?

E: Don=t know exactly.

P: How about your grandparents? Do you remember them?

E: They were from there, too. Yes, I remember them. I remember my mother=s side. I don=t remember my father=s side so much. My dad had nine brothers and sisters, and my mother had eight brothers and sisters, and I had forty-one first cousins in that one county. Not many of them are left now, of course.

P: Bill, what do you remember about Columbia, Tennessee?

E: I don=t remember too much, because they left there and moved to St. Petersburg when I was four years old, in 1925.

P: Why did they move to Florida?

E: My dad had the Columbia Paint and Wallpaper Company. The way I heard the story, he had heard so much about how things were booming in Florida...

P: The land boom in South Florida.

E: Yes. So, he sold the business to relatives, to my grandfather and one of my aunts. They took over the business, and we moved to Florida.

P: Where did you move to?

E: St. Pete. That is the only place they have ever lived in Florida.

P: Why St. Petersburg? Any special reason?

E: I think they had heard a lot of things about, you know, Pinellas County was supposed to be the healthiest place in the country in those days. I don=t know whether you remember that or not.

P: Yes.

E: I think that is one of the main reasons that they moved there. I don=t know of anything else, any other attraction. There were a couple of other people from Columbia who had

moved there, and they probably knew them.

P: So, they had friends when they arrived.

E: Yes.

P: What business did your dad go into?

E: He tried to go into the same kind of business there, but things collapsed before he could get started real well, so he never had any success in Florida. In fact, the first job I remember him having was as a Fuller brush salesman. He traveled all over the middle part of the state selling Fuller brushes. Then, in the Depression, he got a job as janitor of the First Baptist Church. That was the only thing he could get. But there was no stigma attached to that because nobody had any money. Everybody was broke. The thing I remember the most about it was that my job was to fill the baptistery every Saturday, and then I could go swimming. I couldn't have any company, but I could go swimming. You know, the baptistery was about four feet deep and about eight feet long.

P: You had no other relatives in St. Petersburg.

E: No.

P: Tell me about your growing-up years there. You get there, you are four years old, so you don't have any memories, really, of life before then.

E: Very few memories, that is right.

P: You went to school, obviously, there.

E: I went to Lakewood School in St. Pete, all six years. During that period, as I said, my dad was working at the church. My mother was working in a cafeteria as a cashier. I would ride the streetcar every afternoon from Lakewood School downtown and wait for her in the park there.

P: Where was she working? I know you said a cafeteria, but school or commercial?

E: Commercial. Downtown. The way I remember, we lived in a house in Lakewood Estates, which is a nice section of town out on the south side. My memory of those days is that we lived in a big house one day, and the next day we were living in a garage apartment taking care of the property. He lost everything, like so many other people.

P: You were not unlike everybody else. The decade of the Depression really hit the

population very hard. It is hard for people today, young people, to even envision that kind of a life and lifetime.

E: And if you were absolutely broke like that today, you would be humiliated, but then, everybody was in the same boat.

P: Everybody was in the same boat at that time. The Florida people actually went into a Depression with the collapse of the land boom before the rest of the country went into the decade of the Depression.

E: Absolutely.

P: Where did you go to school?

E: The first six years at Lakewood Elementary School. Then, in those days, they had junior high schools which were three years, seventh through ninth [grades]. I went there at what they called Mirror Lake Junior High School and then from there to St. Petersburg High School, which was three years. It was really the only high school in town in those days, so there was no choice. That is where you went.

P: But it had a good substantial reputation.

E: Yes, and it is still going strong. We were there night before last to see a friend inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame. It has been changed quite a bit, but basically it is still the same.

P: That school has an interesting historical relationship to the University of Florida.

E: Really?

P: Because when the Buckman Act was passed in 1905, it wiped out the institution that preceded this one, and one of the ones it wiped out was a school in St. Petersburg called the St. Petersburg Normal and Industrial School, which was for teacher training. The state had taken over financial support of it in 1903, and then in 1905, it ended it. But what remained of the school, books in the library and so on, went into the St. Petersburg High School.

E: I did not know that.

P: The St. Petersburg Normal and Industrial School is one of the four parents of the University of Florida, so there is a historical thread that goes through all of that.

E: There sure is. I wasn't aware of that.

P: How good of a student were you, Bill?

E: Well, I didn't have to try very hard, but I was valedictorian of both the junior high school when I graduated and senior high school. It was useless for me to ever ask Jane for a date, because she wouldn't have thought of dating anybody she thought was an egghead like that. But I was president of the student body and valedictorian of the class.

P: What were your special academic interests?

E: I didn't have any special interests in those days. I just took the general courses.

P: You took what they offered. So, science wasn't a special attraction or English wasn't a special attraction?

E: No. I had no special attraction, and, unfortunately, I didn't have to study very hard. When I finally got to college, that made a big difference. I found out I had to study.

P: Did you work when you were going through high school?

E: Yes.

P: Doing what?

E: I sold magazines on the street and door-to-door, *Liberty* and *Saturday Evening Post* and *Ladies Home Journal*. Then I worked in what we would call now a supermarket. It was a big grocery store. The main thing is, I finally got a job in the Florida Theater. All these theaters in the state were owned by the Sparks brothers in those days, but the Florida Theater was the first-run theater in St. Pete, and I got a job ushering there. I started in high school, and I worked my way through junior college there, too.

P: That was an enviable job, though, seeing all the movies for nothing.

E: Oh, yes, and you could let your girlfriend in once in a while. I made twenty-five cents an hour, I remember.

P: That was big-time.

E: And you had to stand at the head of the aisle like you had a broom up your spine, at attention, and usher every patron...

P: And you had to wear that red uniform.

E: You had to line up every day for inspection, that your uniform was pressed and your shoes were shined and your hair was cut. Every day.

P: For twenty-five cents an hour.

E: Yes. I guess that would be comparable pay for today.

P: That was the going-rate, that=s right. Did you have a car?

E: No.

P: Couldn=t afford one?

E: Well, in junior college I did manage to get an old Model-T and fix it up, so I had that for a little while. The thing about the theater was that, since they were owned all over the state by the Sparks brothers, when I got ready to come to Gainesville, they transferred me up here to the Florida Theater. I had a job when I came. I had all my classes arranged in the morning and went down to open the theater at 12:30 and took tickets until 6:00 and then carried a laundry-route at night. I thought it was tough.

P: That=s not bad.

E: It took me years to realize that the old gentleman at, I think it was called New Way Laundry, was just helping boys get through school. I knew he wasn=t making any money off me, but it took me a while to realize what he was doing. His name was Edwards. Fine old gentleman.

P: Bill, what kind of a social animal were you in high school?

E: Well, I didn=t have enough money to have many dates.

P: But you were not unlike every other boy in school.

E: That=s true. We did have a lot of dances. They called them Stooze Dances at the Coliseum in St. Pete once a week, and there was nothing there but high-school kids. You didn=t have to have a date. You stood out in the middle, that was the stag line, and when people danced around, you tagged in on whomever you wanted to dance with. It was an interesting life, a lot of fun.

P: It was a hard life, but was it a happy life, as you remember it?

E: It was happy, yes.

P: Were you always close with your parents?

E: Yes. I remember my mother, when I got that Model-T, we didn't have a car. Daddy had lost everything. We were living in a garage apartment with one garage down below, and I'd put that car in the garage. When I'd go down to start out in the morning, she'd always come down and watch me start that, because I had to crank it, and she knew I was going to get my arm broken, you know. I found out that when I cranked it and it started, it would start creeping up on me, and the wall of the garage was right behind me. My mother would just let out a shriek. She knew that car was going to crush me. I'd hold out one finger against the radiator, and it would stop.

P: What year are we up to? When did you graduate high school?

E: 1939.

P: From 1939 to 1941, when World War II started, what did you do?

E: St. Pete Junior College, what is now St. Petersburg College.

P: You did go to junior college immediately?

E: Yes, St. Pete Junior College.

P: What did you study there?

E: Let me tell you how I got there. I was valedictorian of my class and could not get a scholarship anywhere, so I had decided I was not going to be able to go to college, that it was out of the question.

P: You did apply to a number of schools?

E: Yes. There was a lawyer in St. Pete who had taken interest in me. He had gone to Vanderbilt, and he did his best to get me a scholarship to Vanderbilt, but it just wasn't available. But there was a doctor in St. Pete named Dr. Council C. Rudolph. We never heard of babysitting before, but I had taken care of his two little boys, who were maybe three and four years old when I was in high school. I took care of them, and it got to where we loved each other. One Sunday, there was a knock on the door, and it was Doc Rudolph. He comes in and says, I have been trying to figure out what to give you for a graduation present from high school, and I've decided to give you the first semester's tuition to [St. Petersburg] Junior College.

P: That was like a miracle coming through the door.

E: Yes, and, you know, once you get a start you figure out a way how to stay in. I think it was \$50, but it might as well have been \$10,000. That=s how I got to Junior College.

P: How did you get back and forth, in that Model-T car?

E: Yes. Well, we lived right close to town. I could walk. The same thing with the theater, I could walk home at night. I have to tell you a funny thing that happened while I was working there. The ideal job was ticket-taker, of course. One night, the ticket-taker comes over to me and he says, now, I want to tell you something. He said, one of the Sparks brothers is in town, and he=s the one who is a little bit different than the rest. So, if you see some guy standing over here kind of watching you, that=s probably who that is. He said, they need a new manager at the Plaza Theater, and he=s looking for somebody, so I advise you to be on your best behavior tonight. Pretty soon, I become aware that there is a heavysset guy dressed terribly standing over there watching every move I make. Finally, he comes over to me and he says, listen, son, I=ve been watching you, and he said, I like the way you handle yourself. He says, we=re looking for a new manager at the Plaza Theater, as you probably know, and he said, I think maybe you=ve got a good chance at it. I mean, I walked home on air that night, told my mother and daddy. It turned out this guy was a stagehand, and in the summer, he worked with the circus.

P: Wanted to see how far he could get with that story.

E: Well, he sure got me. Anyway, it worked out real well anyhow, because it was all the way through high school and junior college and up here.

P: How long were you at Junior College?

E: Two years.

P: So, you were there from 1939 to 1941.

E: Right.

P: Did they have the same kind of curriculum they have now? You took whatever they offered?

E: Yes, pretty much.

P: You weren=t selective?

E: I had no idea what I wanted to do, so I took whatever the general courses were.

P: Were you good in all subjects, or better in some than others?

E: I don=t remember. Latin was hard, I remember that, but I don=t remember any being...

P: Any special problems.

E: No.

P: During all this time, you didn=t get into any discipline trouble?

E: I don=t think so. I don=t mean I was that good, but I just never got into any big trouble that I can remember.

P: What do you remember about the Junior College there?

E: The Junior College was right downtown in those days. They had fraternities, what they called fraternities, not national fraternities, obviously.

P: But they did have fraternities. Social fraternities?

E: Yes. They had four men=s fraternities and four sororities, with Greek names, of course.

P: Were they national fraternities?

E: No, they weren=t. In fact, the one I belonged to was called Skyros. But it formed some awful good friendships, and it was a valuable thing socially. I remember, one day, the girl I was dating, I asked her to have lunch with me, and I got her into this Model-T. It was open, no top on it. I got her into the Model-T, and I drove across the street to a sandwich shop that was over there, drove right up on the sidewalk and parked. We were sitting there eating our lunch, and a cop came along and arrested me for driving on the sidewalk. I had to go to court, and when I got to court, I think every student in Junior College was there in that courtroom. The judge dismissed the case. We weren=t doing anything bad. We were just sitting there. But I think I learned more about how to get along with people in Junior College than anything else. I have stayed close to it. I=m on the Board of Trustees of the Foundation. As I said, now it=s St. Petersburg College. It=s a four-year school now. There=s a scholarship in my mother=s name there that we started when she passed away. So, we stayed pretty close to it. It has grown, now, to where it is fairly substantial.

P: Were you in college when Pearl Harbor [happened]?

E: Yes. I was here.

P: You had already come to Gainesville.

E: I came here and started school in September, 1941. Nobody had a car in those days here. That laundry wagon, I could date anybody I wanted to in High Springs or Newberry or anyplace. I had a date that Sunday afternoon with a gal from High Springs. We were parked out in the woods with a radio on listening to this beautiful music, and all a sudden it came across that the Japs had bombed Pearl Harbor. It=s amazing how things like that affect you. I took her home just as fast as I could and drove back home and got my roommate, who hadn=t heard it B we lived in a rooming house on what was then West Union Street B got him and told him what had happened, and we went down and slept on the post office steps, when the post office was downtown there, where there=s a theater there now [the Hippodrome Theater]. We slept on the post office steps so we could enlist the next morning. I mean, that=s how that affected us.

P: Without any consultation with your family or anything.

E: Nothing.

P: What gripped you so? I mean, how did patriotism take over your life like that?

E: I don=t really know, but I do know that=s what happened [for] both of us, and we weren=t alone. Everybody felt that way.

P: I know. There was a great avalanche of enthusiasm for it, because I was here, too.

E: What happened, of course, was that we were accepted, enlisted in the Navy. I wanted to be a pilot, so we enlisted in the Navy. But they said, we have no place to send you. Where are you going to send three million men overnight? They said, go back and finish this year at college. This was the end of the semester, so I stayed for the second semester.

P: Before you get into that, I want to get you to the University of Florida. You came in September of 1941. Had you applied to any other institutions, any other universities?

E: Other than trying to get scholarships.

P: Were you able to get a scholarship here?

E: No.

P: You came, then, in September, without much money and with great hopes, but you did have a job as an usher, so you had that in your back pocket to back you up.

E: Yes.

P: You did not need an NYA [National Youth Administration] job or anything like that.

E: No.

P: Where did you live?

E: A rooming house on West Union. I don't know what the name of that street is now, but it's the first street south of West University. We only lived a block east of 13th Street, so it was very close to campus.

P: But you had to walk back and forth to the campus every day then.

E: Well, yes, or I had this laundry wagon that I could use.

P: And you didn't have any trouble finding a parking place.

E: No. I don't ever remember having any problems.

P: Now, you come here from St. Petersburg in September of 1941 as a green [junior]. What are your plans of study?

E: I went into business.

P: You had to go to the University College first, general college, they called it then.

E: No, I don't think so, because I had already done two years at Junior College.

P: That's right. You're coming here as a junior, so you're past that.

E: When you don't know what else to do at that age, I think I decided to go into business, and then I decided I'd be an accountant. So, that's what I majored in.

P: So, you came right here and you stuck to that, then.

E: Yes. Earl Powers was one of my first instructors in accounting.

P: And Matherly was the dean.

E: Yes. He was dean.

P: I have forgotten where you all went to school, because you didn't have a business college building then.

E: No. We had some classes in what is now Matherly Hall and some classes...

P: In Anderson, right next door. Matherly wasn't built quite yet.

E: Well, what was the administration building in those days?

P: The administration building was Anderson, and the president had his office down in one corner of it on the first floor, and the registrar's office was in that building. Business used the second floor for a lot of its classes. Of course, the student body, as you and I remember it, was much smaller than it is today.

E: 3,500.

P: Well, it was not even quite that large. On the eve of World War II, it was about 3,200, so it wasn't very far off the mark. But that still made it one of the largest universities in the South.

E: Is that right? One thing I remember is that when we wanted to go home, which wasn't very often, you just put on what they called a rat cap and stood out there and thumbed your ride.

P: And stood on the corner.

E: And anybody would pick you up.

P: They weren't afraid to pick you up in those days.

E: No. In fact, they enjoyed it, it looked like.

P: That's right. They had a chance to chat. And you kept hoping that the car would come along and stop and pick you up.

E: That's right. And I don't ever remember failing. Any time I did it, I always got a ride.

P: Who do you remember, some of your early teachers on the campus?

E: I am trying to think of a fellow who taught economics. He was very well-educated, very well-spoken, and he had a reputation for being very sarcastic.

P: Moby Dick Anderson.

E: No. I think his name started with a B, for some reason. I wish I could think of it, but I do remember him. He was a good instructor.

P: When I came here in 1937, I had a job where I worked for John McFerrin, who was in economics.

E: I remember that name. Who taught money and banking, can you remember?

P: No.

E: I can't either, but I do remember the course. Like I said, I think that's what happens when you don't know what else to do.

P: You really didn't have much chance to test yourself. Were you able to enlist?

E: Oh, yes, they took us in June of 1942, at the end of that year.

P: But did you enlist that morning after Pearl Harbor?

E: Yes, we enlisted.

P: Boy, I bet that was a shock when your mother learned about it.

E: Yes, but I don't recall. I think they both realized that, one way or another, you would wind up in the service anyway, and at least I had a chance to get into the branch that I wanted to get into, which was the Navy, because I wanted to be a pilot and I thought, a Navy pilot, that looked like the thing to do to me.

P: And they had those fancy white uniforms.

E: Yes. But what I didn't realize was that they sent us to what they called pre-flight school in June of 1942. That was at the University of Georgia. It was nothing but physical athletic training. I was wrestling, football in full equipment in the summertime, and long hikes. Their theory was that if you were a pilot and in the Navy, you were going to get shot down over the water or over a jungle. So, most of it was learning to survive and hand-[to-hand] combat and that sort of thing.

P: Survival training.

E: Yes.

P: When did you leave the university, then?

E: We formed a Flying Gator Squadron. I can't remember a lot of the people who were in it, but you probably remember Buster Hancock. Buster Hancock [he was later the head of Blue Cross, Blue Shield of Florida] was in that squadron. There were probably twenty-five of us, I would say, and we all went to pre-flight at Georgia together.

P: But did you leave Gainesville, then, immediately after enlisting?

E: No. See, we enlisted right after Pearl Harbor, and they didn't take us until June.

P: So, you were here until June of 1942, then.

E: Right, the end of that semester.

P: You weren't in uniform, though, were you?

E: No.

P: But you went to regular classes, just like all the other students?

E: Right.

P: Just waiting for the word to come through.

E: I think they had no place to put us. It took a little while to work that out.

P: Then, your first call was to the University of Georgia campus. You lived in the dormitories there?

E: Lived in a girls' dormitory. I will never forget that.

P: That was good survival training.

E: The other thing I didn't realize, I didn't even know it, Jane was there. She went to Georgia for a year or two.

P: But you didn't know Jane at Georgia.

E: I knew her, but I didn't realize she was there. She wouldn't have dated me anyway, so I never had a date with her. I did run into her occasionally there. The fact that we were in a girls= dormitory just really...

P: Threw you.

E: Yes. We didn't know how to handle that.

P: So, from Georgia where did you go?

E: Went to New Orleans for primary flight training. That=s where you fly those yellow bi-planes, they call them yellow Perils. They are either Stearmans or N3Ns. That=s where you learn to fly. I never will forget the instructor the first day. Again, they thought, I think, that they had to be as rough on you as they could be, because you were going to fly over the water in the jungles and all that sort of thing. I never will forget, he humiliated me so badly the first day. We go out and he says, now, Cadet Emerson, this is a tail, and he moves the horizontal stabilizer of this plane, and he walked around and he said, now, this is a wing, and he walked around to the front, and this is a propeller. By the time I got into the cockpit, I was so humiliated, I didn't know which end was up. Of course, it was an open cockpit, you sit behind him, and the only communication is what they call a gosport. You both wore helmets, and there was rubber tubing that ran from his mouthpiece back into your earpieces. You couldn't talk to him, but he could talk to you. He could break your eardrums. On the first flight, he just wrings that plane out.

P: This was in New Orleans.

E: Yes. Right on Lake Pontchartrain, they had made a circular apron. They didn't have any runways, but these planes landed in such a short distance anyway. So, that=s where we learned to fly. First flight up, they would just wring you out. They did loops and snap rolls and everything else you can think of, trying to make you sick. They did their best to wash you out, because they figured you had to be pretty tough to survive.

P: You had to be super good.

E: Yes.

P: But you passed the test, obviously.

E: Yes. New Orleans was not all bad. I will have such fond memories. We had liberty every weekend, and the French Quarter was right there, and the naval cadet uniforms looked almost like officers= uniforms. They were navy blue with brass buttons and one star on

the sleeve here, no bars or anything, of course, and you had a cap with a bill.

P: You were really snazzy-looking.

E: Oh, yes. Those people in the French Quarter couldn't do enough for us. They loved servicemen, and we kind of looked like officers. I mean, they rolled out the red carpet for us. So, I remember those three months very pleasantly.

P: You have fond memories of New Orleans.

E: Yes, sir.

P: From there, you went where?

E: Pensacola. You went there for, you had passed this primary training, so now you went into what they called service aircraft. These things were just very slow bi-planes. We went to Vultees, for example, or SNJs, which were both much higher-powered. The Vultee did not have retractable landing gear, but it did have flaps. The SNJ had both. You learned to fly what they called service-type aircraft. Then you got a chance to apply for what kind of final flying you wanted to do. When you got to final squadron, you could apply for the Marine Corps. All I could think of was, we had to get over there and fight those Japs. I applied for the Marine Corps and was accepted, and I got in multi-engine, because we had heard that if you were in multi-engine in the Marine Corps, you'd wind up flying P-38s or A-20s. We had heard that you could rupture the diaphragm in the air-speed indicator in a P-38 in a dive. That was the hottest thing around, so that's what we had to have. By the way, I should have told you that in New Orleans, I broke my collarbone playing touch football. A parachute strap just about killed me going across that bump in the bone, but what I was really going to tell you was, I got behind the Flying Gator Squadron and I no more was with them, so I was with other people from then on.

We got to Cherry Point, [North Carolina] where what they call operational training in service-type aircraft was to take place. Here we thought we were going to have P-38s or A-20s, and here is this bunch of B-25s parked there. You never saw such a disappointed bunch of guys in your life. This wasn't really a fast airplane, and we didn't really want bombers anyway. Anyhow, we had to go through operational training there. Then, on top of everything else, they kept two of us for instructors= duty. That was the last thing in the world we wanted. So, we went up to see the commanding officer, Colonel Day, who had been an officer with American Airlines. We said, Colonel, we joined the Marine Corps to fight, not to have instructors= duty. He had these big bushy eyebrows, and they started just going up and down like that, and he said, goddammit, in the Marine Corps, you do what you're told, not what you want to do; besides that, this is worse than getting shot at, these guys are trying to kill you every minute, which was true. That was good, in that it kept me in the country for a while longer, and Jane and I were

able to get married during that period.

P: Before that, where and when did you go overseas?

E: I went overseas after we were married. Let me go back a minute to Pensacola.

P: Okay, go ahead. I don't want to lose out on the chronology here.

E: Right. When I finished flight training in Pensacola, the day I got my wings and my commission and they pinned the gold bars on me and the gold wings, I had been upstairs to the uniform shop on Palafox Street. I am coming down the stairs, big, steep stairs, and I walk out into this bright sunshine, and there is Jane walking by on the sidewalk. We had never dated.

P: But you knew each other.

E: We knew each other slightly. She was two years behind me in high school. But she had on the most beautiful lavender organdy dress I've ever seen. The sun was shining so brightly, and she just looked beautiful. So, we struck up a conversation. I wouldn't have thought of asking her for a date. I was going home to get married.

P: Married to whom?

E: Not Jane.

P: I know not Jane. You're meeting Jane on the street. But you had another fiancé.

E: Yes. I had given a ring to this girl in St. Pete. Jane was coming home from Georgia for summer, and she had her record-player and all her stuff with her. And she was coming there to see the guy she was engaged to, get his wings.

P: My God, this is a mixed-up situation.

E: I am telling you, the way fate works, if there had been ten seconds difference when she passed by, we would have never gotten married. It was just that she happened to be right there.

P: Fate handled you just right.

E: I know. I said, well, how are you getting all this stuff home? She had come there on a train. She said, I'm going on a train. I said, I don't think there is any train from Pensacola to St. Pete, and there wasn't. I said, I'm going on a bus, and if you want to go on the same bus, I will help you with this stuff. Well, it was a twenty-four trip from

Pensacola to St. Pete, and by the time we got there, we both decided we were making a mistake. She broke her engagement, and I got my ring [back].

P: She left her fiancé, and you left yours. Boy, you are a fast operator, Bill.

E: It was pure fate, that=s all. We didn=t get married for....

P: But you were married when you went overseas, then.

E: Yes. [By the way, during the war Jane worked for the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, drafting aerial maps which I, unknowingly was using in flight. I told her later that=s why I kept getting lost.]

P: Where did you go?

E: To the Pacific. I was shipping out from Miramar, California. Jane was pregnant by this time, and we thought we=d never see each other again, so she insisted on going out there with me. I had a 1941 Plymouth business coupe with four recapped tires on it. Her folks were very understanding. I didn=t think they would let her go. I didn=t want her to go. I wanted her to, but I didn=t want her to. But her folks, I think, felt the same way, that we might never see each other again, so they agreed. So, we started out. I put a double bed mattress in the trunk. The trunk to that business coup was so big, I could put a double bed mattress in there without folding it even. There weren=t many motels.

P: And your luggage inside the car.

E: Yes. We had our first blow-out about the time we got to Houston, I think, and managed to get recapped tires there. No, I take it back. They were synthetic rubber. That was just coming in. We didn=t have any rubber. The Japs had it all. So, I got two synthetic rubber tires there, and we kept going. It was so hot. This was in...

P: No air conditioning.

E: No. No air conditioning. This thing started overheating. We got into Texas, and we started driving at night and stopping in the daytime if we could find a motel. There weren=t many. I bet I shooed sheep aside and dipped water out of those sheep troughs all the way across Texas and Arizona, because this thing kept overheating. But we finally got to La Jolla, and Miramar is right near La Jolla. That was a staging area. We didn=t know how long I=d be there, so that=s another reason she wanted to go. We must have been there about three months maybe. I got orders to go and her dad said he=d come out and bring her back. I think he wanted the car worse than he wanted Jane, but he started out flying out there. He got to Dallas and they get kicked him off the airplane. He got on a train not very far and they kicked him off that. Then he got on a bus and when he got to

El Centro they kicked him off the bus and he hitchhiked the rest of the way from El Centro to La Jolla. But he drove Jane back home in the car.

P: So she got back safely. Now where were you headed?

E: I didn't know, just out overseas.

P: Orders to move.

E: Well, I knew which squadron I was supposed to join, but I didn't know for sure where they [would] be by the time we got there. So we were anti-shipping, we flew at night. You know the B-25 is a twin-engine, twin-tail [bomber]. They took all the bomb racks out of the bomb bay and filled them up with gas tanks, and they took all the machine-guns off, except for one in the tail and hung three Tiny Tim rockets under each wing. We took off at dusk and flew at 500 feet over the ocean, looking for enemy shipping. If we got an indication on the radar, we flew over it. We had a thing called I.F.F., Identification Friend or Foe, and if that came back as a friendly vessel, we kept going. If it was not a friendly vessel, we made a timed turn and the radar and automatic pilot released the rockets at the right time and a huge parachute-flare in the tail, so a camera back there could take a picture of your hit if you had one [because it was so bright], and also blind the gunners so they couldn't see to shoot at you. So that's what we did. When the war was over, we were on Okinawa, and we had never stopped long enough to open up our post exchange. So when we did, they found that everything that was any value for trading was gone.

Our commanding officer, in the meantime, had been transferred to MacArthur's staff in Tokyo. Our new commanding officer decided that this was a situation that needed to be investigated, so he appointed a three-man investigating board to go up and investigate our former commanding officer. I'm a first lieutenant, I'm a senior member of this three-man board, so we fly a B-25 to Yokosuka, which was a Japanese cadet training-base right near Tokyo. Of course, he knew we were coming and he knew why we were coming, so he says, now, fellows, I'll cooperate any way I can, but in the meantime, my jeep is at your disposal. So we took that jeep and drove all over. We never did investigate him and we saw some fascinating things. We got out in the countryside, for example, and we're going down a real steep valley and the hillsides are just honeycombed with caves. These caves had all kinds of things in them, war materials. One I never will forget was just full of rubber in every form that you could imagine, and we didn't have any, if you remember. One was full of navigation instruments. One was full of huge blue silk forty-eight foot cargo parachutes. I got home with one of those and it was enough silk to keep Jane in silk for two years. These things were made [by the] cottage industry. They were made little panels at a time and brought together in a central place and sewed together into the cargo chute. But they were forty-eight foot chutes. I had made up my mind that I was going to bring Jane a kimono home from there, from

Tokyo. There was nothing standing in Tokyo except the emperor=s palace, everything else was pretty much flattened. We found a place that looked like it was still kind of intact and might be a store. So we went in and didn=t speak any Japanese and the owner of the store didn=t speak any English. I finally made him understand, I thought, what I was looking for. I had armed myself with bars of soap and cigarettes and things like that to trade. So he brings out this girl with a kimono that I didn=t like that much, so he sent her back and brought out another one. This one I did like and we made a deal, I think it was two bars of soap maybe, and then I found out I hadn=t just bought the kimono, I had bought the girl. I had a terrible time getting that kimono off her, but I got home with it all right.

P: Bill, when did you go overseas? What date?

E: Just before the war was over. 1945.

P: The war was over in 1945.

E: I must have gone in the early part of 1945.

P: Where were you when the war ended?

E: Okinawa.

P: Do you remember the celebration?

E: Oh, yeah.

P: Big-time?

E: Yeah, big celebration.

P: Had the news come in over the wires?

E: Yeah. Let me go back just a little bit before that. It took about three weeks for our mail to get to us, and Buck, our first child, was born three weeks early, so I got the letter on the day I thought he was going to be born. You never saw such a party in your life. We had a great celebration when he was born. We didn=t have very much to celebrate with and I didn=t have any cigars to pass out, of course, so I managed to borrow one of those amphibious vessels. We were on a place called Chimu Wan, wan means bay, [and] our one-strip runway base was on the shores of this bay. We had surplus shoes, so I loaded the thing up with shoes and we went out to find this merchant marine ship that had cigars and we traded all these shoes for cigars, all the cigars I wanted.

P: So you had something to celebrate with.

E: Yes. Then, when the Marine Corps birthday party came up, Marine Corps birthday is on November 10. By the way, every [pilot] has another [collateral] duty with the squadron. My co-pilot, for example, was [the] squadron sanitation officer. I was [the] squadron wine mess officer. We got to thinking we ought to have some kind of a party to celebrate the Marine Corps birthday, and see, that=s only a month after Buck would have been born on October 5. So we decided we had to have another party, but we said, how you going to have a party without any women? We remembered that wing headquarters had a hospital at Awassi, which is about twenty miles down the road on Okinawa. So I got a jeep, went down there, and persuaded about twenty of these nurses that we were going to have a great party.

P: You probably didn=t have to persuade too...

E: No, they were perfectly willing to come. So they showed up.

[End Tape A, Side 1.]

E: I said, what are we going to do about bathroom facilities for these women, we don=t have any place for them. Well, our facilities consisted of, on one side of the Quonset hut [which was the officers= mess], there were three fifty-five-gallon drums buried in the ground, with a three-inch pipe that came up like that, you just walked up to the pipe, and on the other side were three more. So my copilot, being [the] sanitation officer, said, let=s just bring three of those funnels off the flight line that we put oil in the engines with, they=re kind of oval-shaped, and on that side will be the ladies room and on this side will be the men=s room. So we put those funnels in those three-inch pipes and they were fine.

P: Very ingenious. So you didn=t get injured at all?

E: No. I never did worry about getting shot at, [but] I worried about finding that island the next morning. You know, you fly all night on all these different headings and I worried about getting lost, but I didn=t worry about getting shot at and never did get shot at.

P: So you=re there on Okinawa on V-J Day. You=re getting ready, now, to come back home?

E: Well, not really. There were a lot of people there that had [more] points [meaning, longer service overseas, which meant they had first-priority for going home].

- P: I know, but you were there from the very beginning.
- E: No, no, I got there towards the end of the war. These guys had been there longer than I had. The point I'm making is that you went home based on the points you had.
- P: Yes, I remember that.
- E: Well, I didn't have as many points as most of these other guys, but one day, I've got [the] duty, I'm at the gate to the camp, and the field telephone rings and the sergeant says, it's for you. He hands me the phone and this voice says, Athis is Sergeant So-and-So at Wing Headquarters in Awassi, you've got orders to go home tomorrow morning at 0630.@ Well, nobody else had orders to go home, so I said, that's a great joke, and hung up. About a minute later, the phone rings again and this [gruff] voice says, Athis is Colonel So-and-So, you better have your ass down here at 0630 in the morning.@ So nobody believed it, but two friends of mine drove me down there in the jeep and I had my seabag.
- P: You were ready.
- E: Yeah. We get down there and there's a Lockheed Lodestar parked there, converted to [passenger] use. It's navy, and there's nobody on it but naval officers, and nobody under lieutenant commander. Here I am a [captain] in the Marine Corps.
- P: I was going to ask you what your rank was by this time.
- E: They looked at me like I [had] leprosy, but I get on and we fly to Pearl Harbor. This is early December and I'm thinking I might even get home in time for Christmas.
- P: Well, the war was over in September, so it's pretty nearly after it.
- E: So we get to Pearl Harbor and I think, oh, I'll be here for three or four months. They put us in a BOQ [Bachelor's Officer Quarters]. Well we weren't there more than a week and got orders to go home, to report aboard the *U.S.S. Texas*. Well, the *Texas* had more famous people and brass on it than any other. That's what it was famous for. So I'm walking up the gangplank with my seabag over my shoulder and there's a sailor sitting up there at this table. By that time, I'd been promoted to Captain Emerson. He says, oh Captain Emerson, you're in the admiral's cabin.
- P: He said Captain Emerson?
- E: Yeah, Marine Corps captain, of course, just two bars. But he says, you're in the

admiral=s cabin, and by now I=m willing to believe anything. He takes my seabag and we walk over to the starboard side of the ship and there=s this big brass plate that says admiral=s cabin. We walk in, I don=t know what I was expecting, but there were sixty-four bunks slung in there four-deep, so then I came back to reality. We got to San Diego.

P: No mishaps on the way home?

E: We lost one engine on the way and they took about an hour to decide whether to turn around and go back, which was the end of the world if they did that, or to go on. They were about halfway, so they decided to go on, but it took longer. But we got to San Diego, I would guess, about December 15. I=m thinking I could get home in time for Christmas [and] this baby I haven=t seen. They said they brought 9,000 men into San Diego that day, so you couldn=t get out of there. You couldn=t get on a train, or a bus, or an airplane, or anything. So four of us hired a taxi to Dallas.

P: Oh, my gosh.

E: The deal was, we=d pay him, I=ve forgotten what we paid him, but we=d also give him all our gasoline stamps and all our tire coupons and take turns driving. So we never stopped for anything but gasoline all the way to Dallas. In Dallas, I managed to get on an airplane for Atlanta and finally got home.

P: You finally got home in time for Christmas.

E: Yep. The airport was on Davis Island in [Tampa] in those days.

P: In the meanwhile, you had notified Jane you were en route.

E: Yep, and she met me. The plane landed about two o=clock in the morning. She drove across Gandy Bridge, [she wouldn=t] let her dad come with her with this baby, and the baby=s two months old.

P: The baby looked up and said, who are you?

E: That=s about right. It was quite a homecoming.

P: So you went home then and you got home in time for Christmas 1945.

E: Right.

P: Now you got to start your civilian life again. So you pretty well had made up your mind you were coming back to the University of Florida?

E: See, that was the thing that was so hard to decide, because with flight-pay, flight-pay was 50 percent of your base-pay, in 1945, I was making about \$500 a month.

P: That=s a lot of money.

E: I had two fogeys, that=s the length of service, and I had base-pay and flight-pay. So I was making close to \$500 a month. They told us that we had the opportunity to stay in or get out. If we stayed in, they would make our reserve-commissions permanent, and that was very attractive. Here [I was with] a year of college to finish and a baby and no money. To give up a \$500 salary and the officer=s club and the golf course and go back...

P: To the G.I. Bill.

E: Yes. That=s the toughest decision I ever made, but I=m sure glad I did. So, yes, I had to start over, but as soon as I got home, I got to thinking, I got to finish that college deal. I managed to get into second semester, which started in January.

P: So you made up your mind pretty quickly that you weren=t going to stay in service and that you were going to come back and finish up your degree.

E: Yep.

P: Who persuaded you to do that? Jane?

E: [She was totally in favor of it.]

P: That was a big sacrifice in terms of income.

E: Yep. Of course I couldn=t have done that if it hadn=t been for the G.I. Bill. I realize that I would be able to get through college with the G.I. Bill, but I didn=t realize how quickly it would happen. I think I came up here on January 6, if I remember, to go to college.

P: So you were only home a couple of weeks.

E: Yes, not even that long.

P: Was Flavet [on-campus veteran=s housing] already open?

E: We were the first ones in it.

P: It was already under construction?

- E: Yes, it was open. The first one, the one-story one. You remember that one?
- P: Was it the one close to Thirteenth Street where Beatty Towers is now?
- E: It was a lot closer to Thirteenth Street than any of the others, but it was really close to what=s now North-South Drive.
- P: Okay, that was where the journalism building is now, back to Reitz. I remember that one, yeah.
- E: I think the sewage plant is there.
- P: Yeah. So that=s where you lived, that=s where the Flavet was.
- E: I saw something in the paper in St. Pete right after we got there that said something about Flavet Village, and I called up here and they said, yeah, we=ll take you. I think the rent was something like \$21 a month and you had to be [a veteran,] married and have at least one child to get in.
- P: So you=re coming here with a wife and a baby.
- E: Yes, but that=s what made it possible was Flavet Village.
- P: You only had one more year before graduation, right?
- E: Right.
- P: So you came in 1946 and graduated in 1947?
- E: No, I went right straight through summer school, both sessions, and graduated in September 1946.
- P: So you really weren=t here long after the war.
- E: No, nine months.
- P: Now you were the first ones in Flavet?
- E: Yep, Flavet 1. The rest of them were two-story, if you remember.
- P: I remember that, yeah.

E: But let me tell you an interesting thing that happened in Flavel Village. It was brand-new, I think it was the first one in the country was what I always thought.

P: It may have been, I don't know. You know, George Baughman was the one responsible for bringing all those structures in.

E: No, I didn't know that. I wish I had known that.

P: He was the vice-president working in Decline Gram, remember because Gram was still living and he was the business manager. They didn't have vice-presidents in those days.

E: Oh, I didn't realize that.

P: So go ahead.

E: As I say, you had to have at least one baby. We had a place that was a living-room and a bedroom and a kitchen and a bathroom and that was it. There wasn't a refrigerator, it was an icebox. We lived on the circle part. You remember there was a block and then there was a circle? We lived on the circle. Jane's mother had given her some real pretty frilly curtains and she had put them up. There was a little picture-window in that living room and she had put those curtains up. [UF President John J.] Tigert's got a general in his car and he wants to show what the university is doing with these barracks. When he drives by, he sees this pretty little window and he decides that's what he has to show him. Jane doesn't know he's there [and] I'm in class. So he knocks on the door and there she is, and here's the president of the university and a general. Fortunately the place was clean. Tigert liked what he saw and from then on her life was pure misery, because she never knew when he was going to show up with another visitor.

P: That was Tigert's last year, by the way, as president.

E: He must have come a dozen times anyway.

P: You had the showplace at Flavel.

E: But that's the only thing that made it possible was getting into Flavel.

P: And Flavel quickly filled up with other families moving in, but for a little bit y'all were all alone.

E: Yeah, not very long though. There were so many kids there, because everybody had to

have at least one child.

P: But your child was really just an infant.

E: Just a baby, yeah.

P: So you took the courses that you needed and you went through summer school and you graduated at the end of summer school, whenever that was in those years.

E: The first part of September, I think, with a BSBA.

P: Were you all dressed up in a cap and gown when you got your degree?

E: Yeah, I think so. I don't remember that really very much.

P: You were, they had all those things right from the very beginning. So then you leave Gainesville with fond memories and you go back to St. Petersburg?

E: Yes.

P: Did you already have something lined up in the way of a job?

E: No. I don't know how it is now, but, in accounting, you have to work for a year before you can sit for the exam, and I couldn't get a job. Believe it or not, I couldn't get a job in accounting.

P: Even as a veteran.

E: Right. I had to work for a year before I could sit for the exam and become a CPA [Certified Public Accountant].

P: And become an accountant then.

E: I wound up working for what was then First Federal Savings and Loan as a teller. That was [Raleigh Green's father and] Lee Green's grandfather that ran that. They only had two tellers. I worked there for \$30 a week. I was there about three months and I heard about the Merrill-Lynch training school, which they had just started. I will always believe that Merrill-Lynch started this training school to pay something back to the men that had been in the service. Here's the cradle of the free-enterprise system [and] you had to be married and have at least one child [and be a veteran] in order to get in this thing. Your starting salary depended on how many dependents you had and how many years you were in the service. So I started to work for Merrill-Lynch in their training school, class

five.

P: Now when did you go to work for Merrill-Lynch?

E: 1947.

P: 1947. The beginning of the year?

E: January.

P: So you worked for the banking...

E: Just a few months.

P: How much did Merrill-Lynch pay you?

E: \$260 a month. There wasn't much choice there. By that time I was making, I think, \$45 a week, but I went from that to \$260 [a month].

P: But you were doing pretty well. The salary with Merrill-Lynch was a big salary at that time, wasn't it?

E: Yes, it wasn't bad. But it was six months in New York.

P: It wasn't in St. Petersburg? You had to move to New York?

E: Well, I had to go. We didn't have the money for Jane to go. We all are alone, maybe fifty guys in my class.

P: How long were you in New York?

E: Six months. We lived in the old Henry Hudson Hotel and went to class all day long. But we were all in the same boat again, all of us had families at home.

P: You ate your meals in the hotel?

E: Yeah, well, some of them. You ate wherever you wanted to pretty much. I did get Jane up for Easter.

P: Where were the classes, on Wall Street?

E: Wall Street. Well, we were at 70 Pine Street, which is a block off of Wall Street. That's where the classes were.

P: So you could walk back and forth?

E: Yeah. [I] rode the subway to work.

P: As I remember, the subway in those years was a nickel.

E: A nickel, exactly. [laughing.]

P: [laughing.] Life has changed.

E: It sure has. But, as I say, I think Merrill-Lynch tried to fulfill what they considered an obligation to the people that had been in the service. I got an automatic ten-percent raise when I finished the training school, a \$26 raise. So we were all right.

P: Now let me understand this. Merrill-Lynch is paying you while you=re going through this training program, this six months training, but you=re hired by Merrill-Lynch?

E: Right, [it was Merrill Lynch=s training school.] You have to be hired by the local office manager in those days, but he had told me he did not want me back there. He said, I=ve already got five account executives [and] I don=t need anymore. So I had made up my mind I=d never get back to St. Pete, but it still looked like the best thing for us to do. By the way, Jane=s mother and dad had a two-story apartment house and she was living there with them, so I knew she was all right. I didn=t have any qualms about leaving her alone. About halfway through the training-school, the firm decided that they wanted at least one trainee in every office, so they let us name our first, second, and third choices. Of course, I named St. Pete first and there wasn=t a trainee there, so they sent me back. He didn=t want me, but they sent me back. It made it tough.

P: He already had five, but you were number six.

E: It was a chalkboard, and girls in shorts marking prices.

P: Well, when you finish these six months, you=re still not ready for the exam yet, are you?

E: Oh, yes. Not the CPA of course, [but] you had to pass the New York Stock Exchange exam before you could graduate from the training school. So I=d already done that.

P: Bill, let me veer just a minute. What=s the history of Merrill-Lynch?

E: It has roots in firms of other names, but Charlie Merrill started this firm in about 1926.

P: After World War I.

E: He talked a guy named Edmund Lynch into going into business with him. They were mainly underwriters. Their first underwriting, I think, was Safeway Stores, for example. [It was] mainly chains. They underwrote S.H. Kress at one time, and Kresge=s, mainly retail stores. But it started out Gwathmey and Company, they are the forerunners, and they were in Philadelphia. There was nothing very big, but those were the roots. Then they merged with Fenner and Beane, which was based in New Orleans. Alf Beane, Jr. was running the training school when I got in it. One of the most impressive things that=s ever happened to me is, he walks in where we are the morning we reported for work on 70 Pine Street on the tenth floor, and there=s maybe fifty of us sitting around this room, he walks in and walks over and shakes hands and calls each one of us by name. He had studied the pictures.

P: Impressive.

E: Boy, I never forgot that. Another interesting thing. The guy who wound up manager of our Dallas office [told me that,] when he got in the service, that was the first pair of shoes he=d ever worn. He winds up in Europe in a platoon that has both Alf Beane and Harold Goodbody as officers, second lieutenants. Goodbody and Company, you remember them.

P: Yeah.

E: But here these guys [are], the war winds down, and they=re asking each other what they=re going to do. Of course they=re coming back to their firms, they know what they=re going to do, but they ask this fellow what he=s going to do. He says, I don=t know, I guess I=ll go back to the farm. They both offered him jobs and he decided to go with Alf Beane, so he wound up with Fenner and Beane. You remember that Beane got in trouble and Goodbody got in trouble. When this friend of mine died, he was worth more than both of them, who had been the officers that he reported to in Europe. I thought that was kind of interesting. But when I started in 1947, a million shares a day was a real rarity.

P: Was it a big-time operation by then? Merrill-Lynch.

E: It was big-time by comparison, but not by today=s standards.

P: But it was a multi-million dollar operation then, wasn=t it?

E: Yes.

P: All over the United States?

E: Yes, pretty much. We probably had, I would guess, maybe one hundred offices.

P: None of them out of the country.

E: I don=t believe so. I don=t think there was [except Havana].

P: How long did you stay in the St. Petersburg office?

E: Until 1968.

P: As an accountant?

E: As an account executive. They used to call them customer=s men, and then we started calling ours account executives.

P: So you go to work for them when again? What year?

E: In 1947.

P: And you work there in St. Petersburg until 1968.

E: I became manager of the office, and that=s another thing that very seldom happened. They had what they called a management training-school, and they never put you back in the same office you were in. That=s a difficult situation, [because] you go from a [peer] status to being the boss in the office. But our manager got sick and died. While he was sick, they made me the interim manager, and when he died, they made me manager of the office.

P: What happened to the guy that said, I don=t want you, I=ve already got five.

E: He left, he retired.

P: I was wondering if he stayed on and had become an irritant or something.

E: No, no, but he didn=t want me, I=ll tell you [that].

P: How much were they paying you at Merrill-Lynch when you came to work again?

E: Well, I got a \$26 raise, so I was making \$286 bucks [per month] when I started.

P: When you left, what was your salary, in 1968? I=m sure it increased slightly.

E: Yeah, a little bit. I want to say \$65,000, but I'm not sure.

P: That was big-time.

E: Well, I left before the big stuff started.

P: So you move up in Merrill-Lynch in the St. Petersburg office. You're really running the show there, aren't you?

E: Right. As I say, the manager, when he died, they made me the manager. One of the things that I remember the most about those years is that Castro, what year did Castro take over? Can you remember?

P: About 1957 or 1958.

E: Okay. I had just been made manager of the office when Castro took over. We had only six officers in the whole state of Florida, but we had an office in Havana, Cuba.

P: So you were out of the country.

E: Well, [we had to close our office] in Havana. But I had just become manager of the [St. Petersburg] office, we didn't have an office in Tampa, and all of a sudden, there'd be Cubans in Ybor City in Tampa. They'd have relatives in Ybor City, [and] they'd escape from Cuba and come to where their relatives were. They were not broke people at that time, but they were, after Castro came in. So they would have mailed their stock certificates out, cut into three or four pieces, so the whole name wouldn't appear on any [one] piece. Here these people would show up in my office, not speaking any English and they'd have maybe three pieces of a stock certificate, and most of the time it was International Telephone, IT&T, printed in Spanish. I don't read Spanish [and] I don't speak Spanish, but they have their relatives from Ybor City with them and so we can communicate. They're broke [and] they need to sell this stock and get this money. Well, here's a stock certificate [and] I have no idea whether it'll clear transfer, so the transfer agent for IT&T [and I] got to where we knew each other on the telephone. He'd say, what [have] you got this time? I'd say, I've got a certificate that's cut in three pieces, but when I put it together, it has this name [and] this certificate number, will it transfer? He'd put me on hold for a minute and he'd come back and say, yeah, we'll transfer that one. So I'd sell those people's stock and give them their money. It just made you feel good. I bet that happened a dozen times.

P: Sure, you didn't need to know Spanish, you had an interpreter.

- E: That=s right. But what I was going to tell you is that they cut the wires, and all our orders went by wire in those days. So, I=d get a call from our manager in Havana [and] he=d say, will you enter this order for me, and I=d enter his order by telephone. You didn=t use long- distance telephone in those days. He got out of Cuba with nothing but the clothes on his back and went to Spain and ran our Madrid office. We called him Ken Crosby. He lives in Washington now. [He=s a] great guy.
- P: Bill, I have that you begin managing the office in 1959-1968. Is that date right, and if so, what did you do until 1958?
- E: I was just an account executive. In other words, I sold securities like everybody else.
- P: Until the guy dies and they move you into that position.
- E: What made that particularly difficult, as I say, is that you went from a peer position to being the boss of these guys. Your customers still see you there, [but] a manager couldn=t have any customers. Here your customers can=t figure out why you can=t handle their account still [when] you=re sitting there in the office, but you had to transfer it to somebody else. That was kind of difficult, but it worked out all right.
- P: Now you=re sitting in the office and people are coming to you. You don=t go out promoting, selling, [or] that sort of thing.
- E: Not after I became manager, but I did a lot of that when I was an account executive. We used to call it cold-calling. That was really what you had to do.
- P: To build up some clients.
- E: Yeah. See, with the volume running less than a million shares a day, you can imagine how tough it was to get an order. That=s the reason that I had so much business in Tampa. I realized that we were in the commodity business too. I realized that Tampa was a much more logical spot to prospect than St. Pete was, so I spent most of my prospecting time in Tampa.
- P: So there was an office in St. Pete and one in Tampa also?
- E: None in Tampa, that=s why I went over there.
- P: Did you move the St. Petersburg office?
- E: No, I just went over there and prospected. I got some awful good accounts, some awful

nice people, and people that really helped me out by introducing me to other people. The thing is, we were in the commodity business too. In fact, the commodity business was a lot more profitable to me than the securities business. Most of my orders in securities, [were odd-lots] with a million-share day, you can imagine. But there were a lot of people that wanted to speculate with commodities, and we could handle anything [that was a] cash commodity, as long as it was in car-load lots. So when the citrus industry first started concentrating orange juice, they wound up with a thing called citrus pulp that they didn't know what to do with.

P: What'd they wind up with? What was that?

E: Citrus pulp. They found out it was an awful good cattle feed, so I sold every car-load of citrus pulp that some of those first companies had.

P: I'm surprised Ben Hill Griffin [Florida citrus magnate] had not already discovered that.

E: I know it. The nice thing about that business was that there was no credit problem, because the seller paid the buyer directly. No credit problems and no payment problems.

P: Well, do we give you credit for that?

E: I didn't start it, no.

P: But you were one of the early pioneers, obviously.

E: Yes. One day, I got a wire from a guy in Wisconsin that he wanted three cars of bagasse. I'd never even heard of it. I didn't want to reveal my ignorance, so I went to the dictionary and found out it's what's left of the sugarcane when they squeeze all the [juice out].

P: I never heard that word before.

E: I know it. Well, you look it up. So I located this bagasse and we had a good commerce in bagasse for awhile.

P: St. Petersburg to Wisconsin.

E: One day, I get a wire from Philadelphia that this guy had, let's say, 10,000 Wisconsin yellow daisies.

P: Yellow daisies?

E: Yes, yellow daisies. He had 10,000 Wisconsin yellow daisies that he wanted to sell. The

mayor of St. Petersburg was a florist, so I went to him and I told him what we had. He said, yeah, if the price is right, I'll buy them. I go back to the office and find out that a Wisconsin yellow daisy is a hoop cheese. So I called him up and I said, Johnny, I'm sorry, but they sold them away from you. [laughing].

P: How large was your staff in St. Petersburg?

E: When I was manager, you mean?

P: Yeah, when you were manager.

E: We had probably twelve account executives and maybe eight other employees.

P: So it'd grown.

E: Oh, yes.

P: What area did it cover? All the Gulf Coast?

E: All the way from Crystal River to [Bonita Springs].

P: Ft. Myers.

E: Yes, and most of the counties inland.

P: By this time, how many operations does Merrill-Lynch have in Florida? A lot.

E: Yes. I don't really know, but I'd say seventy-five. There's as many in Florida now as there were in the whole firm when I first started.

P: Have you ever known the story that the Merrill family started in Jacksonville? So you got that, okay.

E: Yes. It actually started in that little town [called] Green Cove Springs.

P: I know Phillips Highway, which goes through Jacksonville, is named for somebody in the family, or [for somebody] who had something to do with it.

E: This is kind of an interesting thing, I think. When I first got back to St. Pete, when I retired, I had an account with a man in Plant City. The only reason I had that is because St. Pete was the only office on the west coast, so I had maybe eight counties that I could prospect in. I went over and got this man's account, his name was Prosser. I know he

wouldn't mind me telling you this. He'd never owned a share of stock in his life. He had citrus groves and automobile agencies, so I got him to open an account and start buying some securities. When I first came back to St. Pete when I retired, and this is twenty years later, I had been there a week or so and I get a call from this man. He says, do you remember me? I'm Lou Prosser in Plant City. He sounds like he's about, and he was, in his nineties. I said, why sure, I remember you. He says, I hear you're back in St. Pete. I said, yes, and he said, will you take my account back? He said, you made me a millionaire and I'd like you to handle my account. I said, well, I've retired, but let me introduce you to somebody that I have a lot of confidence in here. He'd moved to some other firm, you know. So he says, okay, I'll drive over there and have lunch with you. So he drives all the way from Plant City, here he is in his nineties, [and] brings his wife with him, who's about a third wife, I guess. We have lunch and I introduce him to one of our account executives in St. Pete and he transfers his account to him. So about two or three weeks later, he calls me again and he says, you know, I got a nephew that's got to have a new heart [and] he's on the waiting list at Shands. He says, I know you got a lot of pull up there and he's not going to make it if he don't get this heart pretty quick. He said, do you think you could help? I said, well, Mr. Prosser, I'll sure try. I knew I couldn't, but I said, I'll sure try. As luck would have it, this guy gets a heart and he does fine. So now Prosser calls me again and he says, listen, I want to do something to honor you at the University of Florida, what should I do? I said, now, wait a minute, don't do that, but I said, let's do this. Let's establish an eminent scholar chair in some form of heart research in your name. He said, what's that cost? I said, \$625,000. He said, okay, get the paperwork drawn up. So I called Dave Woodall [and] they got the paperwork all drawn up.

P: In twelve minutes.

E: Well, about. So I called him right back and I said, I got all the paperwork here. He says, bring it over here and I'll sign it. While I was driving from St. Pete to Plant City, he died.

P: Oh, my God.

E: That's how close we came to getting a chair.

P: And his wife wouldn't honor it?

E: She had no interest.

P: She said, no, I want that money. That's an interesting story, though.

E: It=s a true story, Dave Woodall will tell you. When you=re dealing with somebody that old, boy, you better act fast.

P: Amateur=s luck. But obviously that was the only time something like that happened.

E: Oh, by the way, I shouldn=t have left you with that. He said, you made me a millionaire. I said, if you kept all the securities you bought in the late forties and early fifties, you made yourself a millionaire, I didn=t have anything to do with it. Whatever way it did it, it happened, but we lost out. Death took over.

P: In 1968, you go what, to New York?

E: Yes.

P: Let=s stop for just a minute and pick up on the family. I haven=t done any personal stuff. Let=s start with Jane. Who is she?

E: Her maiden name was Stannard.

P: What=s her full name?

E: Jane Stannard Emerson. She didn=t have a middle name.

P: When was she born and where?

E: Born in St. Pete.

P: When?

E: Mound Park Hospital. She was born on January 24, 1923.

P: 1923? She looks good for her age.

E: I know it, thank you. I=ll tell her you said that. [She has been the best partner a man could have].

P: Very good.

E: When I got home from overseas, by the way, Mound Park Hospital, which it was in those days, it=s now called Bayfront, but Mound Park Hospital was having an oldest baby contest. Not many kids were born in the hospital in the early 1920s. So, without telling her, I entered her in this contest, and the prize was a Series-E savings bond, which is

\$18.25. I=ll never forget it. She won, and, I mean, she was ready to kill me. She said, for \$19 bucks you told everybody in town how old I am? Now, it doesn=t make any difference.

P: She really looks wonderful for her age.

E: Thank you, thank you.

P: Tell me about her family.

E: Okay. Her dad=s family was from New York. He was in very poor health [and] Pinellas County was known as a very healthful area in those days.

P: That was the place where old people went and sat on those green benches.

E: That=s right. They told his family he needed to come down here or he wasn=t going to live. He had some sort of respiratory problem. So that=s the reason he came to St. Pete. Her mother was from Pennsylvania. He wound up a good bit like my father in the sense that he lost everything he had in the land boom and never was able to recover from it. He was one of the nicest guys I=ve ever seen and one of my best friends. I got to where I=d rather be with him than people my own age. But he never was able to recover from this. But he lived a full life and so did her mother. Her mother was a nurse.

P: Tell me about your children now. Name their names and give me their birth dates and birth places.

E: All right. Buck, the one that [was] born while I was overseas, is named Marshal H. Emerson.

P: What=s the middle name?

E: Henry. That was a family name.

P: What was the date of his birth again? I know you were overseas.

E: He was born on October 9, 1945. Then the next one was a little girl named Shelley. She is now named Shelley Moorefield. She lives in Tallahassee. Buck lives in Pensacola, by the way.

P: You call him Buck?

E: Yeah. When his grandfather first saw him in the hospital, he said, now, that=s a Buck,

and it just stuck.

P: What=s he do?

E: He worked for Merrill-Lynch too, but his wife for [her last] twelve years suffered with Parkinson=s and about a year and a half ago she passed away. For the last four years, she couldn=t even speak. They finally rediagnosed it as that same thing that Dudley Moore [actor] had, parasupernuclear palsy. She couldn=t even speak. I=m so proud of him, I don=t know what to do, Sam. He put three kids through college, ran three Merrill-Lynch offices, and took care of her. That required full-time around-the-clock help. Two of [his children] are students here now. One=s in law school. When she [Charlotte] died, he decided to retire, took early retirement. He felt like he needed to make a clean break. I thought it was a mistake at the time, but looking back, I think he did the right thing [Buck is a graduate of Emory University and attended Florida Atlantic University to study oceanography].

P: So your second child is...

E: Shelley Moorefield. [She] lives in Tallahassee. She married into the Moorefield family in St. Pete. They have two daughters. [Shelley attended Clemson University].

P: What does she do?

E: She works for the state.

P: In Tallahassee.

E: Yes.

P: When you say works for the state, that means what?

E: [She works for the Department of Revenue in communications. Both of her daughters attended UF.] They have two daughters, [both of whom attended UF] and they have three grandchildren. So we have [two] great-grandchildren there in Tallahassee and one in St. Louis. [One of our great-granddaughters, by the way, is named Emerson Parker]. [Our] third child is another girl. Her name is now Stacey Wright. She lives in Dallas.

P: What=s her full name?

E: It was just Stacey Emerson, and she=s now married to a man named Michael G. Wright. They live in Dallas and they have three children. She was born in 1956. We lost [a son] in between the [second and third children]. The first girl [was] born in 1948 and then the next baby was 1956, but we lost a little boy in there at birth.

P: You lost one?

E: Yes, in between those two. So we actually had two sons.

P: So you had four children, and how many grandchildren?

E: Eight.

P: Eight, that=s good.

E: And three great [grand-children and another due in October, 2003].

P: You=ve got a family in St. Pete, one in Tallahassee, and one in Houston.

E: Well, we don=t really have one in St. Pete, it=s just Jane and me.

P: I thought your son lived in St. Pete.

E: No, he lives in Pensacola. He was the manager of our [Merrill-Lynch=s] Pensacola, Fort Walton [and Panama City branches].

P: My son lives in Pensacola. I wonder if they know each other.

E: Why don=t you ask him?

P: I will.

E: He=s now with a company called Center Pin Technologies.

[break in tape]

E: The fourth child is another girl, and her name is Kimberly. She is married to a man called Scott [Spicer. She graduated from Oglethorpe University in Atlanta].

P: She=s where?

E: She lives in Jacksonville. She works for Merrill-Lynch.

P: Where does she live in Jacksonville?

E: 5550 [Yellow] Bluff Road.

P: See, that=s my home, Jacksonville. I=ve got two brothers there.

E: Well, I bet you know where this is then.

P: Both of them are Gators.

E: [She married a] fellow named Scott Spicer. She was born on August 6, 1958.

P: And all of your children were born in St. Petersburg?

E: Right. When we left to go to New York, which I guess we=ll talk about in a minute, the two older ones were already, for all practical purposes, gone. You know, once they go to college, they=re gone. But we still had these two little girls in grade school.

P: You took two children with you to New York.

E: Yes.

P: Where=d you live in New York?

E: [We] started out in Madison, New Jersey, and later moved to Summit, New Jersey.

P: Did you enjoy your years in New York?

E: The second time I did, which I=ll get to in a minute. The first time it was pretty rough.

P: Why?

E: Well, I wasn=t used to commuting. [The Erie Lackawanna was a particularly old fashioned train. No air conditioning, wood burning stoves, and wicker seats that] [End Tape A, Side 2.] The conductor flipped over at the end of the line.

P: Oh yeah, I wouldn=t like that either.

E: It was in bankruptcy, but it ran on time. I=d heard that it ran on time, and commuting, I didn=t look forward to anyways, so we picked a place on the main-line in New Jersey, which is Madison. I went up earlier, before Jane and the kids came, to look around for a place to live. The first weekend that they came up there, it snowed sixteen inches. They=d never even seen snow.

P: I would have packed up and come home.

E: I thought they would. Not knowing any better, I slogged through that snow down to the station, the depot [on Monday]. We lived fairly close to it. I get there and there=s nobody on the platform except one old man. He told me later he was in his nineties. I didn=t know then that you don=t talk to strangers up there.

P: You thought you were in the South.

E: I struck up a conversation with him and it came out that he has been riding that train for seventy years. I said, well, then you must know how old these cars are. He said, oh yeah, these old cars they put on are 1920. He said, these new ones, they didn=t put on till 1928. But, anyway, I rode the train to Hoboken and took the tubes under the river from there. I thought, at least it=s going [to be] glamorous to have a bar car [train that serves alcohol]. I=d heard all about bar cars. Well, the bar car [on this train] turned out to be, a guy gets on the train in Hoboken with an ironing board under one arm and a box of booze bottles and ice, and [he] flicks over one of these seats and puts the ironing board down and that=s the bar. He gets off in Newark, so if you don=t get a drink before Newark, you don=t get one. Then we later moved to Summit, which was a little closer. The toughest part for me, I think, was that if you=ve been very active like we were in St. Pete, if you live in one town and work in another, you don=t feel like you belong either place. You can=t belong to a civic club, because they meet at noon and you can=t belong to anything else.

P: So there wasn=t much social life then.

E: There wasn=t any.

P: Were the girls in school?

E: Yes, and they were having a tough time too. One of them was told, by the way, by a teacher, that if she didn=t stop saying ma=am, that they were going to expel her.

P: It was a different world.

E: Oh, it was a different world. But they=re good schools as far as scholarship=s concerned.

P: What was your office?

E: In New York, 70 Pine Street. The first time we went it was 70 Pine Street, which was the same place I started when I was in training school. Before I leave Summit, though, let me tell you that, because I couldn=t get used to not having some kind of civic activity, I joined the Summit Rescue Squad. I was on from seven in the evening until seven in the

morning. When I say I was on, I mean I had to be able to respond and be at this place within three minutes after the alarm. They gave you a thing that you set down by your bed. You had to leave your car parked, head out of the driveway and be able to put on your coveralls and be at that place in three minutes after this alarm. Now, I mean, that was fascinating. We had some calls that were drug overdoses and things like that. It was fascinating. When we went up [to New York City] there the first time, 1968, [Merrill-Lynch] took a guy, who=s never done anything but sales work all his life, and put me in charge of what they call the General Service Division.

P: I was going to ask you what your responsibilities were.

E: General service division, I guess with most companies, but with Merrill-Lynch it consisted of the purchasing department, the building [of] offices, security, the mail department, [and] everything physical. I didn=t know a thing about any of that stuff.

P: They figured you had potential or they wouldn=t have moved you up in the first place.

E: Well, I guess that=s what they must have figured. Security, for example. Nobody had any security in those days. There were still old white men walking around the financial district with satchels wide-open with cash and negotiable securities in them and nobody ever bothered them. But the Mafia was discovering stolen certificates. [That was] better than hijacked merchandise, you know? We had uniformed attendants at the doors, but nobody carried a gun. We didn=t have any guards. So I had to establish a security department and I hired an ex-FBI agent to do that. It turned out to be one of the best moves I ever made. So we had this security department. What [the Mafia] would do is, they would steal certificates and take them to the bank and borrow money against them and then not pay off the loan. When the bank tried to put the certificate through transfer they=d find out that a stop had been [placed] on it. I worked my tail off trying to get the banks to not loan money until they had already seen if the thing would go through transfer. They didn=t want to do that, [because] they=d lose too much business, but they lost a lot of money by not doing that. The [Mafia] would steal to order.

For example, we had a young fellow working in our cashier=s department where all the [securities were]. Most people took delivery of their securities in those days, so there was a lot of securities being mailed in that had been sold. He was in the habit of stopping by the same bar on his way home every night and one night this pretty girl played up to him and he wound up spending the night with her. So he gets a phone call the next day and this voice says, that gal you slept with last night is Big Eddie=s girlfriend and he ain=t happy. He wants a 10,000 share certificate of IBM, knowing this kid works in the cashier=s department. But he was smart enough to come to my FBI guy and tell him and he set up a sting and caught him. There was a hooded informer testifying before the congressional committee on organized crime in Washington. [He was] hooded

because he was revealing things that would have ended his life. One day, he said that Merrill-Lynch was missing \$18,000,000 worth of Treasury bills and didn't even know it. Well, a Treasury bill can look like a five-dollar bill and it might be worth \$1,000,000. So our chairman calls me and [says], what the hell is this guy talking about? I said, all I know is what I saw in the paper. He said, are we missing anything? I said, I don't know, but I'm going to have the vault audited. So we had to audit the whole vault and found out we weren't missing anything. You had insurance if you took delivery, until you got your certificate, and that led the insurance companies to discontinue any insurance on anything negotiable, like a Treasury bill. So you didn't ship Treasury bills anymore. The only way they would insure the Treasury bills at all was if they were physically in a Federal Reserve Board bank vault. Well, Pine Street runs parallel to Wall Street one block north, and you walk up one block to [William Street] and one block down there, where there's a Federal Reserve bank downtown. You've seen it, I'm sure. We had to move all the Treasury bills out of our vault into this Federal Reserve bank. I thought it'd be pretty easy to do it. I called Wells-Fargo and all the rest, Brinks, and they wanted \$30,000 to take these Treasury bills two blocks. So, one day, about two o'clock, the back door on Cedar Street opened and a laundry cart pushed out with a guy pushing it, right up the middle of the street. Those are narrow streets, you know. It was full of our Treasury bills. My FBI guy is walking on one side and walking with his gun. I got a gun permit because security reported to me and I'm walking on the other side in a trench-coat and a gun in my pocket. We had a great relationship with [the New York Police Department]. They credited us with teaching them everything they knew about securities, and they taught us everything we knew about security. They were up on top of this [12-story] building [on the corner] with high-powered rifles. All it cost us was two-fifths of scotch instead of \$30,000. All I worried about was a man-hole cover blowing off when that laundry cart went across.

P: A little bit less dangerous then than now.

E: So now we get to thinking that Don Regan, our CEO [who later became Treasury Secretary in the Reagan administration], [will] probably be called to Washington to testify in front of this committee. For about two weeks, we're brainstorming what kind of questions he's liable to be asked, and we figured he'd be asked if Merrill-Lynch had any accounts with any known Mafia characters. So I have to check the records and I find out we've got three accounts with Carlos Gambino [Mafia boss]. I find out the guy who's handling the account is a very close friend of mine who works in the office on the ground floor at 70 Pine Street. So I go down and I say, Herschel, you've got some accounts with Carlos Gambino. He said, yeah, best accounts I've got; never a credit problem, never any argument about executions, best accounts I've got. I said, well you've got to get rid of them. He said, what? So I explained to him what was going on. He says, how do you suggest I tell him? I said, you're right, forget we ever had the

conversation. I went back and told [Don] Regan that I couldn't find any. I wasn't going to be under oath and he was, so he could say none to his knowledge if he were asked. He didn't get called. But that's how it worked. Do you remember when 9/11 happened they kept talking about 1 Liberty Plaza might have to be torn down?

P: I think so.

E: I built that building.

P: Where is it again? I've forgotten.

E: 1 Liberty Plaza B 165 Broadway. When I went up there to take on this general services job, our home office was in twenty-nine different buildings, which is impossible.

P: Lack of communication.

E: Yeah, we had to do something, so we built this 1 Liberty Plaza.

P: And you organized everybody into the one building?

E: Yeah. Fifty-four floors, 34,000 square feet to a floor, 1,800,000 square feet. I wouldn't take anything for the experience, but I'm telling you, I wouldn't want to do it again. We decided to devote the entire eleventh floor to be a feeding facility where we could feed our people for less than they could eat on the street. We didn't want them to feel like they were eating the same food every day, so we had about four different venues. We had a cafeteria, we had a fast-food place, [and] we had a sit-down tablecloth place. We had four different types, so you could eat there every day and not feel like you're eating the same food. I didn't know anything about that, so we had consultants who were telling us how to work this feeding thing. One day I get a call from the consultant and he says, now you're going to have to build some garbage storage in that building. I said, we're not going to store any garbage in that building. In those days, [downtown real-estate costs] was about \$19 a foot . I don't know what it is now. He says, you've got to build some garbage storage. I said, why? He said, what if we have a garbage strike? I said, whoa, if that's what you're talking about, we won't worry about that, it's going to be a big-enough operation, we'll buy our own garbage truck and have our own driver. He said, wait a minute, you don't mess with the garbage, that belongs to the Mafia. Which was true. One day, while we were building the building, my secretary said that there was a man that wanted to see me. I knew his name, because at our printing [and] mail department at the end of West Houston Street, they handled our dry waste. I found out there's all kinds of garbage. So he comes in and he says, I handle your dry waste over there at West Street. I said, yes, I know, and you do a good job. He said, well, I want the contract for your wet garbage at 1 Liberty Plaza. I said, well I'd like for you to have it,

but you=ll have to put in a bid like everybody else. He said, what? I said, you have to put in a bid. He said, we know where you live in Madison, we know you got two little girls, I want that contract. What do you want? \$10,000, you want a woman? What do you want? For six months, I had to have protection for Jane and the kids. He finally put in the best bid and won the contract anyway, but up until that happened, I was afraid for the girls to be unprotected. So...part of the Mafia. They did own the garbage.

P: I didn=t know about that.

E: I heard about one situation where this restaurant down in Long Island, let=s say they were charging \$200 a month and they came to [the owner] one day and said, we=re going to have to go up to \$300 a month. He says, well, I don=t think I can pay that much, I=ll get somebody else. He couldn=t get anybody else, [because] nobody else would touch it. So [the owner] calls and says, okay, he=ll pay \$300. He said, well it=s \$400 now, we had to go up some more.

P: It went up overnight.

E: Yeah, and he had no choice.

P: When you went to New York, you became the director of the General Services Division. What did that mean?

E: Well, it=s like I say, it=s all this physical stuff. [It was the] purchasing department, mail department, security.

P: You didn=t have any responsibility for hiring and firing?

E: Just for that division. Not on the sales side at all. I was completely out of sales.

P: Which is what you=d had your greatest experience in.

E: Yes, the only experience I had was in sales. But, like I say, it was an experience I wouldn=t take anything for, but it sure scared me to death.

P: But you were in New York what, just three years?

E: About four.

P: And then you came back south to Atlanta?

E: To Atlanta.

P: What=d you do? Let me ask you about New York before we leave it. How important was that in your life and to Jane?

E: Very important.

P: Just in terms of your career?

E: No, not just that. We learned a new dimension to life, I would say. The commuting was an experience.

P: Was Jane able to build a social life herself?

E: Yes. We built some pretty good friendships and we found out those people are a lot friendlier than you think they are, especially in the commuter neighborhoods.

P: And they don=t dislike Southerners.

E: My accent, I thought [would] be a terrible [liability], but my accent was the biggest asset I had up there. They remember you. I didn=t think I had one, even.

P: No, I=m not conscious of it either.

E: I wasn=t either.

P: But they=re sensitive to it. So why did they move you?

E: Well, in 1971, we regionalized. We had never had regions. Every office manager reported directly to the president of the company. So now they set up seven regions, later reduced to six, but I was sent to Atlanta to organize what we called the Southeastern region. We=d never had that before. It consisted of North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida. Five states. It was great. I was just delighted we were getting back to the South. New York was all right, but I was ready to come home.

P: But you had no family in Atlanta.

E: No. But that was a great experience too, we really enjoyed living there.

P: Where=d you live in Atlanta?

E: Are you familiar with Buckhead? I know you are. Chastain Park?

P: Yes.

E: Well we lived just across...

P: That's a beautiful area with all those nice trees and azaleas and all.

E: It really is.

P: Now, where was your office in Atlanta?

E: Right downtown, at Five Points.

P: How'd you commute? By car?

E: I did at first, but then I decided the bus was better and I rode a bus.

P: You didn't have to look for a parking place.

E: No. By the way, they built MARTA [Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority] after I went there. That is underground [to an extent]. I was so impressed with what they did, with so little traffic disruption and [bringing] it in under budget and ahead of schedule. It was very impressive.

P: What'd you do in Atlanta?

E: Well, like I say, I was regional director.

P: Each of these moves is a major promotion for you, isn't it?

E: Yes. Every [office] manager in those five states reported to me.

P: How many states again?

E: Five.

P: Florida...

E: North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. I was responsible for all the business in that part of the country. It was during those years that we introduced the CMA [Cash Management Account] account, and Georgia was one of the [four] test states. I have always thought that the CMA account changed the whole face of the banking industry. I'm sure you're familiar with how those work, but you've got everything in one

account, check-writing and everything. That did change the whole face of the banking business.

[I have] a funny story. Like I say, Georgia was one of four trial states for the CMA account. I was out west for some reason and I get a phone call that says, you better come home quick, because tomorrow they're going to have a meeting in the committee in the legislature that decides whether or not [to allow this type of account], because the CMA funds, the CMA money part of it, was a mutual fund. The legislature was going to take it up, and of course there was a lot of politicking against it. So I rushed home and I call the chairman of the committee and I said, may I come over and talk to you? He says, no, we've got this pretty well under control, we don't want to talk to you, [and] we're going to take the vote tomorrow morning. There was nothing I could do. We only had six offices in Georgia. I called every manager and I said, drop everything you're doing, have your guys stop everything except calling their customers, and tell them that there's about to be a piece of legislation passed that favors wealthy people over ordinary people. [I said] a \$10,000 Treasury bill will get a lower interest rate than a \$100,000 one, [but] with our CMA account, everybody'll get the same. So, about ten o'clock the next morning, I get a call from this guy that's chairman of the committee and he says, stop all those damn phone calls and we'll see you at two o'clock. [laughing.]

P: It worked.

E: It worked.

P: But it was an interesting time. At C and S bank, this was a new business for Atlanta, so they took it on themselves to show me [around]. They flew me around in a helicopter to show me where we ought to live, where I ought to have my office, and all the various places. They couldn't have been nicer to me, and I appreciated it.

P: Now did you have to do much traveling?

E: Yeah. I was at the airport at least twice a week.

P: You had to visit the sales offices?

E: Yes. Every office I had to visit. By that time, we probably had thirty offices in the state [of Florida]. I could usually [make an office visit] in one day. I'd take the early bird in the morning and do what I had to do and be home that night.

P: That wasn't bad, but it wore you out.

E: But you know, when I was still running the St. Pete office, did I tell you about that marketing committee I got on?

P: No.

E: They put me on a marketing committee, which made me feel awfully good, that met once a month. I could get an early bird out of Tampa, land at LaGuardia [Airport in New York City], get on a helicopter that landed on a pier in the East River, and walk from there to the building where the meeting started at noon with lunch. At four o'clock, when it was over, I walked back, got back on the helicopter, and I'm back home that same day. This is in the 1950s.

P: You can't do that today.

E: I know it.

P: That's if the plane's even going to leave.

E: But let me tell you something else. I didn't realize that you knew George Baughman that well, I [had] never met him.

P: I did an oral history with George, but I'd known him for years.

E: Well, every time I got on that airplane, he was on there with a secretary [taking dictation]. She's taking dictation all the way to New York and I'm thinking, who in the hell is this guy? You didn't do things like that in those days. I think he was the first president of New College [in Sarasota], wasn't he?

P: I didn't know that.

E: I think he was, I think that's what he was doing. I'm pretty sure he was the first president.

P: Of New College, that's right. He was the first president of New College, you're right.

E: So I watched him dictating all the way [to New York].

P: He went from here to New York University and he was vice-president of business affairs. Then he came back to Florida. They had some sort of a tourist thing there, a garden or something, that he owned or operated. He organized New College and was its first president.

E: Yeah, quite a guy.

P: He lives here in Gainesville now in the country club, but he's not well at all.

E: [I know that]. I saw him [last year].

P: Did you see him?

E: In the football season, I saw him at a game.

P: Did he know who you were ?

E: I don=t think so, and she told me he didn=t.

P: That=s what I heard, the early stages [of Alzheimer=s].

E: That=s really sad.

P: That=s the most terrible thing to happen to you, to lose your mind.

E: Oh yeah, it sure is.

P: That=s not going to happen to you and me, Bill.

E: I don=t know. You hear me trying to think of words I can=t think of now. [laughing.]

P: Okay. How long did you stay in Atlanta? Not a long time.

E: Well, about almost ten years.

P: Oh, then you went back to New York?

E: Yes.

P: What did you accomplish in Atlanta?

E: Let me tell you one other story about this C and S bank I was telling you about.

P: All right, go ahead.

E: There [were] two young fellows that were escorting me around. I wound up putting my office right there at Five Points on the thirteenth floor of what was then First National Bank tower, [and] C and S was right across the street. They said, you know, we=ve been trying to play at Augusta National [golf course that hosts the Master=s tournament] and we can=t get on the course. Now, you have to have a member that plays and he can bring three guests. I didn=t say anything, but I knew our manager in Augusta was a member.

So when I got back to the office, I called him and I said, you wouldn't by any chance be willing to play golf with me and two guys from C and S bank would you? He said, what day do you want to play?

P: He was ready.

E: So I call these two guys, they've been trying now for months to get on and they can't, I called them and I said, you want to play Wednesday or Thursday? [laughing.]

P: They were ready.

E: They fly us over to Augusta in their private airplane. A limousine meets us at the airport, takes us to the club, and we have lunch with our manager. We go out and hit four golf balls on the first tee and the heavens open up and it rained harder than I've ever seen it rain. We never even went to pick up the balls.

P: The four golf balls got lost in the flood.

E: [We] got back in the limo, went back to the airport, and flew back to Atlanta. It's got to be the four most expensive tee shots that have ever been hit.

P: I hope you had a good lunch.

E: Yeah. Atlanta is a fascinating place. Have you ever read a book called *A Man in Full* by Thomas Wolfe?

P: I know who you're talking about, but I haven't read it.

E: You ought to read it sometime, but it means a lot more if you've lived in Atlanta. I thought I could recognize about half the people in the book. It's a fascinating place.

P: My wife grew up in Atlanta, so she might.

E: She ought to read it. It's a very cliquish place and it's awful hard not to have them look down their nose at you.

P: People are so conscious of their background and history and family.

E: I know it. We still belong to the Capital City Club. I can't afford to get out. I'm a lifetime member and an out-of-town member. I think Atlanta and Dallas are the two most dynamic cities in the country, frankly.

P: Atlanta certainly is.

- E: Oh, it is. If they had finished that train out to the airport while I was still going twice a week, it would have meant so much to me.
- P: Of course, the traffic situation in Atlanta is horrendous.
- E: Oh, I know, that's what I mean. This comes up right in the baggage claim area. You get out right there inside the terminal. Two of my daughters made their debuts in Atlanta in the Phoenix Society. We were very active in the Peachtree Presbyterian Church, which I believe is the biggest Presbyterian church in the country. I was a deacon. I was on the board of Columbia Theological Seminary, which is [in Atlanta]. I went on the board of Oglethorpe University and have been on that ever since.
- P: Sounds to me like you played an active life outside of the Merrill-Lynch office.
- E: Somehow or another, I felt like that was thing to do. But I've been on the Oglethorpe board for thirty years now. The Student Center is named for us.
- P: I know, I saw that in the notes.
- E: What notes are you talking about?
- P: These notes, some of this stuff that I have here.
- E: I'll be darned. Well, I'm telling you stuff I've already told you before then.
- P: I've read it all very carefully. [hands him the file.]
- E: Oh, I see.
- P: I didn't miss anything.
- E: No you didn't, you sure didn't.
- P: So you leave Atlanta...
- E: And go back to New York.
- P: But once again, have you finished telling me about Atlanta?
- E: I should tell you, I got in the racehorse business while I was there.

P: Racehorse business?

E: Yeah, racehorses. I told Jane I=d lost money every way there was but that, and I ought to try that once. It worked out beautifully.

P: Racehorses?

E: Yes.

P: You don=t look like that kind of guy.

E: I=m not. I met a fellow in Cartersville who was raising thoroughbred [race] horses. It worked out beautifully, because when I went back to New York, we had horses racing at Belmont [elite horse-racing track; part of horse-racing=s Triple Crown]. I was in the winner=s circle out there one time. I had a horse named Sparky Ridge, he was out of Riva Ridge. But, you know, the main attraction there was that the tax advantages at that time were so good. They changed all that, so it=s not anywhere near as attractive financially. What you hope for is not so much the purse that you win, but that you win enough races that this horse becomes valuable for breeding purposes. I never made any money, but I didn=t lose any. It was a lot of fun.

I should tell you I bought a railroad car while we were there. No, I bought this while we were in New York the first time.

P: A railroad car?

E: Yes. In those days, the investment-banking people didn=t speak to us peasants on the other side of the business. But one day, I got a call from our investment bankers and they said, the Florida Power board is up here [and] we=re getting ready to underwrite a bond issue for them and we know you know all of them. How about coming to dinner with us tonight at the Twenty-one Club? I thought that was great, I felt like I was really honored. I went over there and I was seated next to the only one on the board I didn=t know, a guy named Byron Herlong. You know that name, I=m sure.

P: What=s his name? Byron what?

E: Herlong.

P: Oh sure, absolutely.

E: Byron and I sat there and we hit it off.

P: I knew Byron.

E: Nice guy. About halfway through dinner he says, you know, I'm also on the board of Seaboard Coastline and they've offered me their executive car that they're getting ready to retire, but I don't have any place for it. Now, here's a guy with I don't know how many thousands of acres. I haven't got an acre of land anywhere.

P: Put it in the backyard.

E: By the time dinner's over, we decided we needed another drink and he and I went to the Waldorf [Hotel] and had another drink. By this time I'm thinking about this railroad car and it's got the observation deck, it's got two bedrooms with brass beds, crew's quarters, and all that stuff.

P: It's turning into a guest house.

E: I said, you don't want it? He said, no. I said, you don't suppose they'd sell it to me, do you? He said, I don't know, but I'll find out. I forgot all about it. About three days later, I get a call from Prime Osbourne, who was the chairman of the board Seaboard Coastline. He said, your railroad car is on a siding awaiting your inspection here in Jacksonville. So I call Jane and I said, I think I've created a monster, and I told her what had happened. So I got on the airplane and flew to Jacksonville.

P: And Jane went with you?

E: No, she didn't go, but she was very nice about it. He takes me in his limousine out to where this thing is sitting and I just fell in love with it, so I bought it.

P: How much do railroad cars cost?

E: That's what I'm going to tell you. I got a tax deduction, when I gave it away, for more than I paid for it.

P: Oh, well you did all right, you did okay.

E: But this thing was beautiful. Like I say, it had the crew's quarters and the galley and all that stuff. I had to sign an agreement [that] I'd never put it back in service. The reason they retired it was because they had to run the train slower [when it was hooked on]. It was built in 1921. I signed the agreement, of course. So it was sitting on a [rail road] siding in Brunswick and I'm trying to get them to change their minds, but they're awful hard to deal with. Also, they wanted to take the wheels back. They wanted to make sure it was a static exhibit. Do you remember the Secretary of the Navy that used to run

Southern Railroad? I can=t think of his name.

P: I can=t think of his name either.

E: I didn=t know him from Adam, but I called him and I told him what had happened. I said, I just wanted to get an opinion from you. He said, well, you can=t tell them I said this, but Southern will run it and Amtrak will run it. I keep after them and I said, can=t we just change the agreement that I=ll never put it back on Seaboard Coastline=s tracks? Wouldn=t that be all right? Finally, they agreed to that. So Southern went over to Brunswick, picked it up and brought it back to Atlanta, we had it refurbished, and we just had a ball with that thing. When we left Atlanta to go back to New York the second time, it was just sitting there. Everything goes to pot when you don=t use it, so I gave it to the Railway Historic Society chapter in Atlanta and I got a bigger deduction than I paid for it.

P: I still haven=t figured out how much you paid for it in the first place.

E: \$5,000.

P: \$5,000 for a railroad car?

E: That=s all.

P: John D. Rockefeller paid more than that for his.

E: Yeah, but this thing was retired.

P: Did you ever use it?

E: Oh yeah, that=s what I=m going to tell you. We had it all refurbished [and it was] eighteen first-class fares to travel in it. But this story gets better as far as Florida=s concerned. Living up there, I decided it was going to go to pot, it already had, on the siding in Brunswick, [and] I had to fix it all up. So the Railway Historic Society, which had a two- mile circular track out towards the Buford Highway in Atlanta with all kinds of steam engines and everything, all static, [were very welcoming].

P: I=m trying to remember the name of the guy that ran that society. He was a local historian.

E: If you=d mention it, I=d know it.

P: Yeah, well, I can=t think of it, but I remember him.

E: They made a deal with the state of Georgia that has a thing called the New Georgia Railroad. It's the department that takes care of all the physical things, like general services was for me. For many years, it ran [every weekend] from mile-post zero in Underground Atlanta on a circular track around the city behind a steam engine. It was just great. I had a lifetime pass on it.

P: Bill, you're the only guy I've ever met who owned a railroad car.

E: Well, now the capstone to that story was, before I gave it to the Railroad Historic Society, I tried to give it to the University of Florida. My thought was, FSU's got one that sits outside the stadium there. I'd pay for all of this, but I thought if they could just lay down enough track for it to sit on, I'd somehow get it taken over there and give it to them. But I couldn't even get Marston to tell me he didn't want it.

P: Marston wasn't interested?

E: I just couldn't get anything out of him. I became very disillusioned with the University of Florida. I practically severed my relationships.

P: All over a railroad car.

E: Well, there are some other things that had happened that I didn't much like. So one day I'm sitting in New York after we go back up there, I had an office on the fiftieth floor in the corner. [It was] a great big office. My secretary comes in and says there's a Dr. Wayne Reitz here that says he wants to see you. Well, obviously, I didn't know him very well, but I was delighted to see him. The whole purpose of his visit was to find out why I had become inactive. The result of it is, when he left, I decided I'm going to get back involved, and I did. I'm so glad he came.

P: Sounds like you lived a full life in Atlanta, you and the family, and enjoyed it thoroughly.

E: Yes, we did.

P: Were you reluctant to go back to New York?

E: In a way, but I'll tell you why I went. It was only about four years till my retirement, and I figured, it's a miserable place to be if you think it's going to be forever. You've got to know it's not going to be forever, you've gotta have no kids...

P: And your kids now were grown.

E: They were all married. And you have to not worry about the cost. I could figure all three of those things pretty well, so we talked about it and decided to go. Now [Merrill Lynch was] reorganizing again. We had six regions that covered the whole country, [and] now we were going to divide into North and South, each with seven regions. I was going to be the national sales director for the southern half of the country.

P: Which was a big, big, big responsibility.

E: Five hundred-something offices. I was the first Protestant in the upper management of Merrill-Lynch. They were all Roman-Catholics. My cohort in the northern half was a Jew. He was the first Jew in the management of Merrill-Lynch. So they renamed the Mason-Dixon line the grits-and-bagel line.

P: Very appropriate. So where=d you live in New York?

E: Right in Manhattan.

P: You only needed an apartment now, your kids are grown.

E: That=s right. We were on the corner of Columbus and Sixtieth.

P: Columbus Circle?

E: Columbus Drive, well, Ninth Avenue, and West 60th.

P: Well, you lived in a very nice neighborhood.

E: Oh yes, and we were right across the street from [Lincoln Center and] the Metropolitan Opera, which is another picture in the story.

P: But your offices are still down on Wall Street?

E: Yes, 1 Liberty Plaza.

P: So you could go by subway without any problem.

E: Oh yeah, and I did. I could have had a car, but I didn=t. We didn=t have a car there. A car is just a pain in the neck [in Manhattan].

P: That=s right, with traffic and all. But you were in an area that has a lot of nice restaurants and a lot of activity going on.

- E: The other thing is, we could walk to all the theaters.
- P: Are you and Jane theater people?
- E: Well, we weren=t, but we became such.
- P: So y=all went to the shows?
- E: Every show we ever wanted to see.
- P: And enjoyed it.
- E: Yes. What I would do at lunchtime, if I didn=t have to take anybody or go with somebody to lunch, I=d walk across to the World Trade Center and they had a Twofers office in one of those buildings. I=d come back to the office and I=d call Jane and say, we=re going to go see so-and-so tonight, and we=d walk down there and see it. It was great.
- P: It was wonderful, I=m sure. So, in New York, you had major responsibilities if you=re going to cover that kind of large area.
- E: Yes, it was.
- P: Was it an enjoyable experience?
- E: Yes, unparalleled. We found out, for example, New Yorkers are really not rude, they=re just in too big a hurry. But if you=ve got a problem, they=ll help you. As I say, we just loved it. Every once in awhile, I=d get a call from one of the kids and they=d say, I=ve been trying to call you for three or four days, where you been? I=d say, none of your business. The lack of family responsibility was fascinating.
- P: Merrill-Lynch has really come up giantly in these years, from the time you started in St. Petersburg until you=re in New York for the second time. Is there any larger investment firm in the U.S. by this time?
- E: Nope.
- P: It=s treated you well too, obviously.
- E: Yes, I wouldn=t change anything.
- P: I mean, you worked hard, you made contributions, and in turn they did well by you.

E: You're exactly right. It was a great place to work. The fact that we lived right across from the Metropolitan Opera is kind of interesting up there too, because we got involved a little bit. I wanted to tell you about one night. Bill Rockefeller was the president of the Metropolitan Opera. One night, they were going to have a birthday party on the stage of the opera with the curtains open and you sitting up there, looking out just like the opera singers do. There was at least one opera singer at each table.

P: Yes.

E: And Risa Stevens [opera singer] was at our table.

P: I like her too.

E: [Bill=s] wife is named Molly. [She=s] the cutest little thing you ever saw. He gets up and he says, now, you know this birthday party is in honor of Mrs. So-and-So. He said, she has been such a benefactor of the Metropolitan Opera and we want everybody to stand and sing Happy Birthday to her. So we all stood up. Of course with these opera singers at every table, it was pretty good. So, when we finish, Bill Rockefeller says, now you can go out and tell everybody in the world that you've sung on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera [laughing.]

P: With [Risa Stevens and many others]..

E: Yes. {By the way, at a New York City opera party, Beverly Sills sang a ditty that included the line, Awhen you=re in a pinch call Merrill Lynch.@}

P: That=s not a bad idea at all. Why did you decide to retire?

E: I had to. In those days, you had to, at sixty-five.

P: You had no choice in the matter, then.

E: Right. Now that=s not so, our producers can stay on almost as long as they want to.

P: So when you retired, what happened then? You came back to Florida. Did you maintain a house all this time?

E: In Atlanta, we did. We came back to Atlanta for a couple of years, because we still had our house there and we weren=t sure what we wanted to do anyway. So we came back to Atlanta for not quite two years and then we decided St. Pete=s where we really wanted to be.

P: When you retired, your health was good?

E: Yeah. Well, you probably hear me wheezing, I contracted asthma, I guess you could call it. New Yorkers say, don=t ever breathe any air you can=t see, you know what I mean? If I=d leave the window open over my desk, the next morning [there would be] grit.

P: Grit all over it.

E: I don=t know how anybody ever survives up there, because I know it must damage your lungs. So I got a little problem with that, but not bad.

P: But you=re all right now?

E: Yeah, well, I mean I still got the problem.

P: But you came back to Atlanta then, you and Jane, and reestablished yourself in the community there. You obviously had a lot of friends.

E: Yeah, we had some good friends there. Like I say, I still belong to the Capital City Club. When we first moved to Atlanta, I should tell you that we started getting invitations, William A. Emerson, to things that we didn=t know anything about. One of the first ones was a big formal affair at the Piedmont Driving Club, so of course we went. I wanted to meet people anyway and we met all these nice people. Then we found out there=s a guy, and he still belongs to Capital City Club, named William A. Emerson. They were inviting us, thinking they were inviting him. [He is William Austin Emerson and he wrote *A The Jesus Story*,@ and I think he was at the head of the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Time* magazine.]

P: So what do you do when you get back to Atlanta? You=ve led a very full life of business up until then.

E: Yeah, I had an office in one of our Atlanta offices and I went down every day. I=m not employed, I=m not hired, [and] I=m off the payroll. The thing you miss the most in retirement, Sam, is a secretary. Jane won=t take dictation, she screws up my filing, [and] she won=t take my phone messages. I needed a secretary and that=s the way I got it, I had my office there.

[end Tape B, Side 3.]

E: When [President Jimmy] Carter was talking about giving away the Panama Canal, I got a

call inviting me [to go], and they took about ten of us. The Army, the Army Reserves, [and] all the different aspects of the Army apparently wanted to show some people what a good job they were doing. So they flew us down to the Panama Canal on a big cargo plane and we were there for about a week. They took us around to all the camps, just so we could see what was going on. We spent a lot of time in the Canal itself, watching the locks and all that sort of thing. It was fascinating. I bet you don=t know another man that=s been to the Atlantic and the Pacific twice in one day.

P: No.

E: Helicopter back and forth twice. Back and forth, back and forth. That was a fascinating trip. There was a Cuban ship coming through one of the locks [and] I said, how do you know that that ship is not dangerous, [that it] doesn=t have explosives or something on board? Everything there is Japanese anymore, the tractors that drag the ships through the locks and everything is all Japanese equipment. They said, that it=s really quite vulnerable. They don=t know that there=s not some terrorist on one of those boats. If you blew up that lock, to me, that=s of the most vulnerable places we have. But, anyway, it was an enjoyable trip. [I] learned a lot. [I] learned again that this is the best place in the world to live. I went to Australia when we were in New York the first time. I had become so discouraged with the way things were going in this country, this is about 1970, that I went over there. I got the firm to send me to look at the prospects for opening offices in Australia and we opened three offices as a result of that. I was really thinking seriously about moving over there, but I found out they=ve got more problems than we have. I went to every capital city and it=s a fascinating place. Until he died, I got a Christmas card every year from the Prime Minister of Western Australia in Perth.

P: You saved them?

E: I didn=t save them, but I got them. He and his wife insisted on driving me to the airport the night I left there for a midnight flight. They wouldn=t leave until they were sure the plane left. [They were] very friendly people.

P: Bill, let=s explore a little bit about your activities in Atlanta. You said you were on the Oglethorpe Board, how did that come about? You had no academic connections with Oglethorpe.

E: No, none at all, however, the Presbyterian church that I went to, it=s a huge one as I say, a couple of the board members went to the Presbyterian Church and the only thing I can figure is they must have proposed me for membership. I=ve been on ever since, and Kimberly went there.

P: Do you have any responsibilities?

E: Not really.

P: They don't want you to be a fund-raiser or anything.

E: No.

P: If you see some money coming down the pike, push it in the right direction.

E: I'm going to suggest that I become emeritus or something, whatever they call it. I want to maintain a relationship, because I admire that place so much. You know, it's patterned after Oxford, one of the colleges. Anyway, the architecture looks a good bit like that and it was patterned on them. They've got a very high SAT [average among their students] and it's a good school. Kimberly went there, our youngest daughter [and graduated].

P: Your activities outside of your profession have been many over the years and I just want to touch on some of them. Some of these go way back, for instance, I found that you worked in the American Heart Association.

E: Yep, I ran the first campaign they had in St. Pete.

P: Also the March of Dimes.

E: Yes.

P: Was this something that you did out of the goodness of your heart or were you talked into it or what?

E: Well, that's always got to be part of it. When I was in business, there was always the aspect that the more active you are and the better-known you are, the more likely you are to attract business.

P: You need to show yourself. Were you still active in the Civitan Club?

E: Not when we went back this time. I never have rejoined that.

P: It was just a passing moment in your life.

E: Well, civic clubs are kind of out of phase.

P: Yes, I never was a member of them.

E: Like the Masonic Lodge, it's out of phase. You go to a Lodge meeting now and you see ten people or something like that.

P: You were active, I've got in my record here, in the 1950s in those clubs.

E: Yeah. I was lieutenant governor [and] I was president of the St. Pete club.

P: I know one of the activities that you've been interested in for a long time has been the support of Eckerd College, or what was then Florida Presbyterian College.

E: Yeah, I'm not active anymore there.

P: Weren't you on the board of that for awhile?

E: No, but when it was first established, I was active in fund-raising.

P: Was this because of your friendship with Jack Eckerd?

E: He wasn't involved. No, I don't remember the specific reason I got involved. The first president was a guy that I liked very much, so I did that. But also when Stetson Law College moved to St. Pete [and] took over the old Florida Military Academy, and I've never heard of this before or since, they had a joint fund drive which I ran for Florida Presbyterian College and Stetson Law School. A joint fund drive, I've never seen that before, but it was very successful.

P: So you start and stop with the fund drive. You're not involved beyond that, in any setting policy or anything at all like that.

E: That's right, and we left so soon after that, that I just never have gotten involved again since we went back.

P: You've been on the Committee of 100?

E: I was chairman of that.

P: That was an important organization.

E: It really was. That was the one that was the most directly business-oriented. We brought Minneapolis Honeywell, G.E., [and] two or three others [that] I can't think of right now, but big businesses, to St. Petersburg. I say we did it, I know we helped.

P: How generous was your support of Oglethorpe money-wise? You said there=s a building named for you.

E: Yes. It was pretty generous for what we had at that time.

P: Does it fall into the same category as your building here?

E: [It did at that time]. What it was, we established a charitable remainder unit trust that they=ll get all of when the last of us passes away, but [it was] not an outright gift.

P: But you became involved with Oglethorpe through friends that moved you in that direction. Are you still active in Oglethorpe today?

E: Yes.

P: You go to their meetings?

E: Not all of them, but I make as many as I can.

P: And they=ve named the Student Center there for you and Jane, called the Emerson Student Center?

E: Yes.

P: Well, that=s really very nice.

E: Oh, it=s pleasant.

P: Now what is this St. Joseph, St. Anthony health system?

E: Well, St. Joseph=s Hospital in Tampa and St. Anthony=s in St. Petersburg. They=re both Catholic hospitals. I was chairman of the St. Anthony=s board. Then when they affiliated [with] this St. Joseph=s and two or three other hospitals, I became vice-chairman of the board of that. But I=m no longer involved. I stay involved at St. Anthony=s in the sense that I like what they=re doing and I admire what they do, but I=m not officially involved.

P: In the last several years, then, your interest has been the University of Florida, right? Starting with the courtyard?

E: Yes.

P: Or even before that?

E: I don=t remember the chronology, but there=s a scholarship in the School of Business.

P: I know that=s in there, yeah.

E: And the courtyard.

P: Robert Lanizotti [Dean of UF Business School] promoted that for you?

E: [I guess so, but] I think Jeff Robinson had as much to do with that as anybody.

P: Jeff is now at FSU and I=m sure doing a very good job. He=s an able mind.

E: I think he is too. I stay in touch with him a little bit. Nice guy.

P: I don=t stay in direct touch with him, but he sends regards and I send regards back. I like him very much.

E: I do too.

P: So you set up a fellowship there or a professorship?

E: A professorship. Merrill-Lynch [and our Florida managers matched our gift], so it=s called the W.A. Emerson/Merrill-Lynch professorship.

P: In what? Management?

E: Business.

P: Business, but not any specific special area.

E: No.

P: Then does the courtyard follow?

E: I think the courtyard was before that. I think the courtyard was first.

P: That=s a beautiful area, that courtyard. It is absolutely beautiful.

E: Well, it was such a mud-hole before.

P: It was nice before with the trees, but it didn=t look anything like it does today.

- E: You know, the most pleasant thing about it is that, every once in awhile, one of the professors will say, you know, I have my classes outdoors there when the weather=s nice.
- P: Well, it=s absolutely gorgeous, and the fact that students circulate around and sit on the benches, it=s a pleasure going through there.
- E: That=s what counts, that=s right.
- P: How expensive was that gift?
- E: It wasn=t all that much.
- P: Whatever it is, it was well worth it. It was a good investment.
- E: A quarter of a million, I think. I=m not sure that=s right.
- P: You came out of Merrill-Lynch in good shape financially, didn=t you?
- E: Yes, but you know what I told them at the informal dedication, I said, Jane and I would rather be remembered for our intelligence, call it market timing, than our generosity.
- P: That=s always true. But it=ll all come back, it=ll all restore. Nothing could have been lower in the United States than the stock market crash of 1929, and that all came back.
- E: Boy, is that true.
- P: Anyway, what brought your development interest here in the University of Florida, because it=s had a major influence on you, and you in turn on the university?
- E: Well, as I say, I give Wayne Reitz credit for getting us [back].
- P: For being a gentleman.
- E: Yes, and getting us back in touch.
- P: But that one visit, did that do it?
- E: Well, I=d felt bad ever since I=d [withdrawn]. You don=t like to do that and I felt bad anyway, but he kind of opened the door. When Charlie Pell was coach here, the athletic director, I can=t think of his name now...
- P: I know who you mean, though.

E: He and another fellow would come to New York and see me every once in awhile. That made me feel pretty good. Then, when we moved back to Atlanta, every time we played Georgia Tech, they=d treat us pretty nice. It was a lot of fun.

P: Have you always been a football enthusiast?

E: Yes, pretty much.

P: I know you come to the games now.

E: I don=t care for professional football, but I do enjoy college football.

P: Jane enjoys it also?

E: Yes, yes she does. She wouldn=t miss a game.

P: Well, that=s good.

E: I think so too.

P: And you get a parking place.

E: [laughing.] Yes.

P: I mean, that helps very much. But you don=t have a sky box, do you?

E: No.

P: You=re willing to sit with the peasants?

E: Oh, I love it. I=m still on the board of the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Pete and the Salvador Dali Museum.

P: I was interested in your interest. Why is your interest in art?

E: It isn=t that much.

P: Has this always been true? Are you interested in art per se?

E: I don=t know anything about art, Sam. I know if I like it, but I don=t know whether it=s considered good art.

- P: I was going to say, you really have to be a connoisseur to like Salvador Dali.
- E: That=s right, exactly right. I got acquainted with the people that were such close friends of his, their name is Morse. They became friends of his way back in the 1930s and started accumulating his art. This man ran a company in Cleveland, Ohio. They started thinking about the estate tax and then that got them thinking about maybe contributing this art to some city to start a museum. They had approached about three different cities and it hadn=t worked out. There was lawyer in St. Pete that heard about this and he went to see them. [He] was the catalyst that put the city and them together, and the city gave them a facility. I say gave them, [but] made it available. So that=s the way it worked.
- P: I=ve been in that museum, it=s interesting. His stuff is pretty weird, but I enjoyed looking at it.
- E: It is weird, but you know, I like those big ones, the ones that hang towards the rear.
- P: Yes, the real large ones.
- E: That one about the DNA, I mean, before it=d even been discovered, he made that painting.
- P: But the other museum there, the art museum, is very good.
- E: No, I=m no connoisseur of art.
- P: No, I=m not either.
- E: It=s another one of those things where it was a civic thing.
- P: It=s also kind of a social thing too, getting to the receptions and meeting your friends and talking to people there. In addition to those activities in St. Petersburg, are you involved in other activities there? I=m going to get back to the University of Florida shortly.
- E: I don=t think so. I belong to Feather Sound. That=s a country club, though. We go to the [First] Baptist church. I should tell you that the Baptist church that my father was janitor in downtown, after we moved back to St. Pete, there was absolutely no parking. I don=t know whether you remember where it is or not, but right behind the Princess Martha Hotel.
- P: I know where that is.

- E: There was absolutely no parking and there were homeless people all over the place. The church, thank goodness I wasn't involved, had already made the decision to move out to where Gandy Boulevard and [Interstate] 275 cross. They got a beautiful piece of property. Anyway, that bell tower is named for my mother and dad.
- P: I wanted to ask you, your father taking a janitor=s job, which was a real come-down from the kind of operation he had in Tennessee before he came to Florida, did this impact him in any way? Did he become a bitter man?
- E: Nope, not that I was ever aware of. I think he was humiliated.
- P: But a job was a job, and you needed it at that time.
- E: I remember one period of time when he was working at Lakewood Country Club spreading sand on the greens for something like twenty-five cents an hour, if I remember right. He had to have something to eat.
- P: Well, he obviously was a smart man.
- E: Yeah, I think so. He survived.
- P: A real pragmatic man. He realized what the situation was and he took advantage of it. Now I=m going to get back to the University of Florida because that plays a major role in your life for the last ten, twelve, fifteen years, right?
- E: Right.
- P: So you start out with the professorship in the college of business and then you move to the garden.
- E: I think that was the order.
- P: Well, whatever, the garden is magnificent. Even if you just stopped there, it would be a great benefit to the University of Florida.
- E: It sure is pretty.
- P: Well, how did the building come about?
- E: I give Mike House, if I had to give an individual, [credit for that]. He=s gone now, you know. He mentioned it to me, and the more we looked at it, the better it sounded. You have to think about the fact that, if this were over in the middle of the campus, nobody=d

ever see it. Here it is...

P: It=s right where it=s visible.

E: Yeah, it really is, and the university needed one. It just sounded like a good thing to do.

P: It=s a magnificent building and it looks like a first-class building in terms of everything that went into it. I=ve been here, as you know, a long time, since 1937. I don=t know of another structure on this campus that has had the impact that this already has had.

E: That=s nice to hear.

P: I mean, absolutely everybody knows Emerson Hall. In fact, it=s already used as a place of reference. I heard the other day, somebody said, you go up University Avenue and at Emerson Hall, you take a left. It determines the direction where people are going now. And the dedication is tomorrow.

E: Yes.

P: What=s it going to do? We can=t ground-break, because we=ve already done that.

E: I don=t know what they=re going to do. They told me that the trustees are going to be there and I think some of the regents.

P: And the president will be there.

E: And the governor is going to be at the convocation, I don=t know whether he=ll be at this or not. So that=s really all I know.

P: As far as you know, is this the end of your philanthropy to the University of Florida? Or you=re not going to make any decisions this afternoon?

E: That=s about right.

P: Don=t make any decision then, don=t close the door.

E: But you know another thing, if it were for one college, it would appeal to a certain number of people, but this is for everybody, all the alumni.

P: Bill, I know you also have been, and maybe continue to be, active in the fund-raising activities associated with the university, the big fund drive that took place at the end of

the 1980s. What role did you play there?

E: I was chairman of what they call the Leadership Gifts Committee.

P: Was Fred Fisher the chair of that...

E: Yes, he was chair of the campaign.

P: Is he the one that brought you into it?

E: Yep.

P: You and Fred have been good friends, then, for a long time.

E: Yep. He came to Atlanta and we went to lunch together and he talked me into it.

P: That=s the Leadership Gifts Committee, you were chair of that. Y=all were supposed to be raising what, \$100,000,000 to begin with and then it kept going up and going up?

E: Yes.

P: Your goal originally was \$100,000,000 and you raised \$228,000,000.

E: Well, we raised more than that, we raised \$300,000,000 something.

P: That was the [when] you were chairman of the Leadership Gifts Committee. That ended with Fred Fisher as the chair in 1991. Now, did you then become involved in the second big drive, the APerformance That Counts?@

E: Yes. I was...

P: Campaign Steering Committee, Leadership Gifts Committee.

E: Yes.

P: That=s the one in which the goal was \$500,000,000 and you raised \$813,000,000. Miracles, miracles, absolutely miracles.

E: I have to tell you that first campaign was the first one Florida had ever had, if you remember, and nobody knew what we were doing. Marshall Criser played a great part in getting me interested in that and the university. I was very flattered that he would ask me to do things like that. I am a fan of his anyway, I think he came along at exactly the right

time to run this university when he did. At Oglethorpe, for example, as long as I=ve been on that board, I=ve seen five different presidents, and if they had been in any other order, it would have been a disaster. I think Marshall came along at exactly the right time here.

P: That=s been true of every president we=ve had at the university. Some have looked weak to start with, but they=ve grown in their responsibilities and in their skills and in their ability.

E: I was so impressed with John Lombardi. I was on that search committee.

P: You were on that search committee?

E: Yes, which was very flattering, until I found out there were fifty-four members on the committee. Then I found out we were just an advisory committee.

P: I know, but there could have been 1,500, then fifty-four is a pretty good number.

E: I guess so, but I wasn=t used to that. But I was impressed with him. I liked him.

P: I liked him too. I think he did a very good job while he was here.

E: He=s the best thing that ever happened to the university.

P: I think he did a very good job and I think, with the passage of time, he will emerge as one of our major presidents.

E: I agree.

P: I liked him and Katherine right from the very beginning and we=ve remained good friends. I have an invitation to his invocation [as president of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst] . I can=t go to it.

E: I=m not either. I talk to him occasionally and I like him.

P: I like him very much. And I=ll probably like the next president that comes down.

E: I do, too.

P: After all, I=ve been here longer than anybody.

E: That=s about right.

- P: Keeper of the past, isn't that what it says over here. What other things are you now involved with at the University of Florida? We got to get past the dedication tomorrow, but then Monday comes along and there's new responsibilities.
- E: I don't know of any. I don't think I have any.
- P: Well, give them the weekend to think of some things. Where do you live in St. Petersburg?
- E: We live in what they used to call the jungle. It's the west side of town, Boca Ciega Bay, off Park Street.
- P: Do you know people in Clearwater?
- E: Some.
- P: You don't know Reuben Aycott Siener?
- E: Yes, I know him.
- P: That's our nephew.
- E: Is that right? Isn't that great?
- P: Leslie Reuben. His father is my wife's brother and we're very close to them.
- E: Fantastic.
- P: Let me ask you some general questions now, Bill, some personal questions. When you were here in school, you belonged to a fraternity?
- E: Yes, but not until after the war, [because] I didn't have the money. I got pledged before the war, but didn't have the money to join.
- P: So what'd you do? You worked in the fraternity house?
- E: No, I didn't do that and I didn't join till I got back. After the war, I joined [Phi Delta Theta].
- P: But you joined as a married man?
- E: Yes, one of the first.

P: I was going to say, usually that doesn't happen.

E: It was so strange to get back here and find women all over the campus after the war, wives. It still had not gone co-ed, that was another couple years later, I think.

P: 1947. When did you get into Florida Blue Key?

E: I'm just an honorary member.

P: I know that, it's not JUST an honorary member. They don't pick just everybody.

E: I would say fifteen years ago.

P: Any reason?

E: No.

P: They just didn't come along and say, this year, we're picking Bill Emerson.

E: No, but I don't know why, let me put it that way.

P: They recognized your worth.

E: Yes, maybe.

P: You were also a member of a business fraternity.

E: Beta Gamma.

P: Beta Gamma Sigma.

E: Yes, that was also probably fifteen years ago, I guess.

P: But the thing that I think you should be proudest of is the fact that they made you a distinguished alumnus.

E: Yes, that's why I gave you that. That was very pleasant.

P: That should have been a very proud moment. I became a distinguished alumnus also, so you and I go together.

E: Absolutely. They also made me a distinguished alumnus at St. Petersburg College.

P: I saw that in the listing, I think.

E: An interesting thing happened there. That was about 1986. There was a woman that it was also done for at the same time. She was the sister of a good friend of mine and she was active in the French underground in World War II. I didn't know that until they were telling the things that she had done. Fascinating story.

P: Bill, did you grow up in a religious household?

E: We went to church regularly.

P: Did you go to church regularly as a kid?

E: Yes.

P: Because your father had a job at the church and you said there's a tower dedicated to your parents, which you're responsible for, I'm sure.

E: Yes, in the new church.

P: How religious a man are you now?

E: We go every Sunday.

P: What church do you belong to?

E: The same one, First Baptist.

P: And your wife is also?

E: Yes.

P: Do you go to church regularly like every Sunday or once a month or what?

E: Almost every Sunday. We believe in it and we do it.

P: What is your religious philosophy?

E: I've never tried to vocalize it, but I guess I feel, whether this is definitely Christian or not, if you are Christian, you've got to try to treat people the way you think you'd want to be treated. You do things that are right, even when you can't be observed. I've

always said true honesty is when you're honest when nobody knows whether you're doing anything wrong or not. That's the kind of people I always wanted to hire. I just think that you've got to treat people well, and if you do that, you get treated well usually.

P: Well, you can do that without being a religious person.

E: I know you can, and that's why I say I guess that's not a religious philosophy. I do believe in what the Bible teaches. I believe there's a hereafter and I believe you've got to lead that kind of life in order to merit that life hereafter. I guess that's it.

P: How about your children?

E: They're all Christians.

P: They're all Christians, but are they...

E: The one in Dallas does. She's got three children and they're very active in their church. The other three go, but I don't think they're anywhere near as [active]. Some of the grandchildren do, though.

P: You celebrate, obviously, all of the major holidays, Easter, Christmas, and enjoy them.

E: Yes.

P: Do you have a close family life? I know your children are scattered.

E: Yes, that's the thing. I think if we had never gone to New York, we'd probably have four kids living in and around St. Petersburg. But once you move it just sort of scatters them. Now we don't see them as often as we'd like to.

P: Do you talk to them on the phone a lot?

E: Yes, [several] times a week. I envy my friends who have kids living in St. Pete. We don't have that.

P: Bill, what kind of a political person have you been and are you? Do politics play a role in your life?

E: Yeah, but not a big one. I mentioned Buster Hancock awhile ago, I ran his campaign in Pinellas County. I'm talking about forty years ago, when he was running for governor. But I never have been really active in politics.

P: You vote.

E: Yeah, I always do that, and I help people that I think should be elected, and particularly if they ask me to. We=re registered Republicans. There are some people in Tallahassee that we=re close to, Charlie Crist, [Attorney General, State of Florida] for example. I worked in his campaign. [It was] not anything strenuous, but I helped him as much as I could. But I=m not a political person.

P: How did you stand on this Amendment Eleven that Bob Graham was promoting, that reestablished a type of regents?

E: When I first heard about it, I was all for it, because I personally thought the regent system was okay, it was the appointments that were so bad. So I was all for it when I first started hearing about it. But then, when I found out it was just inserting another layer in there, I voted against it.

P: But do you think that the university has been treated unfairly in the allocation of funding?

E: I don=t know whether I think that or not. I would more prefer to see one governing body for all the universities, so they all get treated equally. Now maybe they will anyway.

P: They weren=t this last time.

E: That=s right.

P: That may be just a one-time deal.

E: I=m always against putting any more layers of government in there than you have to have.

P: You advocate less government then.

E: Yeah, sure do.

P: And, like everybody, we all want taxes reduced.

E: Well that=d be nice to have, but I don=t want to see them reduce taxes to the point that we get in trouble.

P: Yeah, and we might be on the verge of that, but you and I are too small to do very much about it.

E: When they try to tell me we don't have inflation and inflation's not a problem anymore, I have to jump ship there. The other day I bought a loaf of bread for \$1.50 that cost \$1.19 the last time I bought one. And when you see gasoline at \$1.64?

P: Where's that nineteen cents gas that I used to buy twenty-five years ago and that fifteen cents loaf of Merita sliced bread? I guess those times have changed and gone forever.

E: I'm talking about just in the last month or so.

P: Yeah, I know what you're saying.

E: We've got inflation, sure as the world.

P: Bill, what do you and Jane do to fill your time?

E: I play a little golf. Jane is active in some women's groups. I mean by that, she has lunch maybe twice a week.

P: She has lunch and plays bridge and does those things.

E: [She has so many friends. There's hardly a day when she doesn't have something to do.]

P: Do you two travel?

E: Yes.

P: A lot?

E: [Quite a bit].

P: Where have you been this last year?

E: No place particular, except Highlands, we've been back and forth to there.

P: To Gainesville.

E: And to Gainesville. [And in the last few years we've been to England, Italy, Switzerland, Portugal, Spain, Holland, Belgium, Hawaii, and many other places.]

P: You have a house in Highlands, right?

E: Yes.

P: Where in Highlands?

E: Right downtown now. It didn't used to be.

P: How long have you owned that property?

E: Well, Jane's mother and dad owned it. The first time I saw it was the night I graduated here. We got in the car and drove to North Carolina and that's the first time I'd seen it, in 1946.

P: So you're an old-timer up there.

E: Yes, 1946.

P: You go up in the summer every summer?

E: Yes.

P: And escape the Florida heat.

E: Yes.

P: It must be very pleasant.

E: Well, now, if you took the Florida license plates off the main street in the summertime, there wouldn't be anything left.

P: That's right. Do you go to the Gator gatherings?

E: [Never Miss].

P: I understand it was so large, they did two of them this year.

E: I think that's right. By the way, have you read that Golenboch book yet, *Go Gators*?

P: No.

E: You ought to look at that. It mentions people that you've known all your life here. It starts in the war years.

P: I better check it out.

E: Yes. It=s a lot about the coaches too, Pell and Dickey and Graves and all of them.

P: Are you a Gator Booster?

E: Yes I am, I guess.

P: If you get a parking place, it pays, or they ought to give you one at Emerson Hall.

E: They do when I=m here, yes.

P: A permanent parking place.

E: No, it isn=t permanent, it=s just when I=m here.

P: Bill, do you read? Are you a TV-watcher?

E: I don=t watch much TV.

P: What do you do in the way of reading?

E: I read nothing particular, I read everything.

P: Do you read the newspapers?

E: Yeah. In fact, I spend too much time reading the newspaper, I think. If I don=t look at the paper in the morning, my day starts off wrong. I need to know what happened, you know?

P: I=m the same way. I don=t watch television, but I do read the newspapers.

E: That=s what I do.

P: Bill, is life treating you well?

E: Yes.

P: Do you have any regrets?

E: That sounds smug, if you say no.

- P: I just wondered, because the road is getting shorter for both of us and you=d look back over the years and wonder if you made all the right decisions, not that you can do a darn thing about it now.
- E: No, but I really wouldn=t change anything, although I realize that sounds, as I say, a little smug. But I wouldn=t change anything. I=ve had so much good fortune, so much luck.
- P: You=ve had a lot of good luck, and the fact that you=ve escaped being sick. Is Jane well too?
- E: She=s pretty good. She had some very extensive surgery about a year and a half ago.
- P: But she=s fine? She looks wonderful.
- E: She=s better, but she=s not back where she should be [but she is never down and she=s been the greatest inspiration in my life].
- P: Well, the years do get in the way of all of us. What=s your philosophy of life?
- E: I think if you do the best you can, you=ll prosper. I don=t think bad luck is always just luck. I think a lot of times things that you=ve done expose you to that kind of thing. I think if you do the best you can, treat people well, [and] fulfill what you view as your obligations to society, that you=ll be taken care of.
- P: So, really, as you look back over the years that have gone, you really don=t have any major regrets, do you?
- E: No, I don=t.
- P: You=ve got your family, you=ve got your financial security, and you=ve got the recognition.
- E: The major regret I have is that we=re not closer to our kids physically. We=re very close, but we don=t see them often [enough]. I=ve got those three great-grandchildren that, at that age, they grow and change so fast [that,] if you don=t see them for a month, [you miss a lot].
- P: That=s right. And in a year, they really change very dramatically. Do you think we=re living in a good world? Are you satisfied with it?

- E: I worry more about what the entertainment industry and the news media are doing to us than anything else.
- P: Why?
- E: It makes you sound like an old fogey when you talk like this, but I just cannot get used to the fact that, well, we decided to get married, [because] we=ve got this three-year-old child, and almost every story you read is a single mother.
- P: Sex has changed a lot.
- E: Yes sir, and I just wonder what that does to the moral structure of the country.
- P: Or whether it=s just changing times.
- E: Yeah. When I tell you we=re religious, I=ll tell you that we do have a little session every morning where we talk about things like this and we pray. The two things that I pray the most for are how to handle...what the terrorists did to us is one thing, but what we=ve done to ourselves is even worse. The lack of ethics and morality in corporate life, [and] I don=t mean everybody, but look at [it]. There=s at least twenty companies that are in or are about to go into bankruptcy because of what was done that was wrong.
- P: And these are big major companies too.
- E: Yes, and they hurt people.
- P: Thousands of employees.
- E: What that did to destroy the confidence, and you can=t build confidence back overnight, once you=ve destroyed that, you=ve done a very damaging thing. The levels of compensation in the corporate world and in the entertainment world and the sports world, I think, are just terribly out-of-line.
- P: I know a lot of people are disturbed about the language that young people use. I=m so used to it from walking around the campus that it=s not startling to me anymore.
- E: Well, there are some words that you wouldn=t have thought of using that have become everyday usage.
- P: It becomes everyday usage, that=s right. They say all kinds of words that doesn=t shock them the least bit, it=s just part of the language. What have we not talked about, Bill?

E: Did I tell you anywhere there that I was named the Outstanding Citizen for the Boy Scouts?

P: No, you did not, and I want to say that. When did that happen?

E: About four years ago. Here, I want to give you this. That=s what I sent them when they asked me to give them a little biographical background.

P: I think I have this.

E: Keep it, I made a copy. That was about four years ago.

P: This is the national Boy Scouts or the St. Petersburg?

E: St. Pete.

P: Had you played an active role in Boy Scouts?

E: Not really.

P: I don=t mean to be a scout leader or anything.

E: Not really, but apparently that=s not the criteria. It=s what you=ve done otherwise.

P: They=re recognizing your work out in the community.

E: Yeah. As far as the Boy Scouts are concerned, to be honest with you, when I joined the Boy Scouts and I passed the Tenderfoot test [Scouting rank], but I didn=t have the money to buy the uniform, so I dropped out. I never got past that. It got too embarrassing to show up without a uniform.

P: Oh sure, if you were a kid. When was this recognition by the Boy Scouts?

E: About four years ago, I=d say 1998.

P: Was it a public ceremony?

E: Oh yeah, it was real nice.

P: In St. Petersburg. Was it a big-time thing?

E: A dinner party. They had our minister do the invocation and [it was very inspirational. The recognition was called the Boy Scouts of America Distinguished Citizen Award.]

[end Tape B Side 4.]

P: It=s been a great interview, I can tell you that, and I=m an expert on this.

E: Yes you are.

P: I want to finish up the Boy Scout business. You say there was a public ceremony four years ago recognizing your work as a member of the community. Did the honor have a name?

E: I can=t remember exactly what they call it. I=ll tell you, though, I=ll get back to you on that.

P: Well, you certainly belong to a lot of clubs. I=d hate to have to pay dues to all of those that you belong to, yacht clubs, riding clubs.

E: Like Capital City Club, you get where you can=t afford to get out. I mean by that, the initiation fee is now something like \$50,000.

P: It=s not worth it.

E: And with being an out-of-town member and a lifetime member, my dues are so low, I can=t get out. Jane went to summer school at Florida before it was co-ed.

P: Oh she did? She was here in school?

E: Yes, summer session.

P: She went to Georgia regularly and came here for summer school.

E: She went to summer school here first and then went to Georgia.

P: So she was a long-time Gator.

E: That=s right.

P: I wonder what dormitory she was in. The women occupied the dormitories, Buckman.

E: Would they have been in Murphree in summer school?

P: Yes.

E: I think that=s where she was. I believe that=s it.

P: And she had Dean Norman. I=m glad you told me that, I was not aware of that.

E: I think I=ve told you everything I know.

P: I don=t want to leave anything out. Of course, when you get the manuscript you=ll have the opportunity if something hits you.

E: I told you that, when I finished operational flight training in Cherry Point, right after I got my commission, they kept two of us for instructor=s duty and opened a new base in Edenton, North Carolina, just a training base. So I went up there and, because I had instructor=s duty, I was there for several months and they tried to get me to run for mayor of Edenton.

P: See, they were trying to get you into politics very early. [laughing] Mayor Emerson, that sounds good, doesn=t it?

E: Wouldn=t it have been funny?

P: Let=s not leave out any recognitions, because they need to be part of the record.

E: Well, let=s see. I was on the board of the Red Cross and the Salvation Army. This was the early days in St. Pete, before I went to New York. I was vice-chairman of a thing called St. Petersburg Progress.

P: Whatever that is.

E: I was one of the founders and president of the St. Petersburg Stock and Bond Club.

P: What was your responsibilities there? Any?

E: You know, president.

P: Yeah, you had meetings and that sort of thing, didn=t you?

E: We met once a month. But it has become quite a good-sized group now. It=s amazing.

I have to tell you a story. The Sun Coasters, which I was active in, is a group that puts on the Festival of States Parade, among other things. One time, the parade had ended and

they had cars that the various automobile agencies had loaned for this purpose for us to transport people off the floats before and after. I had been sent up to where the parade ended and I was supposed to bring this car back down and take some of the girls off the floats back to where they belonged. So I get in this car and, all of a sudden, I look up and I see this guy in a white suit and another fellow running towards the car and they were making signals. I opened the door to see what it was and they said, that=s our car. I said, what do you mean, it=s your car? This is the car they told me to take. I had my Sun Coasters badge on. They said, no, it=s a mistake, but this is our car. They said, open the trunk, it=s full of fried chicken. I opened the trunk and that guy=s Colonel Sanders in the white suit, it was his car I was about to steal.

P: So the fried chicken was there.

E: Yeah. I was president of the Quarterback Club [and] president of Squires Club.

P: So you were active in the Athletic Association. Whether you were in Gator Boosters or not, you were in the Quarterback Club.

E: Right. We started a professional football team in St. Pete. It never went anywhere, but we started one. We had two or three games.

P: Well, we=ll chalk that up to one that did not succeed.

E: In 1956, we went to Mexico and I caught a nine-foot six-inch sailfish that they said was within a half inch of the world record.

P: I didn=t realize you were a fisherman, indeed, to your other accomplishments.

E: I=m telling you. I=ve got a nilgai head in my den at home, that=s a blue ox. The King Ranch people imported [the nilgais], they=re Indian antelopes, into this country to experiment with crossing them with domestic cattle. The meat is absolutely delicious, white, tender, but it didn=t work and so they abandoned it. This was fifty years ago. They turned them loose and now there=s a herd of them on the King Ranch in Texas. I got invited out there and I shot one. I=ve got his head on my wall.

P: You=re not going to tell me you own a ranch out there? You just got invited out to visit.

E: Well, no, to shoot.

P: You=ve got a lot of notes with you. I should have looked at those before I got started.

E: Well, I'll leave these with you.

P: Yes, I'd like it. We'll have a biographical file on you also. You said that you and Jane did some traveling. Where do you travel? Where have you all been?

E: That reminds me, I should tell you about when we went to the Winter Olympics in Sarajevo in about 1984. I bought her a fur coat, because it was winter in Yugoslavia and I bought a shearling jacket, not realizing that the American team was going to be wearing a shearling jackets. We had a great time in Sarajevo. Those people are so nice, you can't believe it. Everything we saw there has been destroyed now, you know, but we just had a great time.

P: Have you all been everywhere in the world, all the continents?

E: [We] never have been to Africa.

P: Have you been to China?

E: Yes. On the way home [from Sarajevo], we were going to go to Paris, but they were having what they call a lorry strike and you couldn't cross the border, so we stayed in Brussels. They told us that, when we went out on the street, that there'd probably be kids begging and not to give them change, they wanted dollar bills. So we're walking down the street and behind me all of a sudden I hear, dollas, dollas? I turn around and here are these kids. [Now] I'm wearing a Stetson and a shearling jacket, so I reach in my pocket for my money and they said, J.R., J.R.? They thought I was J.R. Ewing with his shearling jacket. So I signed autograph books J.R. Ewing all over Brussels. I used to go bone fishing in [the Bahamas] and used to go dove hunting in Central America with a group of Atlanta businessmen, that's one of the things I did when I was there [and every year I went salmon fishing in Alaska].

P: So you're a fisherman and a hunter.

E: Yes. By the way, the reason that we got so involved is that I got Merrill-Lynch to sponsor the Metropolitan Opera's road trips. They used to go to three cities in the South and three in the North. The lady that became president right after Bill Rockefeller, her name is Louise Humphrey, invites me to go dove hunting on her plantation, which is between Tallahassee and Thomasville.

P: Which I understand is a magnificent plantation.

E: We saw thirty-eight coveys one day here about three weeks ago.

P: I=ve heard about it. Are you an opera supporter?

E: Not really.

P: I like it myself.

E: We lived right across the street, so we were active. We were at the 100th anniversary party for Carnegie Hall. We wound up sitting with Mrs. Oscar Hammerstein [composer and lyricist] and Mrs. [Richard] Rogers [composer and lyricist].

P: Mrs. Rogers is his widow.

E: She=s a widow. They got to comparing bracelets. They said [the producer of South Pacific] gave them to them [Mary Martin]. It was an interesting conversation. One of their bracelets was a little bit fancier than the other ones [and caused some interesting comments].

P: Did you see ASouth Pacific@ with Mary Martin?

E: [Yes].

P: Do y=all do much theater or activity in St. Petersburg now?

E: No, we go occasionally.

P: You know, over in [Clearwater], there=s Ruth Eckerd Hall.

E: [We go] once in a while, and once in a while at Tampa Performing Arts.

While I was in New York, the second time we got to travel an awful lot, because we had a lot of meetings in Hawaii, Palm Desert, and places like that. We flew in a helicopter almost into those volcanoes that were erupting in Hawaii.

P: I did that once.

E: We got some pictures, beautiful pictures.

P: It went down so fast, I got sick. I said, no more for me and helicopters.

E: I never will forget, we got in that helicopter and this [pilot] looks at Jane and says, is this your first trip in a helicopter? She said, yes, and he said, mine too.

P: Do you and Jane do much cruising?

E: [We have been on a number of cruises and really enjoyed them.]

P: Does she wear her glasses and earrings just to attract attention?

E: I don=t know, but she always wears them.

P: Well, she looks good. It=s unusual, but people identify with her and it=s wonderful.

E: You ought to see the impact it has on kids once in a while. She=ll bend down and she=ll say, I can see into the future with these glasses [and] I know exactly what you=re going to be.

P: She=s got a great sense of humor.

E: [She=s just a great lifetime partner].

P: So are they entertaining you royally tomorrow?

E: [I believe they are].

P: There=s no champagne supper planned?

E: No, they got a convocation and a reception.

P: Well, you=ll get some punch there.

E: I guess so.

P: I=m going to the convocation, but I don=t know if I=m going to the reception.

E: Well, I don=t think we=ll go to the convocation. What=s that going to be exactly?

P: Oh I think that will be very interesting. [Forest] Sawyer [television news personality] is talking along with Jeb Bush, whom I=ve never heard speak in public. This will be my first contact with him. Being a Democrat, I=m not overly enthusiastic, but I think he=s doing a very good job.

E: I do too. I got to tell you about one time we had all our managers in Maui.

P: But I would go to it, it=s going to be another one of the historic events of the university. See, I was at the 100th in 1953.

E: Anyway, we were at Maui and they were going to have this big party outdoors, it was going to be a MASH party [long-running television sitcom about a mobile Army hospital during the Korean War]. To make a long story short, they took me up the coast a mile or so past where the party was, it was dark, and they got a helicopter there and they put me on the runners of this helicopter. I=m laying out there on a stretcher outside. Just like MASH, they fly it in to where the party is and sit down. The guys don=t realize it=s me at first, you know, [but] finally they realize it=s me. Klinger [character from MASH sitcom], a guy, of course, is in a dress and he=s carrying a blood-transfusion thing. He comes up to where I am and fastens this thing on this stretcher they=re pushing. Of course, it=s wine and he sticks it in my mouth. By that time, they all realized that it was the boss on this stretcher.

P: That it was a joke.

E: We had [the captain and tenille] as entertainment that night. Manhattan was a wonderful experience. I think we=ve talked about all that stuff.

P: Well, I=m going to turn this off. We=re on side five. When I take it back to the office they=re going to say, did y=all have to talk so much? I=m glad we were able to finish up this afternoon.

[End of Interview.]