
MELVIN CHISUM: This is Melvin J. Chisum, Melvin Jackson Chisum, MD, performing the 43rd in the series of interviews with members of the Alpha Boulé of the Sigma Pi Phi fraternity. I might say the unusual thing about this interview is I’m not only the interviewer, but I am the interviewee. Anyone listening to this series will have heard my voice on the other interviews.

I guess I should say a few words about the series in general. The Alpha Boulé of the Sigma Pi Phi fraternity is the first chapter of an organization founded in Philadelphia in 1904. Its members are practically exclusively blacks. It is the oldest of the black Greek letter organizations. One unusual thing, of course, is that it is an organization of graduate students. It was planned for college men who were graduates of colleges and were engaged in professional activities in their communities.

At present, there are 86 chapters of this organization; I should say at least 86. There are about 2,200 members of the organization spread throughout the country. A chapter was founded in Liberia about one or two years before the famous coup that took place in that country, and that chapter was practically eliminated by the events of the coup. Of course, most of its members were highly placed officials in the Liberian government. Dr. A. Romeo Horton, who was interviewed in this series, is a Liberian and was a member of that Liberian chapter originally.
About four or five years ago, the chapter decided to have a memorial service for its past members. It was my assignment to identify the past members of the organization, many of whom were dead, of course. And I found that I had a very difficult time in being certain that I had found the names of all the people who had been members of Alpha Boulé since its founding back in 1904. This fact interested the members in the history of the organization itself, and this series of interviews, this living history, if you will, is a consequence of the efforts we decided to make to document the organization, the history of this organization and its members.

If the listener is interested any more in the history of the Sigma Pi Phi fraternity, I can refer you to a book by that title, *The History of the Sigma Pi Phi*, by Charles H. Wesley, published in 1954 and again in 1969 by the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in Washington, D.C.

I shall try to follow the same general format I followed with my fraternity brothers. First, to make a point I probably did before, but again, the date is October the 2\(^{nd}\) of 1987. This interview is being performed in my home, at 4120 Apalogen Road in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. My occupation is medical doctor; I am a physician, and my present title is medical director of the Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania and the Diamond State Telephone Company. I don’t like that title because it implies that I am the boss medical director, which is not the fact of the matter. There is a corporate medical director who is my boss, and there are at present three medical directors of the telephone companies mentioned above,
two of whom work in Philadelphia, and the third one is located in the company’s medical department in Pittsburgh.

Regarding the genealogy of Melvin Jackson Chisum, I wish to have the written genealogy, the printed genealogy I worked out back in April 1978, to be considered as supplement to this tape, and I would suggest that if anyone is listening to the tape and is interested in the genealogy, he should find somewhere in the archives at Temple University, or wherever the tape is located, a genealogy which says “Chisum Genealogy.” It goes back about three generations on my mother’s side to a female West African who was probably born in Guinea, and on my father’s side also back three generations to a slave owner of Dutch extraction, and my great-great grandmother, who was a slave by whom he fathered a child.

My father, Melvin Jackson Chisum, was born on January the 12th, 1873 in Tehuacana Hills, that’s T-E-H-U-A-C-A-N-A, Tehuacana Hills, Texas. Tehuacana Hills is in Limestone County, either in or near the city of Mexia. My father was born on an army reservation, or at least his father worked on an army reservation. That’s an interesting story in itself.

Most Americans have heard of the old Chisholm Trail, and my family name is that same Chisholm. The Chisholms were wealthy, white landowners, slave owners, people of great substance in South Carolina. My father contended that nearly every person in the United States whose name was Chisum, if he could trace his family name back far enough would find that he came from South Carolina, would realize of course that some Chisums came to this country from the West Indies.
Be that as it may, when the Chisum known as John Chisum, the famous John Chisum, realized that the Confederacy was about to lose the Civil War, he like many of his wealthy colleagues put as much of his property as he could on Conestoga wagons and headed west. He put down stakes in Texas. When the Civil War was over and President Grant had time to take care of these odds and ends, he sent cavalry squadrons down to Texas to repatriate these people. When this particular cavalry squadron commander caught up with John Chisum, he told John Chisum he was going to confiscate his horse. John Chisum said, “Well if you’re going to take this horse, you should take that young fellow with him. That’s his groom, and he’s the only person who really knows how to handle him.” Well, that young fellow turned out to be my grandfather. He was freed at that stage, practically, of course, and he went to work for the cavalry commander who took the horse.

My father was born on the army reservation at which the cavalry commander was still stationed, down in Texas. My father’s father obviously met and married a woman, and my father was born down there. His father took his slave owner’s name. He name was already John, and he became John Chisum. John Chisum, of course, went on to become famous as a cattle man in the West, and it was he who blazed the trail which I guess went from Abilene, Texas, to Dodge City.

Back to my father and his family, I have a copy of a newspaper from Mexia, Texas, which, it’s dated in 1899. The paper announces that John Chisum, who had run a well-respected restaurant in Mexia
for quite some time, had announced the closing of his restaurant because he and his family were moving to New York City.

My father tells me that when his father decided to leave Texas and go north, he sent two of his boys, my father, who was the oldest, Melvin Jackson Chisum, and the second boy who was William Woodruff, up to Texas to—I’m sorry, up to New York City to prepare for the rest of the family.

My father also used to refer to his father as a farmer, and William and Melvin arranged to lease a farm which was located in the Van Cortlandt Park section of the Bronx. When the rest of the family went by boat from Galveston up to New York they were united on that farm, which is where the Chisum family was raised from then on. Dad tells me that when they moved to Van Cortlandt Park he used to have to walk south for an hour to catch the horse trolley to take you to New York City. He remembers when they built the Brooklyn Bridge, when Steve Brodie jumped off the bridge. He described the situation to me in which efforts were being made to sell blacks in New York City land in Harlem, and it was a very difficult sell because the land was so far north of what was then known as New York City that most blacks couldn’t see any future in buying land way out there in the country.

My father had six siblings, incidentally, again they’re documented on the genealogy, their names are documented there. That I know of, my father didn’t finish high school. I really don’t know much about his formal education at all. The amazing thing to me in retrospect is that he was certainly the most well-informed individual with whom I ever dealt, while he was alive. He knew
much about everything. He was extremely well-read in the English classics. He knew everything about business, apparently except how to make some money and keep it for himself and his family. I have met people from my father’s era who said, when they heard my name, said, “Oh, you must be Melvin Chisum’s son. I knew him; he was a great banker.” Or, “I knew him; he was a newspaperman.” Or, “I knew him; he was a politician.” Or, “I knew him; he was a money-raiser for Tuskegee Institute.” Or, “I knew him; he was an engineer.” And so it went.

He obviously performed in all of these capacities at various times during his life. Most of my life I can remember that my father was working away from home. Daddy was usually away, mother, my sister and myself at home, and it was always a great delight when Daddy came home because he always had gifts for Mother, and gifts for Anne, and gifts for Jack.

My first memories are of Washington, D.C. And at that time my father was working as a lobbyist, probably for the United States Steel Corporation. The famous Judge Elbert Gary was his employer. I guess he had come to know my father because during World War I my father was one of those famous padrones, blacks who went down South and recruited blacks to go up North to work in the factories that were fueling World War I. My father was a famous man because of that. He tells me that his pictures, or at least his descriptions were plastered all over the South with a reward for him dead or alive, because the southern authorities did not appreciate or approve of the blacks moving to the North and leaving the circumstances under which they were being held there.
Dad tells me that the word would be passed to blacks who were interested in going north that there would be a train on such-and-such a siding, at such-and-such an hour, on such-and-such a day, and blacks who wanted to go to Detroit, or wanted to go to Chicago, or wanted to go up north would be advised to be there. And that’s the way many of the blacks left the South during World War I. This transportation, of course, was financed by the industrial giants of the North, who were interested in recruiting labor.

My earliest memories were of Washington, D.C. We didn’t live down there very long. We moved from there to the town of Glencoe, Illinois. My father went out there to go to work for Samuel Insull. I am certain that another way he met these financial giants, these industrial giants, was that one of my father’s jobs was as personal secretary to Booker T. Washington. And in this capacity he was more than a personal secretary; he was a money raiser. It was his job to go up north, interest northern men of means in contributing money to Tuskegee University, and introducing them to Booker T. Washington, and bringing them down to the school to see the place and to lecture to the students, and so forth.

It was certainly before, well before World War I that Booker T. Washington took an interest in the fact that much of the money that the federal government budgeted and sent to the Midwest to take care of and educate the Indians, and the blacks who were there as slaves, and relatives of the Indians was being stolen by the local authorities in the state of Oklahoma. For this reason he sent my father to Oklahoma to found a newspaper, the purpose of that newspaper being to publicize the fact that these monies were being stolen. This
newspaper was a one-man operation at first. The paper is still in existence, it’s now known as The Oklahoma City Call.

My father was one of the founders of the National Negro Business League. He was a member of the National Negro Press Association, and I can remember the stationery my father had. It had a green band around it, Melvin J. Chisum, Field Secretary of the National Negro Press Association. That stationery was issued from Glencoe, Illinois, which is where we were living at the time, a town about nineteen miles north of Chicago.

My father, though he had always been a Republican, the life he led kept him in contact with politicians. He spent a lot of time in Washington. He met personally on business relating to blacks, of course, with all of the presidents who were in office after he became involved in these kinds of activities. I have a picture which I will probably give to Mr. Blockson, which has about, I don’t know, a hundred black men on it. It’s a conference that Dad had obviously organized at the White House for blacks to discuss some problem with the then-president.

About the banking incident. Dad had always told me that he had organized a bank for the farmers to put their money in, and to save their money, and to make loans down on Delmarva Peninsula. It probably was in the state of Maryland. I doubt that it was in northern Virginia, and it certainly wasn’t in Delaware. I didn’t know much about this, and still don’t, but I do recollect that I was at Mercy-Douglass Hospital in my professional capacity, and I had a patient in the bed in the room, and in the other bed was an elderly individual from the eastern shore of Maryland. When this individual heard that
this was a Dr. Chisum seeing his roommate, he said, “Was your father Melvin Chisum?” So I said, “Well, yes he was.” He said, “Well, he certainly was quite a man. I remember when Mr. Chisum organized that bank for us down there,” and so forth, and so forth, which just documented something that I didn’t know that much about myself, and still don’t, except that he did do it.

My father was always a Republican politician. I think that the Hoover experience caused him to lose interest in the Republicans, or at least he felt that he didn’t have much of a future as a Republican politician right then. He had lost practically all his savings in the crash in 1929. We were still living in Chicago—I’m sorry, in Glencoe, and it was probably, it was certainly in the summer, late summer of 1932, that Dad put all the furnishings from the house in storage, and we got in the car that he had, and we headed west. He was on his way to Los Angeles to participate in politics for the presidential election, which was coming up, the election in which Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected president.

I can remember that trip because it was a great experience for kids. I would have been just eleven then, and my sister nine. And the usual thing that would happen—this was before it was possible for blacks to patronize most hotels. Dad would usually have to find some black family to accommodate us for the night, and the way he would usually locate this family is, after driving into a town—and I can remember this happening in half a dozen places—we’d get to a town, and Dad would just find the black section of town and park the car, and tell my mother, “Mother, you and Sister stay here. Son and I will be right back.”
We would start down the street, and I swear, we never walked more than 100 yards before Dad didn’t see somebody who said, “Melvin Chisum, how are you?” From here it would go; he would find old friends and find a place for his family to spend the night. He was just that well-known, in my experience, throughout every part of the country that I travelled to with him, which was all the way from Illinois across to California, and from California back to Pennsylvania.

After the election of ’32, we came on back to Philadelphia, drove back across the country and got back to Philadelphia in 1933. And my father made his residence in this town from then until he died, and of course I’ve been here ever since myself. When we got back to Philadelphia my father finally got a job as a resident engineer inspector with the PWA, I think it was called, the Public Works Administration. The Public Works Administration was a New Deal organization whose job it was to build public facilities—bridges, post offices, court houses, and so forth.

As a resident engineer inspector, my father would be assigned to one of these projects, and it would be his job to see to it that the specifications were met for building materials, work procedures, and so forth. I can remember he worked on the Mussel Shoals Dam, which was probably in Mississippi. I remember he was assigned at one time to a bridge that was being built up in the state of Washington, and any number of other projects he worked at during that period.

I forget why he finally left this job. I do recollect that when World War II got started my father was recruited to go to work at the
Sun Oil Company in a managerial capacity. This didn’t last very long because they eventually unionized the Sun Oil Company, and unions were always anathema to my father. Rather than work in a unionized camp, a unionized plant, he just quit.

He was always feisty; he was quite a fighter. He was short. Dad was probably the shortest member of our family. He was about 5—well, I take that back. He was about 5’7”, always weighed between about 208 and 212 pounds, and much of it was muscle. I’ve seen him fight any number of times, because he had a short temper, especially if he felt he was being wronged. His Texas background taught him that you just ought to fight if things weren’t going your way.

He could be as smooth as the best of them, and was a tremendous speaker, and orator par excellence. Spoke English as though he had been raised in the Northeast, which I guess effectively he was. And he loved to speak, but in spite of that if you got him in a corner he would fight in a minute.

The last time I saw him was when I was on leave as a soldier in World War II. I came home on leave probably in late January of 1944, and when I left home I was on my way overseas to the Pacific. Dad was struck by a streetcar at 30th and Market streets. He was on his way from home, which then was 812 North 46th Street in West Philadelphia, to a political meeting on Woodland Avenue in West Philly. And apparently he’d gotten off the Route 10 trolley car, and was crossing Market Street to get on the westbound 37 trolley car when the car he had just left struck him as he walked in front of it. He died in Philadelphia General Hospital. That was in July of 1945. My
father is buried in Mount Lawn Cemetery in Darby Township, Delaware County, just outside Philadelphia.

Regarding his siblings, William Woodruff spent the rest of his life in New York City. There’s a, is it Chisum Place, Chisum Terrace? Chisum some-such-a-street in Harlem, not too far from the Armory up there. I guess it’s probably the 15th New York State Guard Armory. My uncle was a soldier in World War I, apparently stayed in the reserves after World War I. Was in the National Guard, and during World War II he was the commanding officer of that Guard regiment, whose job it was to provide security for the City of New York. As my uncle told it, it was a matter of drawing lots to see whether he or Colonel Chauncey Hooper would be activated and go onto active duty. And my uncle won or lost, depending on how you look at it, but he remained at home in Philadelphia during World War II. He was an employee of the Immigration Department and worked at Ellis Island.

William Woodruff is buried in the Mount Hope Cemetery in Yonkers, New York, as is his father, my grandfather John Chisum, along with several other members of the family. My father’s sister Clarissa, Clarissa Strong, Clarissa Chisum Strong, is also buried there. To be more precise, my paternal grandfather is buried there. My paternal grandmother, Rachel Arvelia Henderson Chisum, is buried there. My aunt tells me that she was born in slavery at Tehuacana Hills in 1858 or 1860. She died in New York City in 1904. My father’s brother Benjamin Chisum is also buried in that cemetery, Mount Hope Cemetery, as is Elmore Chisum. Elmore is a first cousin of mine, the son of Benjamin Chisum.
I knew my father’s sister Clarissa. I first remember meeting her in 1933 or 1934, not too long after we had come back east. We went to visit her; she was living then in Jamaica, Long Island. Her husband was Thomas Strong. Mr. Strong was a Pullman porter. He also is buried in Mount Hope Cemetery where aunt Crissy’s buried, and the rest of the family. After her husband died she moved into Harlem. Most of the later part of her life she was living on 116th Street, just west of Park Avenue. I can remember visiting her there any number of times after the war, during my internship. And after my internship we used to go up to see her. She was ill for the last several years of her life, and my mother and I, and later my wife, mother and I, would go up and see Aunt Crissy from time to time. She died up there in that hospital on Roosevelt Island, and is buried in Mount Hope Cemetery, in Yonkers, again.

I never knew any of my other aunts and uncles on my father’s side. My Aunt Crissy used to talk about Sammy Sylvester Chisum. He apparently was quite long-lived. He died in St. Louis about 1972.

My mother was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey on May the 13th, 1894. She was very proud of the fact that she was the first black female graduate of the New Brunswick Public High School. After leaving high school she came to Philadelphia, and matriculated at the Frederick Douglass Nurses Training School in South Philadelphia, and she finished her training there in 1916.

That was at the time of the great flu pandemic, and mother went home when her training was over to nurse her family. She had fifteen siblings, and lost most of them in that flu pandemic. When the pandemic was over, Mother tried to get a job working as a nurse in
New Brunswick. She found that she had any number of opportunities. People would hire her presumably as a nurse, but she would find in short order that she was expected to function as a domestic.

She naturally wanted to practice her profession, and she heard through a friend that there was a dentist, a black dentist in Baltimore who was looking for a nurse to work in his office. So Mother went down to Baltimore, got that job, and it was there, while working there, that she met my father. They were married in Baltimore and came to Philadelphia in short order, where I was born, and later my sister, as well.

My mother’s father was Chester Daniel Venable. I should say that my mother’s maiden name was Venable, of course. I think she was probably christened as Eliza Ann Venable, but she didn’t prefer it that way. She preferred to be known as Ann Elizabeth Venable. Her father Chester was born in 1861 in Danville, Virginia, and died in 1932 in New Brunswick. My maternal grandmother’s name was Julia Elizabeth Book. She was born in 1863. She died in 1928 in New Brunswick. I’m not exactly certain whether she was born in New Brunswick or not; I think so. I remember both my mother’s parents. We visited New Brunswick on several occasions as youngsters, while they were living.

One other story to show you kind of the way Mother was. As I explained, Mother left Philadelphia to go home to New Brunswick to nurse her family. From New Brunswick she went down to Baltimore to go to work, and then she got married and was a housewife and a homemaker. Consequently, she’d never taken her nurse’s registration examination. I remember that when Anne and I were in junior high
school, it must have been about 1934 or ’35, mother obviously felt that she didn’t have to stay home to watch her children any longer.

My father was a very traditional thinker so far as family relationships were concerned, and the way he understood it, as the father and the husband he was supposed to earn the living. But even my sister and I as youngsters realized that although we had what we needed, that we were well clothed, the rent always got paid eventually, there was always coal in the basement to heat the house, we realized the bills were just getting paid. There was never anything to put aside. Year in and year out Dad had been able to earn just enough money to get the basics taken care of.

Mother had decided that she didn’t need to stay home to watch her children any longer, and that it was the proper thing for her to do, to return to her profession. It’s what she preferred to do, and she realized that the family could use the money. She had gone to Douglass Hospital and had talked to the lady who was the superintendent of nurses there, Mrs. Nada Brannon. Mrs. Brannon had been the superintendent of nurses when mother was in training, and Mrs. Brannon told mother that if she could pass her nurse’s examination to get her registration, that she’d give her a job. So Mom had found out what the latest books were, and had bought the books, and she was studying to take her nurse’s registration.

Now, she finished training in 1916, and this means that in 1934 or 1935 she took the state board of examination for nurses and passed it. At this point, she announced to her husband that she was going back to work, or going to work as a nurse. And he was outraged. I can remember some of it. He threatened, and he roared. He
threatened to leave home, and so forth. But Mother persisted, and she
did go back to work, and of course Dad stayed right there. And
Mother nursed most of the rest of her life.

She was at the old Douglass at first, even eventually worked
there as acting superintendent in Mrs. Brannon’s absence. After the
hospitals merged, Mercy and Douglass, that is, she moved out to
Mercy-Douglass Hospital and worked there as one of the charge
nurses, until I was in medical school, really.

When I matriculated in medical school, Mom would have
been—6, 57—she would have been 6 and 47, she would have been 53
years old. I knew she had high blood pressure, and it upset me a bit
that she insisted on nursing regularly. They had the nurses work very
long hours at that time, and I can remember her telling me on one
occasion, “Well, Son, you have to have a place to live.” I thought that
was kind of terrible that my mother thought she’d have to continue to
work in order that her son, who by then was 26 years old, would have
to have a place to live. I vowed to myself that as soon as I could I
would eliminate that excuse.

When I went off to New York to do my internship in 1952, I
remember telling Mother that what she could count on was my
coming home when the internship was over in order to establish a
practice. When I came home on Easter vacation during my internship
I found out that Mother had quit her job, had bought a television set,
and was home relaxing. She didn’t go back to work for a number of
months, I guess for well over a year, and when she did go back to
work she went back to work as a private duty nurse. She did private
duty wherever they wanted her for a while, and once she realized that
her services were in demand she only did private duty at Presbyterian Hospital, and then after a while she only did private duty at Presbyterian Hospital from 3 to 11. And that’s the way it was the rest of her working days.

She developed a painful hip, to the point that the last couple of years of her life she spent most of her time outside the house on a cane. This problem was partially responsible for the end of her nursing career. She always loved the profession, and was very well thought of as a nurse in the medical community. As a matter of fact, one reason I had it so easy establishing a practice in Philadelphia was that Mother was so well thought of by the physicians that they felt that Miss Chisum’s son must be all right.

My mother had a large aneurism of the abdominal aorta. It was not operable by the techniques available at the time, and she was hospitalized with that problem a couple of years before she passed away. That’s when the diagnosis was made. And then in late January of 1975, I was called home one Saturday night by some friends, who told me mother had pain in the abdomen. And I went over to the house on 34th Street and realized she was having difficulty again. To make the long story short, she was hospitalized at University Hospital, a patient of Dr. Brook Roberts, the vascular surgeon there then. They operated on her, found they couldn’t repair the aneurism, and Mother spent another week or ten days in the hospital, and expired there in early February of 1975. Both my parents are buried in Mount Lawn Cemetery in Darby Township.

The only one of my mother’s siblings I knew well was her sister Nan, Aunt Nan. Aunt Nan was married to a minister in the
AME Church. Her married name was Marshall. Aunt Nan came to Glencoe and lived with us for a while. As a matter of fact, she died in Glencoe of spinal meningitis.

I think that’s about enough of genealogy. As for education, I started school at the South Street School in Glencoe, Illinois. The family probably moved from Washington to Glencoe in 1925, because it’s my recollection that we were there about a year before I started school. There were only two colored families with children in that school, and I was introduced early to the idea of being a member of a minority in the school. Once Ann came to school there, as I recollect, that the other family had around three kids at South Street.

My first experience with discrimination came there, and it was interesting because I didn’t recognize it as such, but my mother was outraged when she learned what happened. What it was all about—I forget how far along we were, but they were going to have a Flag Day ceremony in the school, and different classes had to do different things. My teacher decided that my class was going to have this arrangement by which one of the students would be queried on questions about the flag, and the student would answer the questions that the other students asked him or her about the flag. And she decided that the student who would represent the flag, who would speak for the flag, would be the student who learned the responses best.

There were a whole series of questions, and you had to learn the questions, and you had to learn the responses. There was a competition at which they were going to figure out which one of the students in my class was going to be the flag. I can remember that
Mother and I were going over these responses, and I was studying and studying, and memorizing and memorizing. And when the contest finally came along, sure enough, I won the contest.

I had memorized all of these responses without any paper before me. I could reel off this page after page, or at least line after line of material, the responses to these questions. So at that stage of the game the teacher changed the rules a little bit. They decided that the student responding as the flag was going to be behind the flag. As it originally was conceived of, the student was going to be out in plain view alongside the flag. This didn’t bother me very much; I didn’t realize the implication of it. But when Mother came to the program and found out that I was behind the flag, and I never did get out from behind the flag, so nobody ever realized that that was her little black son back there responding for the flag, she was really upset.

When the audience had come in to sit down to view the ceremony, I was behind the flag. I was behind the flag during the ceremony, giving the responses, and when the ceremony was over all the people left and I was still behind the flag. Well, when she explained to me her viewpoint of why they had changed the rules, I could see that that was what they were trying to accomplish. I remember, that was my introduction to discrimination. It didn’t bother me that much then, but I realized that I had been mistreated. But I always was a good student. That was one other moral of that story. Studying things and memorizing, I would apply myself.

We left Glencoe in 1932, and made the trip I mentioned sometime back across the country to Los Angeles. Anne and I went to a school—oh, I can’t recall the name of that school now. Something
makes me want to say it was the 34th Street School, but I don’t think that was the name of it.

Incidentally, I should say, my sister Anne Elizabeth Chisum was born on August the 8th, 1923, in Philadelphia. Incidentally, we were born on South 12th Street, in a rooming house, the house of Mrs. Mattie Seymour. Miss Seymour ran a rooming house on 12th Street; it was about 12th and Catherine. My father usually stayed there when he went to town, when he went to Philadelphia, and we lived there so long that both my sister and I were born in my father’s quarters, I guess, in the rooms that my parents lived in in Mrs. Seymour’s house. Mattie Seymour was my godmother, and my sister’s godmother as well.

But to get back to the story, we were in Los Angeles less than a semester, because we registered in the school after the semester had started, and as I remember we left Los Angeles coming back east before the semester was over. We wound up back in Philadelphia. We lived first at 1239 North 57th Street, in the home of John and Fleeta Broadhead. Fleeta Broadhead had been a classmate of my mother’s in nurse’s training school. I always knew Mrs. Broadhead as Auntie Jones, and I always knew her husband as Uncle Jack. Jones, of course, was her maiden name. She was born and raised in Bridgewater, Pennsylvania.

We only lived with them for several weeks, maybe a month or so, until Dad could find a place for us to move to. Anne and I were registered in the Hanna School at 58th and Media. That was the first school we attended in Philadelphia.
Dad rented an apartment in what was then known as the Booker T. Washington Apartments on 47th Street, between Brown and Aspen, just on the east side of the playground which is across the street from Sulzberger Junior High School. We lived there—the address was probably 761 North 47th Street—we lived there for quite some time. And when we moved down there we transferred to Martha Washington, which is there at 47th and Aspen streets.

I’ll never forget my shock and my sister’s shock when we got to Martha Washington. It’s the first school we’d ever gone to that was primarily a black school. The teachers and the students at Martha Washington were black. As I mentioned, in Glencoe there were just the two black families with kids in the school. The school we went to in Los Angeles, there was only, as I remember, one other black student in the school. There were a number of Hispanic students there, but most of the students were white. At Hanna, when we went there, there was a sprinkling of black students, but we’d never seen anything like we saw at Martha Washington. It just seemed to us—we didn’t have anything against them; it was just a new experience and they seemed so, I guess the best word to use would be agitated. They just seemed to move around a good bit more than anybody, any students we’d ever seen.

[End Part 1.1 / Begin Part 1.2]

It seemed to us that these colored students had a very high energy level. It didn’t keep us from enjoying ourselves with them; it was just an observation that we made. Because of the moving around that we’d done in such a short period of time, from Glencoe to Los Angeles and back to Philadelphia, they set me back a half semester,
back one semester, and Anne as well. So that spring semester in 1933, I was just in 6A at Martha Washington. Anne and I both went to summer school. I forget the name of the school; it was in the 3400 block of Chestnut Street. And as a consequence of that I was able to finish the 6B in summer school, and that September I went on to Sulzberger Junior High School, which was right where I should be. Anne, on the other hand, did so well at summer school that they advanced her a whole year on the basis of her summer school work. Consequently, she finished Sulzberger a year and a half behind me instead of two years behind me.

Sulzberger, of course, was right across the street from where we lived. As I said, we were living on the east side of the playground. Sulzberger was on the south side of the playground. At about that time we moved from 761 North 47th Street to a house at 733 North 49th Street, so we were still only a block from school.

At the time I went to Sulzberger it was primarily a white school. I daresay that 25 to 30 percent of the students were black. When we got there, when I got there, there were no black teachers there. As a matter of fact, it caused quite a furor. Before I left, they assigned the first black teacher at the junior high school level in Philadelphia. It was Mrs. Beatrice Claire Overton, who came to Sulzberger as an art teacher, probably in the year 1935.

They had black teachers at the primary school level. They even had at least one principal at the primary school level. As a matter of fact, Dr. John Broadhead, the man with whom we stayed, with whose family we stayed when we first came to Philadelphia, was the
principal of the Arnold School at 22nd and Dauphin. But this was a big deal, appointing Mrs. Overton to the junior high school level.

I graduated from Sulzberger in June of 1936, and went to Central High School. My record was sufficiently good to get me there. Central then was located at Broad and Green. I spent two and a half years at Broad and Green, and in January for the spring semester in 1939, the new school building at Ogontz and Olney was activated. So I elected to go to the new Central, and I was in the first class. I was a member of the 172nd class; that was the first class to graduate from the new building at Ogontz and Olney. My schoolmates who stayed behind at the old school at Broad and Green, of course, were in the first class to graduate from the Benjamin Franklin High School, which was activated on the premises that Central had formerly occupied.

I finished Central in June of 1939, and matriculated that September in the college at the University of Pennsylvania. My father had always told me I was going to college. As a matter of fact, Dad used to talk to me a lot. I explained that he was away from home a lot. He really loved his family, and especially loved to talk to his son. When he was home, I loved to just be in the room with him and listen to what he was talking about. And he’d talk to me about anything that was on his mind. He’d explain things to me, tell me what he was doing, explain some of the facts of the world, world politics, national politics. Anything that was on his mind that he thought I might be interested in, he discussed with me.

And I can remember that Dad told me that I was going to college so early in my life that I had no idea what he was talking
about. When he said I was going to college, I didn’t know what college was, what it meant. But I said, “Yes, Daddy,” because I knew I was going. A couple of years later—we were living in Glencoe at the time—I remember that there was a great deal of excitement in the small black community there because Buddy Dean and Bill Seven were going away to college. So I started keeping an eye on Buddy and Bill. I wanted to see what they were going to do because Dad had told me I was going to college, too. And as the summer wore on it became obvious to me that Buddy and Bill were going away. In fact, they had both been accepted at the University of Iowa, and they were going out to Iowa to go to school.

So I realized then when they finally left and knew where they were going, that when Dad said I was going to college it meant to me that I was going to have this experience eventually where I would be going away to school. So he always told me I was going, and I always assumed that I was going because he told me I was going.

The matter of finances and whatnot never occurred to me; it never occurred to me I ought to worry about that. Dad said I was going to college. He was a great admirer of most of the Republicans, of Calvin Coolidge especially, and Dad told me I was going to Amherst, and I was going to Amherst because Calvin Coolidge had gone to Amherst. Well, as 1939 approached, the business of the practical aspect of the money to go to Amherst began to come up, and Dad suggested that I had better apply to some other schools. Specifically, he told me to apply to Penn. Well, Mother told me that I ought to apply to Lincoln as well. And I talked to her about it, and she explained that I ought to apply to Lincoln because it costs much
less to go to Lincoln. I took this up with Dad, and he told me not to worry about it; he was going to get the money to send me to Penn.

Dad felt strongly that the way to prepare his son to deal with the modern world was to send him to one of the big and famous schools. He was a frustrated lawyer himself, and not only had he told me I was going to college, he always told me I was going to be a lawyer. The law school hadn’t been picked out, but that was also a given. His son was going to be a lawyer.

So, I did apply to Penn. I was accepted. When I got there—as I recollect it, and my recollection is probably accurate, there were exactly eight black male students in the undergraduate school at the University of Pennsylvania. One of them was John Schremp.

John became one of my closest friends during our years together in college. I had known him slightly at Central High School. His brother-in-law was Judge Theodore Spaulding, and Judge Spaulding, being in the know and being a politician, told Johnny something that I didn’t know. I don’t know that it made any difference to me, but it explained why he didn’t go up to Central. Most of the students who proposed to go to college went to the new Central. Johnny certainly proposed to go to college, but Judge Spaulding had told him that each high school received at least one full tuition scholarship for four years, for one student, to the University of Pennsylvania. And he told him that most of the guys who want to go to college, that is to say most of the best students, will be going up to the new Central, so if you stay at Ben Franklin, you’ll have less competition to win one of those scholarships.
So Johnny did stay, and Johnny did win the scholarship. So when I went to college at Penn in the fall of ’39, I found him there. There were six other black students there. One was Warren Grey—six other black undergraduate students there. Warren Grey, from Montclair, New Jersey, was in the Fine Arts School taking the Architecture curriculum. A fellow named Leon Williams from Bermuda was there in the college. George Whitfield Nottage was there. Beverly Graves was there. I had known Bev Graves at Central, not well. He was a big man on the campus at Central, very high-profile, well-liked individual, a lovely youngster. Leon Allen, who also had gone to Central, but whom I did not know at Central, was there.

And last and far from least was William T. Coleman, Jr., from Germantown and Germantown High School. Bill Coleman was probably about two years ahead of me in college. This, of course, is the William T. Coleman who went on to Harvard Law School, became about the first black to be a member of a major law firm in Philadelphia. He was one of the legal brains behind the Civil Rights activists, Martin Luther King, Jr., specifically. He was appointed the Secretary of Transportation in the cabinet of Gerald Ford. He is currently the chairman of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, a member of the law firm of O’Melveny and Myers in Washington, DC—a brilliant, prominent lawyer of international reputation.

There also were either three or four black females in the undergraduate school.

I went out for football in my freshman year at Penn. I didn’t do it because I had any ambitions to be a football player; I really wanted
it for the exercise. And that was a mistake, because they weeded us out that first fall. By the time Thanksgiving came, none of us who went out on the field to get the exercise was at all interested in football after that. Those fellows who were out there trying to earn their scholarships and trying to make the team beat us to death in a very short period of time.

That experience let me know future at Penn resided in the academic field, in the scholastic field at least, not in the athletic, and I applied myself to my studies the rest of my days there. I majored in Political Science and English. I had nearly as many courses in the Wharton School as I did in the College, but I was registered in the College. I was preparing myself to be the lawyer my father had always told me I was going to be.

World War II had started in 1941, and in order to shorten the curriculum for males, to give them a chance to finish school before they might be drafted, we all went to school, or most of us went to school, in the summer of 1942. And consequently, I graduated from college in February of 1943.

In order to keep from being drafted, I had to volunteer. They had an arrangement called Enlisted Reserve Corps. They wouldn’t guarantee you that you would finish college, but if your draft board called you up, you could volunteer. You would go through the paperwork, take the physical examination, be inducted into Enlisted Reserve Corps, and placed on inactive duty with the understanding that they would allow you to finish college if they could. And fortunately for me, I was able to finish school before they called me to
active duty. I graduated in February. I was called to active duty in May of 1943.

Incidentally, I joined Omega Psi Phi fraternity. I was initiated on May the 10th, 1940. In the first semester of my senior year I was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and I was elected to Pi Gamma Mu, the national honorary social science fraternity.

Well, when they called me to active duty I was sent down to Camp Lee, Virginia, in the Quartermaster Corps. Spent five weeks in basic training down there. Was then eight weeks of technical training, they trained me as a clerk. At that time if you were black and in the Quartermaster Corps, and maybe in the other services as well, if you’d finished high school you automatically went to clerk school.

That technical training class was quite an experience for me. I had never been around so many intelligent, trained black people before. Many of them, of course, had gone to all-black schools all over the South. I hadn’t had that experience, and it was a joy to find young men of my age with various backgrounds, but similarly educated, similarly motivated, with similar interests. It was a lot of fun in spite of the work involved and in spite of the honor regimentation.

I met any number of people whom I’ve run into as the years have gone by. The first one I would think of, of course, is my good friend Morris Williams of Greensboro, North Carolina, who went through clerk school with me, who told me as I was going across the company street two to three weeks after clerk school was over that I’d better go home that weekend because I was going to be shipped out the next week. And I said, “Morris, where am I going?” And he said,
“Well, I told you too much already, soldier. You just go home, because you’re going to leave here next week.” And sure enough, he was right.

I was transferred to Fort Francis E. Warren, Wyoming. I left Camp Lee on the 10th of October, 1943, and five days later, on a troop train, of course, and that train wandered and meandered, backed up, and so forth, generally heading west and north—and five days later we were at the railhead at Fort Francis E. Warren, Wyoming. And I was assigned to the headquarters and headquarters detachment of the 492nd Quartermaster Battalion. And that’s the only Army organization I ever was assigned to. All my other duty was attached unassigned, or some duty stays other than assigned.

The 492nd Quartermaster Battalion when it was activated was alerted to go overseas. We didn’t know that then. We didn’t know it; the soldiers didn’t know it. But we spent the better part of that winter out there in Wyoming, the coldest winter I’ve ever spent in my life, most snow I’ve ever seen in my life. In late January I went home on leave, and when I got back to Fort Warren the outfit was getting ready to move out. And by troop train, we left Fort Warren along about the 15th of February, and travelled on west to Camp Stone in California, where we spent about a week before we went by ferry boat down to Fort Mason Port of Embarkation.

They put my outfit on United States Army Transport Sea Capped. And on the Sea Capped, we left San Francisco Harbor and landed in Honolulu on the 20th of February, 1944. I remember that because we left Hawaii on the 20th of September, 1944, and the
landing on Leyte, whither I was bound, took place on the 20th of October, 1944.

So, my outfit, Major Wallace A. Manning of Ogden, Utah—the rest of the officers were white, as well. The enlisted men were black. We went out to an airbase called Kahuku, Kahuku Army Airbase. We spent a couple of months out there before we were moved to Scoffield Barracks. The rest of our time in Hawaii was spent there. The last couple of weeks before we left Oahu we lived in a bivouac area that was commonly referred to as Mud City. And on the 20th of September we left Mud City and were ferried out to P.A. 20, Army Personnel Attack Ship 20, a personnel carrier, which left the harbor, I daresay, probably the following day.

And in convoy we moseyed on west, made our first landfall at Enewetak, spent several days at Enewetak, then headed southwest and finally put in several days later at Manus Island in the Admiralties. And when that convoy that we were in, which we thought was big, pulled into Manus, we found a bigger convoy yet down there. This conglomeration of ships and personnel was the 10th Army, and the associated Marines and naval personnel which composed the attack force, the main attack force, which made the landing on the island of Leyte on the 20th of October.

My outfit went ashore on the 23rd of October. That was my real, my first exposure to action. It was quite an experience. The Japanese were trying to sink the ships, of course. The ships, naturally, and the installations they had been able to set up on shore would be able to fire at the Japanese planes, dive bombers, torpedo bombers,
kamikaze bombers. We saw it all out there. Saw ships just disappear beneath the—after being struck by kamikaze planes.

Finally went ashore on the 23rd and spent our whole time right there on Dulag, D-U-L-A-G, Beach, Dulag Beach in Leyte. We set up a command post right there in Dulag. Again, I was in one of those outfits that didn’t have that much to do. They figured out some paperwork for the 492nd to do, but I couldn’t see that we had anything to do with any of the quartermaster operations there.

Actually, in the month of January, the outfit was alerted to move on. We got all our stuff together, and they moved us on to a smaller attack ship, a smaller personnel carrier, which was in Leyte Gulf. And we just sat there on that ship, from, oh, sometime in January to late March. And I daresay about the 24th or 25th of March that ship left Leyte Gulf, in convoy again, and we headed north, and this was the attack force that made the landing on Okinawa. That was my second battle.

And we went through the same thing on Okinawa that we’d gone through in the Philippines: Japanese planes diving, bombing, kamikaze attacks. The Navy ground installations repelling the airships. Finally went ashore after about a week of that, and spent the rest of the time in the jungles of Okinawa.

The landings on Okinawa were made on the 1st of April. That was Easter Sunday; it also was April Fools’ Day. The war, of course, was over. They must have dropped the bombs, bomb on Hiroshima along about the 2nd or 3rd of August. It seems to me VJ Day was along about the 3rd of August, 1945, and the war was over, in terms of active
warfare, at least. It took me another several months before I was able to get home.

My father had been killed in the meantime. I learned of this while the war was still on. I had no chance to come home because the war was being fought. After the war was over, I was placed on detached service with the 52nd Medium Port, TC. It was a large outfit, the outfit which was in charge of all landing and loading operations for the Port of Okinawa—for the island of Okinawa, that is to say.

As I remember it there were around 500 and some enlisted men in the outfit, and a complement of something like 40 or 50 officers. It was an organization designed to provide the brains for loading and unloading a lot of merchandise, and people.

Incidentally, of course, I went into the Army as a recruit, after some time before we went overseas, we got a few stripes in the outfit, and I was a technician 5th grade, a corporal with a T under it, in other words, when we left the States bound for Hawaii, I was the personnel clerk. The personnel sergeant major—rather, the sergeant major was William Roundtree of Washington, DC. For reasons of their own, the powers that be stateside had assigned two second lieutenants to our outfit.

The table of organization of a headquarters and headquarters attachment medical department called for twelve enlisted men and three officers in the headquarters, the headquarters detachment. The CO was to be a lieutenant colonel, the executive officer a major, and the adjutant and attachment commander was a captain. TO also called for two personnel officers, one in—I’m sorry, called for two warrant officers, one in personnel, and one in supply.
We went overseas—oh, the attached medical section called for a dentist and a medical officer, both to be captains, and seven enlisted men who were the medical and dental technicians. When we went overseas, the attached medical section was in place and in force. The lieutenant colonel was a Colonel Burnett. Major Wallace Manning was the executive officer. A Lieutenant Norbert Hansen was the adjutant and detachment commander. And they sent two second lieutenants instead of two warrant officers. Apparently, second lieutenants were a dime a dozen back in the service command, which included Wyoming.

When we got to Hawaii, Lieutenant Colonel Burnett put us behind himself very soon. He got transferred, and those two second lieutenants found that they were in short supply over there. They were transferred out, and our commanding officer was told that the personnel officer and supply officer would have to be warrant officers. They either would assign them two warrant officers, or if he saw fit, he could recommend some of his enlisted men to take the examination and they might be considered for those appointments.

Well, Major Manning—also, I might say that the policy in the Army at the time was that if the enlisted men in an organization were black, that the warrant officers should be black. We always felt that’s one reason they hadn’t appointed warrant officers back stateside. Be that as it may, Major Manning didn’t trust black people very much, but he figured that he would be better off with the black people he knew than with some black people he didn’t. So he elected to allow his better enlisted men to take the examination, to see if he couldn’t get a couple of warrant officers from his own boys.
Well, to make a long story short, I passed the warrant officer examination and I got the appointment as the warrant officer junior grade in personnel. They transferred in a warrant officer junior grade in supply, a fellow named James A. May. James was from Virginia, from—where in Virginia was he from? I forget; I want to say Emporia, but I’m not sure. Be that as it may, when we left the Hawaiian Islands on our way to the Philippines, I was Warrant Officer Chisum. By the time I was assigned to the 53rd Medium Port TC, I was probably Chief Warrant Officer Chisum, and as I say it, the only black person working in that headquarters.

The company headquarters, the Medium Port headquarters, was located in the only building left standing in Naha, Okinawa after the bombardment. I remember that I was always properly treated there. I didn’t stay with the outfit. I was attached unassigned, and I stayed over in an area with a bunch of black officers. There was nothing unusual about that at the time; that’s the way it was done. And as I remember, I probably ate even with my black colleagues, but I went to work at the 53rd Medium Port.

And I never realized how much tension there probably was involved in having me there until I was leaving. Nearly everybody there was Southern, had a Southern accent. The man who was the personnel officer, the chief personnel officer, was Mr. Robert—was a Lieutenant Robert Gordon. Always treated me very nice, but obviously a Southerner from the Deep South; had been an enlisted man in the regular Army. Knew his personnel work. But he left me in charge of what I was supposed to do, the morning report, the service reports, everything except the officers’ records.
The 201 records of the officers I didn’t have much to do with, but the rest of the routine things, payroll, all of that business, was Mr. Chisum’s bailiwick. Personnel sergeant major was Wallace Tosh. Tosh was from Texas, and he had a big Texan accent. Always treated me with the greatest courtesy and respect, but the relationship was such that there was never anything personal or friendly about it; we would just take care of business together. Relaxed, it seemed to me.

But I’ll never forget, when I was leaving that outfit, I forget whether I was leaving because they were leaving, or I was leaving because I was leaving, but one day I was telling them goodbye, and Tosh kind of warmed up to me a little bit. “Mr. Chisum,” he said, “it’s been a very pleasant experience working with you these several months, and I want to thank you for helping me out. And you’ve taught me an awful lot.” And he said, “I just want you to know that when I left Texas I wouldn’t have believed that there was any black man in the world who could teach me anything, and you’ve shown me that I was wrong about that.” So I said, “Well Sergeant Tosh, I guess the Army is a learning experience for us all.” But that, I’ll never forget his telling me that, because it surprised me so. I guess what surprised me was that he would say it.

But in April, I guess it was, or maybe late March, I guess I probably left Okinawa on the 25th of March. I was on an APA again, this time it was the President Hayes, went from Okinawa back to Fort Mason. Fort Mason, took the reverse trip on the ferry boat back to Camp Stoneman. I spent several days in Camp Stoneman, then in a train going across the country to Fort Dix, where I was discharged. I’ll always remember the day I got home. My mother was there, and
Bev Carter was there. Bev was there not only to welcome me home, but to inform me that that coming Thursday he wanted me to be his partner at the West End Bridge Club.

Let me say that I learned to play bridge very likely when I was in junior high school. My mother was a great bridge player. She played with the Carters especially, Dr. and Mrs. Carter. I should say that another classmate of my mother’s in nurse training school was Mariah Green Parker Carter. Auntie Carter was married to William Beverly Carter, M.D. Dr. Carter was born and raised in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, finished the school known as Medical Chi probably in 1915. Did his internship at the Frederick Douglass Hospital, where he met my mother and her classmate. And he married Auntie Carter. They went out to Coatesville, and Dr. Carter took over the practice of Dr. DeHaven Hinkson. Dr. Hinkson was going into the service in World War I. Dr. Carter practiced out there for a while in Coatesville before moving into West Philadelphia, where he spent the last of his practice days. Their only child was William Beverly Carter, Jr., my closest friend throughout most of my life.

We were so close that many people who should have known better always thought we were cousins, because he called my mother Aunt Venny, I called his mother Auntie Carter. I called Dr. Carter Uncle Beverly, and we used to call each other cousin. And there are people to this day who think that Bev Carter was my cousin. He was really closer to my brother. We were just as thick as two thieves, and the friendship just flourished over the years until he died unexpectedly of a heart attack in his 61st year. He died on my mother’s birthday, May 13th, 1982.
That reminds me, I can’t remember having specified earlier that I was born on November the 29th, 1921, in Philadelphia.

Anyhow, I had learned bridge and my sister had when we were in junior high school, just from following my mother around, and we picked up the game at the Carters. But I could never find anyone to play it with me, none of my colleagues, none of my buddies, that is. So we used to play pinochle all the time, because that was the popular game. But probably during our second or third year in college, Bev came home one weekend and called me, and told me that he wanted me to come over to the house. He had a couple of buddies with him and he wanted a bridge game.

So after that, many weekends I was playing bridge with Bev and his friends. And I would imagine in writing him during the war, he realized I was playing bridge in the Army. He was certainly playing at home. He was never called to duty in the service because of his asthma; he always had severe asthma from the time he was a youngster. And he had taken up duplicate bridge, and he was awaiting my arrival because he wanted to have a regular partner, and the natural person was Jack Chisum.

So from that first Thursday, I daresay I played bridge every Thursday from the first Thursday after I got home out of the Army, which would have been in April of 1946, until the last Thursday before I matriculated to medical school, which would have been September of 1947. And that was really the peak of my bridge game. The regular sessions there at West End made me about as sharp as I’ve ever been, so far as that game is concerned.
When I came out of the Army—of course my father was dead now, so the only person home was mother. I guess Anne, my sister, had finished nursing school at the Lincoln School of Nurses in 1945. I guess when I came out of the service in 1946, she was probably nursing in Detroit. She nursed at Herman Keefer Hospital there for a year or two. Be that as it may, when I got home I was interested in trying to get into medical school.

Several things—the biggest thing which happened to me when I was in the Army was that I had changed my mind about what career I wished to follow. I have often said that the difference between me when I came out of the Army and when I went in was that I had two calluses on the bottom of each foot, I knew how to type, I had decided that I wanted to go to medical school instead of law school, and I was three years older.

I never really asked myself what I wanted to do with my own life until I was overseas in the Army. I remember one day I was on the beach at Leyte. I guess it must have been along about the 30th of October, maybe early November. I was walking down the beach, or maybe riding down the beach, and as far as I could see there were landing craft parked almost like cars in a parking lot on the beach, disgorging all kinds of equipment and personnel, trucks coming out, tanks coming out, cans of gas coming out, oil coming out, food coming out. They were just discharging all sorts of things on the beach, in the way of men and materiel. Overhead you could hear shells whistling, and I realized that those were shells which had been fired from ships which were so far out in the Leyte Gulf that I
couldn’t see them, and that those shells were directed at the Japanese up in the mountains of Leyte.

There were spiffily dressed patrolmen on the beach directing traffic. You thought they were on Broad Street, one every several hundred yards, with their white gloves on, directing the traffic, two lanes of traffic, one going up the beach, one going down the beach. And I remember looking at this and saying to myself, “There is no way in the world that anybody can resist this much strength indefinitely. The United States is going to win this war, and if you don’t get killed, you’re going to be going home. What are you going to do when you get home?” I had never asked myself that question before, but I began to think about it, not worry about it, but think about the future. “What are you going to do when you get home?”

Between that time and the time that I came out of the Army, I discovered that the people for whom I had the most respect were the doctors. I met several black doctors with whom I became close. We palled around together, played bridge together. The two I would think of were Andrew K. Roberts of Washington, DC, and James E. Jackson of Seattle, Washington. These two especially I spent a lot of time with, talked to them a lot. They were men I just looked up to, men I respected, and in talking to both of them about my own future they both encouraged me, if I was inclined to do so, to go to medical school.

finished college. The law school curriculum is three years in length at the most. I understand they have summer sessions now, and I can finish law school in two and a half years. And if I go home and decide I want to go to medical school, from what you’re telling me, I’ll have to go to medical school for four years and do an internship for another before I can even think about earning a living.” I said, “That’s exactly twice as long as it would take me to qualify myself to finish—qualify myself to practice after going to law school.”

And James Jackson told me, he said, “Jack,” he said, “Those two and a half years won’t mean a thing to you 10, 15, 20, 25 years down the line. What you’re talking of, what you’re thinking about, isn’t important. The most important thing for you to do is decide what you want to do so you will be happy in your profession.”

And I took his words to heart, and I decided that I was going to go to medical school if I could get in. Well, when I got home one of the first things I did was to go over to the campus of the University of Pennsylvania to say hello to my old friends there. I remember I ran into Mr. Gene Gisburne. Mr. Gisburne, he and a man by the name of George Peters had both been assistants to the dean when I was in college, and it was only with their help that I was able to stay in school, in a sense that I never was able to pay all my tuition. My first semester of paying I had to pay my full tuition, but because of my scholastic aptitude, after that, between fellowships and scholarships, I never did have to pay them the money right then.

When I left Penn I probably owed them $6- or $700, $700 or $800 dollars, or something like that, for tuition and fees. But they saw to it that it got through, and it was Gene Gisburne and George Peters
who were always at my side to help me and arrange for me to get the finances for this semester straightened out. By this semester, I mean the upcoming semester.

So I went back and talked to these folks, and said hello, “Glad to be out of the service,” and whatnot. Found out that Dad had been back there taking care of business while I was gone, maintained the relationship. And I guess it was Mr. Gisburne I told what I wanted to do. And he said, “Look,” he said, “You go over and talk to Dr. Kennedy. He’s the assistant to the dean over there. Tell him you’re one of our boys, and what’s on your mind.” So I did; I went over and talked to Dr. Kennedy, and he told me what I would need in order to qualify to be accepted to medical school. I needed some Physics, and some Chemistry, and some Zoology, none of which I had. So I registered in the college collateral courses in the summer of 19—

[End Part 1.2 / Begin Part 2.1]

To repeat, that summer I took the basic course in Chemistry, General and Organic Chemistry. In the fall I took Physics I, I guess it was Qualitative Analysis of Chemistry and Zoology I. In the spring I took Physics II, another course in Genetics, another course in Zoology, it probably was Genetics and Qualitative Analysis. That summer I took the course in Cat Anatomy.

In the meantime, I had applied to medical school the previous winter, and I had heard in the spring that I was accepted at medical school at Penn, so there I went. Well, I did apply to one other school. From talking to my friends who were also trying to get into medical school, or dental school, or law school at the time, they made me rather anxious that I had only applied to Penn. I found out it was
common policy to apply to several schools at least, so my friends made me so nervous that I did apply to Howard University.

And I was accepted in Penn probably sometime in early April, and I never heard from the application to Howard until probably sometime in June. And in June, I got a letter from them. As I remember it the first letter told me that I had been rejected as an applicant. Then several weeks later, as I recollect it, I got a letter from them telling me that I could come there in September if I would take two years of German, something like that. Now this, mind you, I wanted to matriculate there for that September.

Then the next letter, I forget what the next letter said, but about the fourth letter that I got from them, and that letter probably came in early September, told me that if I would come on down to Howard they would admit me to the class. Of course, I never bothered to answer any of those letters. The only reason I mention this, I have talked to so many people who went to medical schools other than Howard who can give you a similar story as to what happened to their applications to Howard Medical School.

But anyhow, I matriculated at Penn in 1947, and finished there in 1952. I was out ill for a year. When I got to college at Penn, to medical school at Penn, I was tuberculin negative. They use to do tuberculin tests on tuberculin negative people, as I remember, three times a year. When I had my tuberculin test done in January of my second year, it had converted to positive. And, oh, probably a couple of months later I got a notice from the student health center to come over and get my chest x-rayed. And about a week after I had that
done, I got a message from Dr. Harry D. Lees, who was the head of the student health service at Penn. He said he wanted to see me.

So I went over to see Dr. Lees and Dr. Lees had my chest x-ray there, and he showed me where I had a minimal lesion, which was quite consistent with tuberculosis. They did some laboratory work on me, all of which was normal. They had me taking my temperature; I didn’t have any fever. My blood count was normal. And there seemed to be no evidence of the disease except for the chest x-ray. Of course, I was distraught. At the time the only anti-tuberculosis drug which had been developed was streptomycin. So many people had developed a resistance to streptomycin that they didn’t prefer to use the drug except when the circumstances were fairly desperate. The current wisdom then was that the way to treat me was to put me at rest, and this of course meant that I would lose some time for school.

Well, I begged them to let me finish my second year. As I remember, that chest x-ray was dated something like May the 5th or May the 10th, so we only had about three to four weeks to go. And Dr. Lees finally compromised, he wouldn’t let me come to class, but he told me that I could take the examinations. So it was a matter of getting my classmates to give me the lectures notes, so that I would have the information they had been exposed to that last month. And my good friend Teddy Cohen—and I realized then what a good friend he was—was most careful to take notes very carefully in legible handwriting so that his buddy Chisum would know what had gone on in the class. I took my final examinations of my second year, passed my final examinations, and then I sat out a year.
I wasn’t in the bed most of the time, but I will say I spent about half of each day on the couch in the house, listening to the radio primarily. This is the first time I developed any true appreciation for classical music, because I listened to a good bit of it that year of ’49–’50.

Well, Dr. Lees x-rayed my chest every two months. He x-rayed my chest in July; there was no difference in the appearance of the lesion. Still felt fine. X-rayed my chest in September. As I remember there was no real difference in the lesion in September. But when he x-rayed my chest in November there was definitely a decrease in the size of that lesion, and he x-rayed my chest in January, it was smaller yet, x-rayed my chest in March, it was smaller yet. And then, what would have been next. We were so satisfied with my progress that as I remember we didn’t even x-ray the chest in June. Went back and had it x-rayed in August, and low and behold, the lesion was larger than it had ever been. And I remember I broke out into a cold sweat when I saw it. And Dr. Lees looked at me, and I looked at him, and he was dejected. And I was dejected. I remember my question to him. I said, “Well, what are you going to do now?”

And we talked about it, and I said to him, “I don’t want to sit out another year of school. I want to proceed with my education.” He said, “Well,” he said, “What we’ll have to do then is to give you a pneumothorax.” So I said, “Well, how do we go about that?” He said, “Henry Hopkins, Dr. Hopkins, takes care of those.” So he called Dr. Hopkins and told Dr. Hopkins about me, and I went over and saw Dr. Henry Hopkins. Dr. Henry Hopkins was an internist at the University of Pennsylvania who had an interest in pulmonary
diseases. I had met him. I’m sure I had met him, because he was—well, I guess I hadn’t met him then, this was the second year. Anyhow, Dr. Hopkins, I remember he looked at the x-ray films and he had one eye which was miscast, I remember he looked at those films with one eye, looked at it with the other. He said, “Well,” he said, “you might have a lesion there, but we’ll see if we can’t get your lung down.”

So I figured he didn’t like black people right away; he was going to complicate the situation. And all he had done was look at the film. So I went back several days later and he started to collapse my right lung for me. And sure enough, he turned out to be right. He showed me the films. He couldn’t get the lung down. He put some air in, he put some air in, he put some air in, and x-rayed my chest, and you could see the tenting where the lung was pinned to the pleura, either directly or by an adhesion. So he said, “Well,” he said, “We’ll have to bring you in and do an interpleural pneumolysis, clip that adhesion.

So he sent me to see Dr. Charles Kirby, who was one of the chest physicians there, and Dr. Kirby arranged for me to come into the hospital. And Dr. Kirby and Dr. Julian Johnson went into my chest, clipped the adhesion. I guess I spent around two or three days in the hospital then. And then the lung, of course, collapsed when they did clip the adhesion. I kept that pneumothorax throughout the last two years of school. I came back to school in September of 1950, and I finished in June of 1952.

Well, that was the first year of the matching plan, the plan they used to allow interns and residents to select the hospitals they wanted
to do their internships and residencies at. My sister was back home by now, and I remember that in the summer of 1951 she and Elmer Taylor and I went up to Lincoln Hospital. Mind you, this is the same hospital which my sister had trained. Elmer Taylor, Elmer Taylor, Jr., was in medical school at the Jefferson Medical College. He was due to finish in 1952, as I was due to finish now at Penn. And Elmer had spent the summer of 1951 at Lincoln Hospital doing an externship.

It was probably in October or November of that year, my mother’s very good friend Ruth Ivey was visiting us. Ruth lived in New Brunswick. She lived there as a domestic. She was a cook in one of the fraternity houses at Rutgers. Ruth was the wife of my mother’s older sister’s son. Mother had a sister named Sue. Sue had a son; I forget the son’s name, but Ruth was his widow, and she was about Mother’s age. They were very close friends.

Ruth was over visiting, and we decided somehow on a Friday night to drive up to New York City. I was going to drive Ruth and Mother up to Harlem and leave them at Aunt Chrissie’s house, and Anne and Elmer and I were going up to Lincoln Hospital to spend some time. He wanted us to see the hospital. Anne wanted to go up there and see some friends, and I was considering going up there to do my internship.

Well, I remember that we got to the hospital, and we left Anne down in the nursing office. She found somebody she knew down there. And Elmer and I went on up into the hospital itself, toward the laboratory. We were walking down the hall to the laboratory, and the prettiest little brown-skinned girl I had ever seen in my life saw us and
said, “Oh, Dr. Taylor,” and ran up and jumped in his arms. And I said to myself right then, this is where I’m going to do my internship.

And let me say that when I was in medical school I had no social life at all in the school. There were, I guess when I got to school, I guess Ed Sule was probably still in medical school there, then there was myself, Jim Robinson. James H. Robinson finished the year behind me in 1953. A fellow named John Williams had come to school in the—he had really registered in the graduate school, was studying anatomy, but he transferred to the medical school. Charlie Chambers was there in medical school, but there were—at the most there were five blacks in the medical school during my whole stay there.

Our social life was oriented toward our friends off campus. There was no socializing with nurses. There were no black nurses there; there were no black student nurses there. And I realized that my classmates had friends in the hospital. There was some boy-girl activity there, but I didn’t participate in it, and while I didn’t miss it that much, I certainly appreciated its advantages, especially when that little girl came up and jumped in Elmer’s arms. I decided that if that’s the way it was at Lincoln, that’s the place I wanted to be, and I put Lincoln Hospital as number one.

No, I take that back. I put Cleveland City General Hospital as number one in my match, Lincoln Hospital as number two, Philadelphia General Hospital as number three. I had decided that I was going home to practice, and I felt that the training I needed I could best secure at somebody’s city general hospital. I was matched at Lincoln, and I went to Lincoln and had what I still this was one of
my most enjoyable years in my life, because of the social activities at Lincoln Hospital.

I had always been a jazz fan ever since I was a youngster, and I was known within two weeks after getting there as Dr. Birdland. The reason for that was in order to leave the house staff quarters, you had to walk down a long passageway past the emergency room. Of course, the internship started on the 1st of July. In the evenings the nurses would be hanging out the window in order to try to cool off. The hospital was not air conditioned. All of the student nurses there and most of the staff nurses were black. Some of the teaching staff was white.

The first black house staff members they had ever had at Lincoln Hospital had appeared there about two years before I got there. This particular year that I was there there were two single black doctors on the house staff, one was—well, black male doctors, I should say. Jane Williams was there, Jane, of course, being female. But Frank Lester was a resident in Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Melvin Chisum was there as an intern. As I so often said, those girls treated us like he was Jesus and I was Christ, and we had a very good time when we were there.

Well, the first night I was off, of course, I stayed in the house staff quarters. We ate in the hospital cafeteria. And about 9 o’clock that night—it was summertime, so it wasn’t quite dark, but the nurses hang out the window trying to beat the heat. The hospital wasn’t air conditioned. So Dr. Chisum walking down the, coming down the passage way, and they said, “Dr. Chisum, where are you going?” I said, “Birdland.” And about a week or ten days later, same thing, hot
July night, the receiving ward windows were all up, and the nurses hanging out there trying to catch a breath of air. “Hey Dr. Chisum, where are you going?” I said, “Birdland.” Well, after that I was known as Dr. Birdland. As a matter of fact, some of them still call me Dr. Birdland.

My internship was a great experience not only for social reasons, but for professional reasons. The internship was exactly what I thought it was going to be. I thought I’d work hard, and I did. I thought I’d learn a lot, and I did. I thought I’d have a lot to do, and I did. I made at least one great friend while I was there, two, really, Dr. Jack Gardner and his wife Chippy.

Jack was an Indianapolis, Indiana, fellow who had gone to Meharry Medical College, did his internship at—excuse me, at Harlem Hospital, had gone in the Air Force for a couple of years and had come back to Lincoln Hospital to do a residency in Internal Medicine at the encouragement of Emanuel K. Goldberger, who was the hospital cardiologist. Jack Gardner rapidly became the chief resident in Medicine, so to all intents and purposes he was my boss when I was there, and the experience was richer for that.

I should introduce Edward E. Holloway into this discussion now. Edward Holloway has certainly been the most important professional influence on my life. Above and beyond that, he has been a father to me, and an extremely good friend, a man whom I’ve learned to love as a physician, as a friend, as a teacher, as a scholar, as a buddy. He is a kindred spirit in every sense of the word. My mother told me about Dr. Holloway very likely before I even went to medical school. She told me that—she had spread the word around,
of course, because she was very proud when her husband—when her son was accepted to medical school. And she said that Dr. Holloway especially said he would like to meet me.

Well, I felt that the doctor was just being patronizing to a nurse. I could understand that if a nurse said, “My son is going to medical school,” if he had any sensitivity at all, he would be bound to say, “I’d like to meet him.” I didn’t pay much attention to it, but I finally met him—won’t bother you with that story—in the early part of my second year in medical school, about halfway through the second year.

He invited me to make rounds with him at Mercy-Douglass Hospital, where he was a chief. Well, he used to make rounds at 7 o’clock on Saturday morning, and of course at 7 o’clock on Saturday morning, you only have the true believers making rounds. It was Dr. Holloway, Dr. Lester Henry, who was in town that year—I guess he was probably taking the postgraduate course at the University of Pennsylvania. Suffice it to say Dr. Henry was usually there making rounds. The resident was Dr. Alfonso Jordan.

And I guess I probably made rounds with Dr. Holloway on Saturday mornings from then throughout the rest of medical school. More than that, after I met him he used to call me practically every night, and it was an unusual evening when I didn’t spend at least ten or fifteen minutes talking with Dr. Holloway. Dr. Holloway always asked me what I learned that day. He used to lean on me; he used to encourage me. He used to stimulate me to learn, learn, learn, learn.

He was an avid reader, himself. As close as you can be, can come to being one, he was a self-taught physician. When I say that,
he had no formal training after his internship, but he was a member of the American Board of Internal Medicine and the American Board of Cardiovascular Diseases on the basis of reading, his own reading, and his own self-application, and his own discipline, and his own superior mind. He was quite an example. It was obvious to me that he knew everything I knew and more.

I can remember on more than one occasion in school being told, “We’re teaching you this. We didn’t teach this last year because we didn’t know it last year.” And when I’d hear something like that I’d say, “I have to stick Dr. Holloway with this tonight.” When the chief would call me, I’d manage to introduce it into the subject one way or another, and he’d never fail to, “Oh, yes, I know that,” and he’d explain the intricacies of it. He really set a very high standard for me and made it possible for me to—I don’t want to use the word excel, but made it possible for me to do better than I think I would have done without him behind me all the time, urging me on.

It was his philosophy that the proper approach to specialization was through general medicine. Of course, he had been a general practitioner himself for a while. But because of his example and his teachings, I felt that although I wanted to be an internist like he, the first thing for me to do was to work at being a general practitioner. So this kind of fortified my own resolve in that regard.

The greatest single medical teaching experience I have ever witnessed took place at Lincoln Hospital. I told Jack Gardner so often about Dr. Holloway, and we felt that the teaching we got at Lincoln Hospital on the wards was inferior. The attending physicians there were not the brightest bunch, in the first place. More importantly,
Lincoln Hospital was kind of a second institution for most of them. They had no private patients there. They spent most of their time in their prime time at other hospitals where their private patients were located, and they also came up to Lincoln Hospital. We really didn’t feel that we got the best they had to offer.

So the members of the house staff were always complaining to each other about this, and I used to brag so about, “Dr. Holloway this,” and, “Dr. Holloway that,” and, “Dr. Holloway the other.” So Jack Gardner finally said, “Chis,” he said, “Do you think you could get him to come up here and spend some time with us? I said, “I’ll bet he’d love to do that, and I’ll talk to him about it when I’m home.” So, it was probably when I was home for the Easter holiday I talked to the Chief, as we all called him. And he said, “Oh, I’d love to come up and spend an afternoon with you.” So we set it up for a Saturday not too long after that.

He got up there about one o’clock in the afternoon, as I remember. I met him; he called me from the front of the building. I went out and met him and brought him up on the ward. And all of the interested residents and house staff had been primed to the fact that we were going to have a real teacher there. I remember Jane Williams was there; Frank Lester was there. Morley Cherniak, Morley was a Canadian, had gone to the University of Saskatoon—he was there. Henry Meacham was there, Henry from Howard University, a boy from Tennessee whose practice is even now on Long Island. I guess that was about the whole group, probably a couple more hangers-on, but those are the ones I can remember.
And the first patient Jack Gardner took—of course Jack was there. Jack took us up on the female medical ward. And I remember he took us to the bed of a Puerto Rican patient, light-skinned Puerto Rican lady, probably about 40 or 45 years of age. Jack said, “Dr. Holloway, this is Mrs. So-and-so.” The Chief interrupted him right there and said, “Dr. Gardner,” he said, “Let me tell you what a seasoned clinician would infer just from looking at this lady.” Dr. Holloway stood at the foot of that bed, talked about that lady’s complexion, talked about the way the bed rocked, talked about what she looked about, and made a diagnosis of acute rheumatic fever with aortic insufficiency and congestive heart failure. Of course, that’s what the lady had. He exhausted that subject completely. I guess he probably spent about 45 minutes there.

Well, so he said, “Well, let’s go see another patient.” So we went down the hall to the male medical ward. I remember this was about a 45- or 50-year-old white fellow, thin. And Jack said, “Dr. Holloway, this gentleman came in presenting with a cough.” And the Chief said, “Dr. Gardner, just let me take it from right there.” Well, this man had been in the hospital for about four months. He wasn’t seriously ill, but he had a fever, and I forget what the rest of the clinical picture was, but although he was on his feet, he was just kind of an old customer around there. We didn’t know what was wrong with him. It was obvious that he was sick.

And the Kveim Test, capital K-V-E-I-M, the Kveim Test had just been introduced. The Kveim Test is a test in which you inject some material beneath the skin of an individual in order to make the diagnosis of Boeck’s sarcoidosis. The test had been described just a
couple of years before. Our pathologist managed to get some Kveim antigen, and tested this fellow with the Kveim antigen, and the test was positive. He was the first time we’d ever had a chance to make that diagnosis in that way, in that hospital, and had made the diagnosis on this fellow who had been around there for fully four months as a diagnostic puzzle. So this was the patient that we presented.

When Jack said the man had the cough, the Chief said, “Let me take it from there.” And he hadn’t been talking 30 seconds before he mentioned that Boeck’s sarcoidosis would be an important part of the differential diagnosis in this problem. Well, of course, everybody realized by then that what I’d been telling them about Dr. Holloway was so, that he could do no wrong, so to speak, that he was a master clinician. He laid the problem of Boeck’s sarcoid to rest for us.

By now—I said he spent 45 minutes with that lady. He probably spent closer to an hour and a half on that first case, because by now it was around 4 or 4:30 in the afternoon, and everybody was really kind of tired, and we were about to break up the session. But Lorenzo Douglas was there. Dr. Douglas, Dr. E. Lorenzo Douglas, was an old friend of Dr. Holloway’s. He was a Philadelphia practitioner who had decided relatively late in life that he wanted to specialize in urology. He had gone up to Lincoln Hospital the same time I did—as a matter of fact, he drove me to Lincoln Hospital—to do his residence in urology. So he said, “Eddie,” he said, “Please,” he said, “We have this patient on our Urology Service who’s been quite a problem. Would you just take a look at him for me?”

So Chief said, “Of course. Let’s go see this patient.” So we all trooped up to the Urology Ward. And they had this man on the
ward—as I recollect at the time he was about 50 or 55 years of age. And the reason he was a puzzle is that they felt he had an obstructed uropathy. His BUN was a little elevated. But the things weren’t quite right, and they hadn’t been able to make the diagnosis. They were trying to figure out what was going on, and he had been in the hospital for two or three weeks.

Well, they explained the case to Dr. Holloway, and Dr. Holloway examined the man and made a diagnosis on him of Addison’s disease. Well, he laid Addison’s disease to rest. The chief Urology resident’s name was Siegendorf. Siegendorf was off that particular weekend, but when he got back to the ward on Monday morning, the first chart he went for was the chart of this guy who had been such a problem to him. He was the biggest problem they had on the Urology Service. And he looked at the chart, and he said he figured Lorenzo Douglas had been drunk over the weekend, because he had written so much on the chart. Well, to make a long story short, they were able to confirm the diagnosis of Addison’s disease in that man. Of course, Dr. Holloway made true believers out of my colleagues there in Lincoln Hospital on that one afternoon.

As I said, I went to a fine medical school. I was exposed to a number of great clinicians, both medical and surgical, while I was there. That’s where I got the basics of my education. But I never saw such a demonstration of clinical prowess as Edward Estes Holloway showed the house staff at Lincoln Hospital on that spring day in 1953.

I had seen him, I might add, pull similar gems, clinical gems, at Mercy-Douglass Hospital, making rounds with him. And over the years, after I returned to Philadelphia, I saw him continue doing the
same thing week in and week out, and he still does it. But the Chief really is responsible for my professional personality. He taught me to be aggressive professionally. He taught me to be thorough. He taught me to rely only on myself in making a diagnosis and deciding what to do about it. He taught me that you can’t be afraid of making a mistake as a clinician; that you don’t operate in the complete light of all available knowledge all the time, because it just isn’t there, that you have to do the best you can with what you have, and that you can’t afford to be afraid to make a mistake. He always said the only physician who doesn’t make mistakes is the physician who doesn’t do anything, and he felt it was your job to do something if you were going to be a clinician.

I remember this especially; it makes me think of one case we had at Lincoln Hospital. One night I was on call. Either I was in the emergency room, or they called me from the medical ward to see a patient in the emergency room. It doesn’t matter which happened because it was all the same thing. I went down to the emergency room and they had this young, Hispanic male. He looked to be in his late 20s. He was a big guy, big, husky, he really wasn’t so husky as he was fat.

A bunch of his buddies had brought him into the hospital, and they said that—this was a Saturday night, as I remember—they said that they were playing poker. He had arrived at the poker game doing quite fine, doing quite well, and during the poker game he got sick. They had been drinking some beer, was about all, and the guy rapidly became comatose, and they brought him to the hospital. Here he was
in a coma. I don’t remember whether he had any fever or anything like that; we just couldn’t wake him up.

The guy died right there in the emergency room. I got the story from them again, and when he was dead I looked at him, and I could see these little freckles on his face. And I looked, and there were freckles all over his body, what looked to be freckles. I decided that this fellow had died of acute adrenal cortical insufficiency, the Waterhouse-Friderichsen Syndrome, meningococcemia, if you will, overwhelming meningococcemia. So I took a needle, did what they taught us to do in school, took a syringe and a needle, and aspirated a couple of these freckles on his body, put the material in a culture tube, sent it to the laboratory, signed the guy out as Waterhouse-Friderichsen Syndrome, meningococcemia, and went on about my business.

A day or so later—well, I remember telling Jack Gardner about the case the next day, about this fellow who had come in, had been in good health about a half an hour before they brought him to the hospital, and just died there with nothing to explain what I thought was wrong with him. He said, “That’s a good diagnosis.” And a day or so later I got a report back in the lab reports, meningococccis in this serum that I’d gotten out of this freckle, which made the diagnosis.

So about a week or so later, one of my attending physicians was making rounds with me. He said, “You know,” he said, “I was talking to the coroner the other day, and I heard about one of the house staff here. A man came into the hospital and died in the emergency room, and signed him out as meningococcemia. And he went on talking about it, about what a desperate diagnosis this was to make, and how
the man might have been murdered, or he might have been poisoned, you couldn’t tell what was wrong with him, and how much nerve did it take. It wasn’t a common diagnosis to make. So I said to him, I said, “Well, I made that diagnosis. That was my patient.” I said, “And after all,” I said, “I got the culture back and the culture was positive for meningococcus.” He said, “It was?” I said, “Yes, doctor.” I said, “That was the diagnosis.” Well, that fellow never forgot that.

As a matter of fact, Dr. Holloway—now this happened in 1953, ’52 or ’53, most likely early ’53. About five years ago, it couldn’t have been over five years ago; it had to be 1982 at the earliest. Dr. Holloway went to a conference somewhere, and he told me that he’d met this Jewish physician from New York City, and the doctor asked him, did he know Dr. Melvin Chisum from Philadelphia? So Dr. Holloway told him, “Yes, I know Dr. Chisum quite well. He was a good friend of mine, a student of mine, so forth. Why do you know him?”

He said, “Well, he was an intern at Lincoln Hospital back quite some time ago, and I remember him because he made a very astute diagnosis on a patient. And I just have never forgotten him for that reason. I was always impressed. And when you told me you were from Philadelphia, I just wondered if he was there and if he was doing well.” So the Chief told him, “Yes, Dr. Chisum is still there practicing.” And when he came home he told me about it. He said, “The guy’s name was Green-something.” He said, “Greenstein, or Greenspan, or Greenspern, or something like that.” And it didn’t take me but about five minutes to figure out who that was. That was that
attending who had been so surprised that I had made that diagnosis of acute meningococcemia on that man.

But I say this to say that this is what Dr. Holloway taught me to do. In the first place, he taught me to think. He taught me to use the knowledge that you got, be light on your feet, keep your mind working, be courageous. Don’t be cocky; he never taught me to be cocky. He told me the more you learn, the less you know. You never know it all. He used to emphasize the fact that he himself knew so little, and you, as one of his students, knew that he knew infinitely more than you did, so it kept you properly humble, and it kept you struggling to make the most you could with what you had. And that was the kind of diagnosis I couldn’t miss making, being one of Eddie Holloway’s students.

Along about Easter time 1953, I heard from Dr. James Batz through my mother. Dr. Batz asked me to get ahold of him. He at the time was on the staff of the hospital in Obstetrics and Gynecology, and he was the head of the House Staff Committee. The integration of black students and black internships into internship programs and residency programs in the country had put quite a burden on the black hospitals. While the system was segregated, they had a fairly regular supply of physicians to assume the house staff positions.

Mercy-Douglass had agreed to accept four prospective graduates from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine as interns at the hospital. This had never been done in the state before. The attending staff was anxious to have an allopathic graduate to supervise these interns, and Dr. Batz wanted me to come work at the hospital for that purpose. They really hired two physicians for that
purpose. Another was Dr. John Braxton, a West Philadelphian whom I’d known since high school days. John had gone to medical school at Howard, I’m pretty sure, and had done his internship at Philadelphia General Hospital.

So John and I were hired to work as house physicians, and I was coming home, planning to come home, when the internship was over, to really do three things: to find a building in which to establish a medical practice, to buy a car, and thirdly, to take part three of the National Board Examinations, take and pass it in order to qualify for my professional license to practice medicine.

So along about the 1st of July, I was home; went to work at Mercy-Douglass; met these four interns. They were four very bright fellows—Irving Tennenbaum, Albert Axelrod, David Simon, and the fourth one’s last name was Oyle, O-Y-L-E. I think his first name was Richard, but I’m not sure. So I worked from something like 8 o’clock in the morning to 8 o’clock at night, and John Braxton from 8 o’clock at night to 8 o’clock in the morning. The only resident in the house staff I recollect at time was Surgeon Caven [], of Obstetrics and Gynecology. If there was a surgical resident, I can’t recollect who it was, and there certainly was no medical resident. To all intents and purposes, John Braxton and I were the medical residents.

I was right where I wanted to be, because Dr. Holloway rapidly put me in charge of all of the details of organization of his medical service. I was the man on the spot, so to speak, arranged the conferences and the rounds, what not. So my medical education continued at full speed with the daily contact with Dr. Holloway.
I bought a car. I remember, it was a blue Ford. It was the first of the Victorias that Ford had made. And I started making calls for physicians around town who wanted somebody to make house calls. And in looking through the paper, I saw a house for sale at 600 North 34th Street. I had driven through that area often enough to realize that it was an area of the city which before World War II was probably practically all white, which was rapidly converting into a black neighborhood, and I thought this might be a good location to practice medicine. I contacted the people who were selling the house, found out it was the Clefelt family. The Clefelts, there were at least two females, at least two males. None of them were married. The two females had both taught at Sulzberger Junior High School. They had taught Anne and me when we were there.

The sale of the house to me was arranged. As I remember it, I probably took possession of the house in August. Mother and Anne and I were living then at 812 North 46th Street. It was a three-story house, and I planned to reconvert the first floor of the house into an office, and to arrange the second and third floors as living quarters for Anne, Mom and myself. And that’s what I did, with the help of Reginald H. George.

Reggie George is my other best friend. He and I had known each other ever since high school days, junior high school days. We both lived in the Booker T. Washington Apartments, and had been close buddies down through the years. We’d kept in touch with each other again during World War II. He was in the Signal Corps as I remember, but certainly he was in the European theatre of operation. He had been a fireman. Well, I guess he joined the Philadelphia Fire
Department after he came out of the service. But Reggie could do absolutely anything with his hands and his head. He was a mechanic of all types—plumbing, electrical work, working on radios, later television sets, carpentry. Reggie could do any of it.

And he promised he would help me convert this house, and really, Reggie and I did it. He put up partitions and so forth, and taught me how to lay asphalt tile. We tiled the whole first floor of the place. I was able to see my first patient. It was the last Saturday in January, as I remember, in 1954, in my new office, 600 North 34th Street. We kept the same telephone number we had on 46th street, which was Bering 2, 3826.

Mother, Anne and I moved from 46th Street down to the 34th Street address on Washington’s Birthday in 1954.

So I had my office open, and I was working at the hospital during the day after I finished office hours in the morning, keeping contact with the situation over there by telephone. They were building a new hospital then, and there were several big problems with the hospital, not the least of which was the furor of the Pennsylvania State Board with the hospital for hiring these osteopathic interns. That was unheard of in the state, and the hospital was threatened with loss of its accreditation if it didn’t fire these osteopathic physicians.

I wasn’t privy to the thoughts of the hospital authorities, but I realize that this problem existed from talking to my attending staff members. The whole problem was resolved either late that spring or early that summer, when the hospital had to close. As I recollect it,
the fire marshal of the City of Philadelphia would not allow the authorities to keep the old hospital building open. It was because of the threat they felt it imposed on the new hospital building; had something to do with fire regulations or something like that. The new hospital was built right alongside the old one.

So they closed the hospital anyhow and that kind of left the matter about the interns moot. They had to leave because there was no functioning hospital. I guess the hospital probably reopened about six months later, something like that; I forget the details. Suffice it to say this was my first personal exposure to osteopathic physicians, and I realize that they were bright students. By the same token, I realize that these were four of the brightest.

At that time, osteopathic physicians were not required to do an internship, but the osteopathic authorities had decided that in a year or two after that, internships were going to be required in order that you might qualify to take the state board examination for licensing as an osteopathic physician. And it was an indication of the brightness of these four that they decided five, ten, fifteen, twenty years down the line they were not going to be osteopathic physicians who had not done their internship. They decided to seize the bull by the horns and do the internship before it was a requirement.

So we had four of the brightest, any way you look at it. The other thing I learned about them was that they had a much more effective attitude and preparation toward low back problems than we allopaths did, or at least than we allopaths who graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. I remember very well that Irving Tennenbaum came up to get me late one evening. And he told me, he
said, “Jack, there’s a lady down in the emergency room who has a back problem. Her back is hurting her.” He said, “It’s a back sprain, and she’s in distress. And if you will let me,” he said, “I can relieve it for her with osteopathic manipulation.” He said, “I know what to do to relieve her discomfort.” So I said, “Let me go down and take a look at her.” So he and I went down and examined the lady. It was a typical story. She’d bent over to do something, she had this back pain, and her back had been bothering her ever since. She was all bent over and was obviously acute distress.

So I took Irv aside and I said, “Irv, do you think that you can help that lady?” He said, “I can relieve her back pain right now if you let me.” He said, “I just wanted your approval before I did it, because it’s an osteopathic therapeutic maneuver, and I wasn’t certain that I should do it without your approval.” I said, “If you can relieve it, you go ahead and let me see what you’re going to do.” So Irving explained to the lady that he was going to manipulate her back in some way in order to relieve her of her pain. And he got some kind of a hold on here there and kind of stretched her a little bit, grunted a little bit, and let the lady go. And she said her pain was gone. She walked out of the emergency room with a smile on her face!

I realized then that the osteopathic students had been taught something about back problems that we had not been taught, and my respect for them increased even more. Observing those four interns made me realize that they had received good educations, but that the real difference between their training and ours was that they hadn’t been exposed to researchers at all, and they did not have the clinical
exposure that we had at the University of Pennsylvania. But they were bright, and they were quick learners.

So when the hospital closed, that left me with full time to spend toward developing my practice. I was able to secure an appointment at the Women’s Hospital at 41st and Parrish Streets in Philadelphia, not too far from my office. And that’s where I took care of my patients until the new Mercy-Douglass Hospital opened that following year.

I was admitted to the hospital with privileges on the Internal Medical staff, took care of patients there and did consultations there. I was able to do this because my fellow colleagues in Surgery, and in Obstetrics and Gynecology, and so forth, looked upon me as an internist, and they looked upon me as an internist because they realized that I functioned as such as Dr. Holloway’s right bower at Mercy-Douglass Hospital.

Once the new hospital was opened, I rapidly achieved an appointment there. As a matter of fact, I probably had the appointment as a staff physician before they closed the old hospital. I think my title was something like junior attending physician in Internal Medicine. In the new hospital setup I was quite busy. Again, I was in charge of the operations of the Medical Department, in the sense that Dr. Holloway never had any interest in the administrative aspects of medicine. He came to the hospital to make ward rounds, to work on the clinical problems, and he spent a minimum amount of time, or less, taking care of the paperwork aspect of the things, organizing things. He depended upon me to do that, and I did.
As the years went by I got busier and busier in practice, the office on 34th Street, business at rounds and so forth, taking care of patients, clinical work at Mercy-Douglass Hospital, and still taking care of some patients at the Women’s Hospital in West Philly.

I had always felt that I wanted to be an internist, and my association with Dr. Holloway, and later with Dr. Edward S. Cooper stimulated me even more in this direction. By the time I had been in practice for about five years or so, I realized that there was a lot of information that I needed in order to function as an internist, a lot of training that I needed that I didn’t have, and I decided I was going to leave my practice and do a residency in internal medicine.

In the meantime, I was married by now. While in medical school I had met a Charles A. Tollett, T-O-L-L-E-T-T. Charles was from Muskogee, Oklahoma. He had gone to Howard College, had come to Temple University to go to medical school. He must have matriculated there in ’48. He finished in ’52, the same year I finished. He stayed at his internship at Temple. And when I returned home in ’53 to start my practice and to go to work as house physician at Mercy-Douglass, he was starting his surgical residency at Temple Hospital. Charles and I were still friends, of course, and used to socialize a bit, and he had sent to me as a patient a young lady who was raised with him in Muskogee.

Gloria Juanita Twine was born and raised in Muskogee, Oklahoma. She finished college at Howard University in 1951, entered the graduate school there, got her master’s degree in Psychology in 1953, and then moved to Philadelphia to go to work on her PhD in Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. Charles
told this young friend of his that he had a buddy who was practicing medicine in West Philadelphia, a new physician, and if you needed any medical help he was certain that she’d find it there. Incidentally, Gloria had introduced Charles to the girl he married, a Catherine Summers. Cathy Summers had been a schoolmate and even a roommate of Gloria’s at Howard, and she’d introduced the two, and she was their maid of honor when they got married in New York City. Gloria also was the godmother of their first child.

So anyhow, I met Miss Twine in my office. She came to me with some minor problem, a headache or something like that. She told me how she’d come to know my name. Charlie and Cathy invited me to a party at their house along about Thanksgiving time; this would have been Thanksgiving time, 1954. I met this young lady there again. I was impressed with her when I met her as a patient. Being a proper physician, I didn’t take advantage of any opportunities I might have had then. But at the party, I established a more personal contact, and told her that I’d be in touch with her.

To make a long story short, Gloria and I had our first date on the 1st of January, 1955. I took her to the Mastbaum Theatre to see *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. She was living in West Philadelphia; she had a room there with Mr. and Mrs. Hal Shockley. We were courting, and in April of that year we were engaged to be married. Planned to get married that fall, that late summer, in Muskogee, and indeed we did, on September the 10th, 1955.

Bev Carter was my best man. Cathy Tollett was our matron of honor. My mother, Auntie Jones, and Auntie Carter all flew out to Muskogee for the wedding. Anne flew east from Los Angeles. And
Gloria and I left there on the following day on our honeymoon, driving her Morris Minor car, which was in Muskogee because it had broken down somewhere in Missouri, as I remember, when she was on her way home to Philadelphia from her Christmas vacation, Christmas of 1954.

Let me say a few words about my sister Anne while I can. This was Anne Elizabeth Chisum. I may have already stated that Anne was born on August the 8th, 1923. She was my only sibling. Anne went to school the same places I did, except that instead of going to Central High School, Anne went to Girls’ High, which then was located at 17th and Spring Garden streets. She finished high school, and in what must have been, I guess—I forget when the school year starts in nursing school, but in 1942 she went to the Lincoln School of Nurses.

I’ll always remember the day, because as Mother and I drove Anne up to New York City when she started nurse training, as we were coming home, we were coming down the West Side Highway and there was a lot of smoke we saw out in the river. We realized it was a fire of some kind there, and driving home we heard on the news that the Normandy had been set afire, presumably by saboteurs. At that time they said it was probably saboteurs, but of course this was during the war, and the ship was being used as a personnel transport, as I remember. I forget whether that was September ’42 or earlier in the year.

But in any event, Anne finished nurse training in Lincoln Hospital, and between 1945, when she finished, and 1955, when I was married, she had nursed at Herman Keefer in Detroit—I remember
mentioning that—at Mercy-Douglass, and I guess at the old Douglass as well in Philadelphia, and she had spent a couple of years in the Army Nurse Corps, stationed at Walter Reed Hospital, where she worked in the operating room. When I finished school, finished med school, she must have been back working at Mercy-Douglass, because as I said, she was living at 46th Street with Mom and me, and moved to 34th Street when we went down there.

Mother and Anne went to a nurses’ convention. The Chi Eta Phi sorority held its convention in Los Angeles, probably in October or November of that year. I remember driving Mother and Anne, Auntie Jones, and Auntie Carter, out to Philadelphia International Airport, putting them on a plane. And when Anne came home, when they came home from that West Coast trip Anne told me that she had enjoyed the stay very much. She liked the West Coast. Neither of us had been there—well, she hadn’t been there since we left Los Angeles in 1933. She said that she thought she was going back out there to go to work. She did this, as a matter of fact, shortly after her colleagues out there encouraged her to apply for a job. She did apply for a job in the county hospital system. She was told she was qualified. She had a job, and Mother and I put Anne on a plane in early January 1955, en route to Los Angeles.

She was in Los Angeles then by the time I was getting married in Muskogee, and Anne came east to the wedding. To wrap up that story, Anne married a school teacher named Roy Johnson in Los Angeles. Roy was from Kansas, as I recall. She had two daughters, twin daughters, Dianne Janeen Johnson and Angela Lynn Johnson. They were twins, both born in November of 1961. Dianne and
Angela came up through the public school system in Los Angeles, and in 1979 Dianne came to Philadelphia to matriculate at the University of Pennsylvania. Angela went up to Berkeley to matriculate at the University of California at Berkeley. They both finished college in 1983. Dianne presently is living in Brooklyn, working in Manhattan, and Angela is living and working in Berkeley. I guess she’s living in Berkeley, working in Oakland.

My sister Anne retired from the hospital system in Los Angeles earlier this year, and her husband also has retired from the school system, and they are currently enjoying the retiree’s life. As a matter of fact, they were in Philadelphia for a couple of days earlier this week. They had come east just to do some travelling and sightseeing.

So to get back on the former story, after our honeymoon Gloria and I came on back to Philadelphia. I resumed my practice and she resumed her work in the Psychology Department of the graduate school of the University of Pennsylvania. My ambition to become an internist didn’t wane, and along about we began planning on how we were going to manage this. We didn’t seem to have a family as yet to interfere with our doing what we wanted to do in an academic way.

Gloria worked on her degree and got her PhD from Penn in 1960, and she went to work at the Warminster Naval Air Development Center in their Vision Laboratory there, working for Dr. Harry Hill. In the meantime, I prevailed upon a buddy of mine, Llewellyn Wilson, a graduate of the School of Osteopathy out in Iowa, I guess it is. Lou was practicing medicine around town. I prevailed on him to take over my office at 34th and Haverford, and in
July of 1961 I started my residency at the Philadelphia General Hospital in General Internal Medicine.

A very rewarding three years. At the end of that time I felt ready to take the American Board of Internal Medicine, and I took the examination and passed it at the earliest opportunity, as I remember, which was in October 1965. I returned to Mercy-Douglass Hospital and decided that I would never be able to practice medicine the way I wanted to on 34th Street in the old location because people were accustomed to coming in there whenever they wanted, for whatever they wanted, and I really felt that I wanted to have more of an internal medical-type practice, or referral-type practice, and spend my time taking care of the more seriously ill patients.

I leased an office at 245 North Broad Street, right across the street from Hahnemann Hospital, with which I had no official connection. Most of my time was still spent at Mercy-Douglass. Also, during the last year of my internship, beginning in September, I made an arrangement with the authorities in the Internal Medicine Service at Philadelphia General to attend the first semester of the course of the graduate school of the University of Pennsylvania. This was the basic sciences course. I felt that this is what I lacked, especially. An awful lot had happened in the technology, in the basic sciences, between 1952, when I left school, and 1961, when I started the residency. This was my way of getting this formal education that I thought I needed to supplement the training that I received at Philadelphia General Hospital. It was extremely helpful to me.

I also met Dr. Henry J. Tumen, T-U-M-E-N. Dr. Tumen was a lovely gentleman, a scholar, a fine physician, a gastroenterologist, and
he was the chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine at Graduate Hospital. Sometime, I guess it was probably during the time that I was there in school, Dr. Tumen asked me what I proposed to do when I finished my residency. He learned that I was a resident at PGH. He was a very friendly, warm, outgoing individual who took a great interest in the students around him. When I told him that when I finished the residency I would be going back into practice in Philadelphia, he said, “Well, you know, we like you down here and we would be glad to have you come aboard and give us some help. Why don’t you contact me when you get back out there, and let’s talk?”

I don’t know how or why we finally got together, whether I accepted that invitation, or whether he got ahold of me again, but to make a long story short when I was back in practice I went down and talked to Dr. Tumen, and he said he would like to have me come join the staff at Graduate. He made the point that you give a little and you get a little in this world, that if I was going join the staff, he expected me to work there, and where would I want to work in the hospital?

Well, I had become particularly interested in rheumatology during my residency. We didn’t have a full-time rheumatology program at Philadelphia General, but Dr. Daniel McCarty, who probably was at Hahnemann then, used to make rounds once a week on the rheumatology patients at PGH. Bob Gatter, Robert A. Gatter, was a year ahead of me in the medical residency program, and Bob was quite interested in rheumatology. And he was more or less the majordomo around there so far as rheumatology was concerned.
At Philadelphia General we had a great deal of freedom. You could more or less do what you wanted to do, so long as you took care of your patients. But the academic parts of the program were left up to you, and I elected to make rounds with the rheumatologists when they came, and to interest myself in the rheumatology problems. Once Bob had left and I was a senior resident in my third year, I took over the organization of the Rheumatology Program there, which meant I would see what consultations had been requested for the rheumatologists. I would see the patients myself before the rheumatologists got there. I would order the studies that I knew the rheumatologists would want done, and just kind of expedite things. In this way, I took a big part in the functioning of the part-time rheumatology service that we had at Philadelphia General Hospital.

So when Dr. Tumen asked me what I wanted to do, I told him I would like to work on the Rheumatology Service, in his Rheumatology Clinic. He said that was fine, and referred me to Dr. Ralph A. Jesser, who at that time was head of his clinic. I contacted Ralph. He and I had known each other for some time. We were both students together in college at the University of Pennsylvania. By the time I came back to go to medical school, he was one of the junior attendings at Penn. He was in practice, and he worked in the Rheumatology Service there under Dr. Joseph Lee Hollander. Dr. Hollander remembered me from medical school, realized that I had an interest in Rheumatology, and I remember that the American Rheumatism Association was meeting—take that back, it must have been the local chapter of the Arthritis Foundation was meeting in Philadelphia.
I was attending the meetings. I guess Dr. Hollander probably asked me to come to the meetings. Suffice it to say, I went to the meetings. And I remember I wanted to leave to do something, and Dr. Hollander said, “No Mel, I don’t want you to leave yet. I want you to hold. Let’s stay here for a while.” I didn’t know what he wanted me to stay for, but eventually I realized he called me in, and they had elected me a member of the board of governors of the local chapter of the Arthritis Foundation. I just say this to say that Dr. Hollander was responsible to a great extent as well for integrating me into the Rheumatology effort in Philadelphia.

He realized that I was running the Arthritis Clinic at Mercy-Douglass Hospital. He realized I was working in the Arthritis Clinic with Ralph Jesser at the Graduate Hospital. And especially as the chief of a clinic, there were certain courtesies I was due, and he saw to it that I received them. So I was on the medical and scientific committee, and so forth, medical and scientific committee of the local chapter of the Arthritis Foundation, that is.

So by now I was back in practice, internal medicine practice, on the staff at Mercy-Douglass, on the staff at Graduate, practicing at 245 North Broad Street. I managed to close the office down on 34th Street altogether. Incidentally, when Anne had gone out to Los Angeles in January of 1955, this left Mother and me living on the second and third floors of the house on 34th Street. When I realized I was about to get married, I had planned to find an apartment somewhere else for my wife and me, but before I had a chance to do anything about it Gloria and Mother got together and decided that if I would spend a little money in renovations there on 34th Street, that we could all live
right there. Well, this sounded like a practical arrangement, and an economical arrangement, so I got in some contractors.

When I had bought the house on 34th Street, on the first floor, you walked in the front door and there was a large living room, then there was a dining room, and then there was a kitchen. On the second floor of the house, at the rear, there was again kind of large living room, then there was a bathroom, and there were two bedrooms. On the third floor of the house there were one, two, three, four bedrooms, and a closet.

Reggie and I changed the first floor into a waiting room, a consultation room, two examination and treatment rooms, a lavatory, and there was a hall which went down the north side of the house that opened into each of these rooms separately. We left the living room on the second floor as it was, used the bathroom as it was. The rear bedroom we converted into a modern kitchen, asphalt tile floor, new cabinets, a new range, a new sink, and so forth. And the front bedroom on the second floor, Mother and Anne and I used as a dining room. Then we had the four bedrooms on the fourth floor, there was one bedroom for each of us, plus a spare.

So when I got married, what I did was, Mother really took over the second floor of the house. What had been our dining room became her bedroom. She had her own kitchen, she had her own bathroom, and she had the living room at the rear. On the third floor of the house, Gloria and I used the front room as our living room, and a dining room when we wanted one. The next bedroom we converted into a modern kitchen again. That closet that was up there was big enough for a bathroom. Then we had the other two bedrooms, one of
which we used as a guest room, and the rear bedroom was our bedroom.

So this was the living arrangement in 1964 when I finished my residency. That 34th and Haverford corner was extremely noisy, and Gloria and I had decided we wanted to move somewhere, and we made the compromise. We had the agreement that we would wait until I was through with my residency, and that then we’d find a place to move to. To make a long story short, by the time the residency was over, we had bought the lot at 4120 Apalogen Road, and we began building our home there in 1966. See, it took us about fourteen months to get into the house. In the late summer of ’66, we began construction at 4120.

I tried to persuade Mother to move out of the house into a nicer location, as well. I didn’t want to leave her there by herself, but she felt happy being there. It was what she was accustomed to. She knew I owned the house and she’d never have to worry about rent or anything like that, and to make a long story short, Mom continued to live on the second floor of that house until she died. After she passed, the house was empty, and in the course of several months I was able to sell it to a physician who proposed to establish a practice there, and did so.

Gloria and I moved into our new home in Germantown, here, on the first Wednesday of October in 1967, so we’ve been here twenty years this month. As a matter of fact, twenty years next Wednesday.

Well, I was very busy in my practice, but I had just about decided that I made a mistake by establishing a solo practice again. The details, the business details of the practice of medicine, had
changed tremendously. When I went into practice in 1954, I was able to take care of all of the paperwork myself very easily. I had learned to type while I was in the Army. I bought a typewriter when I came out of the Army. This typewriter was in the desk in my office. As I remember, about once every one or two weeks I would spend an hour or two, and I would type all of the letters and fill out all of the forms, and take care of those administrative details that needed to be taken care of in order to keep the practice going. But by the time I finished the residency in 1964, just twelve years later, I had to hire a part-time secretary in order to help me with these details.

Not only in the practice of medicine, but apparently in the practice of any kind of business, the system worked for people who had big practices, big business, and it was just very difficult to accomplish the job as a small businessman. I was really primarily interested in finding some physicians who were interested in practicing as I was, but I never made any great effort to find any. I was busy doing what I was doing.

I used to always attend Grand Rounds at the University of Pennsylvania when I could. I went to Grand Rounds this particular Wednesday, and I ran in to Dr. Robert S. Ehrlich. Bob Ehrlich had been a classmate of mine when I started Penn. He’d finished in ’51, the year before me. And Bob told me he was now the medical director at the Bell Telephone Company, and wanted to know what I was doing. I told him, and he asked me if I wouldn’t come down and talk to him. To make a long story short, I eventually did. He was interested in my coming to work for him part-time, and I had enough time to do that. I started working in the Medical Department at Bell
Telephone Company on Mondays from 12 to 5. I went to work there the Monday after the 4th of July in 1966.

A couple of years later, Dr. Ehrlich asked me if I couldn’t come to work for him half-time; he meant twenty hours a week. I explained to him that with my practice, I spent so much time that I really couldn’t sustain the practice if I spent that much time there at Bell. So he asked me if I couldn’t give him some more time, and I started working there—in addition to the Mondays from 12 to 5, I worked there Thursdays from 9 to 1, so it was nine hours per week.

I stayed there until late 1976, along about Thanksgiving time—I’m sorry, late 1974, along about Thanksgiving time. Bob Ehrlich came and talked to me, and explained to me that George Nichols, who had worked there full-time with him for quite some time, was ill, and Dr. Nichols had told him that he wasn’t going to be able to return to work. Bob said he had to replace him with a full-time physician, and before he went out and looked for somebody he wanted to be quite certain I didn’t want the job, because what he really wanted was that I should come to work for him as one of his medical officers at the telephone company.

Well, it didn’t take me a long time to figure out that this was the answer to my own problem, the management of the solo practice. It was obvious to me now that this was about the clumsiest available way for a physician to deliver medical care. I was running from the time I got out of bed in the morning until the time I went to bed at night. Between taking care of patients at Mercy-Douglass Hospital, the Arthritis Clinic at Mercy-Douglass Hospital, consultations at Mercy-Douglass Hospital, rounds at Mercy-Douglass Hospital, taking
care of patients, doing rounds, and all of the same activities at Graduate Hospital, and my practice on Broad Street, I was really running, running, running. Although I was enjoying it, it was kind of a grind and I didn’t see any way out, until Bob Ehrlich told me he wanted me to come to work for him.

The only question in my mind when he made the offer was how to go about disposing of my practice, because I knew I was going to take him up on it. So I went to work full-time at the telephone company the first Monday in January, in 1975. Bob gave me some time to spend in the office in order to properly transfer my patients’ care to other physicians, and I saw my last patient in that office in July of 1975, and have worked only at the telephone company ever since then.

That more or less brings my personal story right up to date. I think I wandered around more than the other interviewees because I haven’t had anybody to direct my thoughts, but there are some other things I wish to say. I’ll think about the things I asked the other interviewees.

First, I guess, the people who have influenced me and helped me down over the years. First and foremost, of course, in my particular instance would be my parents. As I said before, my father used to talk to me from the time I was so young that I didn’t know what he was talking about. But I revered him. He was a real authoritarian figure, a real father figure, and I used to listen to my father carefully even when I didn’t know what he was talking about. But there are certain thoughts he put in my mind as a youngster. In the first place, he told me that I would have to work, that I would have
to apply myself. He told me that in order to be a success, and he expected me to be a success, that I would have to excel.

He also told me that as a Negro, I would have to work harder for anything I wanted than I would have to work if I was white. He didn’t suggest that this was right or that this was wrong; he just suggested that this was a fact of life that I would adjust myself to. As I remember his putting it, “Son, if you want to accomplish any particular objective, you will find that you have to work harder to get there than the white boys do.”

Now, when he first told me that, I don’t even know if I knew what a white boy was, or why he was talking about it. But as time went by and I learned who the white boys were, I was ready to exert the effort to compete with them, and to compete with them successfully. It used to annoy my sister, and it annoyed me, but my father used to always suggest to us that we weren’t ordinary people, that we were something special. I guess it was the democratic philosophy that our country’s system tried to impose on your thinking—we kind of thought that was wrong, that we ought to be like everybody else. Dad never would settle for that.

And I remember I was so impressed when we finally met my cousin Frances. Frances was William Woodruff’s daughter; I probably mentioned that before. When we met Frances in New York, I remember the first time we left the older folks. We went down the street to do something, and just in talking to Frances, Anne and I realized that Woodruff had been telling Frances the same thing that Dad had been telling us, that we were expected to be a little bit above
the average. I remember thinking then that at least it wasn’t the Old Man that had this idea; it seemed to be kind of a Chisum philosophy.

Well, by the time I got to junior high school, I can remember once incident which occurred. No, I’m going to tell that story a little later. But the important things that my father taught me. As I said, he was obviously an intellect himself, and I wished to be one myself in order to emulate my father. He taught me I would have to work. He taught me that he expected me to excel. He taught me that as a member of the minority, black group, in the country, that I would have to work harder than the average person in order to get to where I wanted to go. He told me I was going to college. He also told me I was going to be a lawyer. But this just gave me some direction as I was coming along. It gave me a firm foundation and something to work toward.

As for my mom, in retrospect I realize that she was a very unusual lady herself. The fact that she managed to graduate from high school when it was not common, when Mother came along, for black females to graduate from high school. They usually fell by the wayside one way or another. They either got married and had families or they had to go to work, but somehow between Mother and her family she managed to stay in high school. She left home to go to nursing school, and then she left home again to practice her profession before she got married.

Mother was the person we always knew best, because as I said, Dad often was away from home working, most of the time, especially when we were younger. Mother was holding up the homefront. It was she who was there taking care of us, holding off the creditors. All
throughout my younger days I can remember that we knew that when the rent payment was due, and it was usually a scuffle to get the money together. Sometimes there was a problem paying the bills for the electricity or for the gas, but it always got done. It was usually a close shave, often enough, in paying the bills on time, but they usually did get paid. But I recollect that Anne and I felt that it was Mother who was withstanding these pressures. Dad was off somewhere. We were always looking for a letter from him with some money in it, but it was Mom who was there on the spot taking care of these problems.

The thing this did for me, it made me as a youngster decide that if I could ever do anything about it, my mother wouldn’t have to worry about bill collectors once I was able to earn a living. And at the stage of the game at which I decided I was going to return to Philadelphia to practice medicine when my internship was over, this, of course, was part of my motivation.

As for teachers, I don’t remember the teachers in primary school very much, with one exception. I remember Mr. Amonetti, who was my teacher the one semester I was at Martha Washington, and I remember that I always felt that Mr. Amonetti was something special. He was a very warm teacher. He obviously was interested in the students in general, and in me in particular. I’ve just never forgotten him. I don’t remember any other primary school teacher in the same way that I remember him.

As for junior high school, one teacher stands out. It was a lady named Wencose. Miss Wencose was one of my teachers at Sulzberger, and the reason I remember her was another incident which happened, which I recognized for what it was when it did happen. We
had a competition in the class. As I remember, Miss Wencose taught us Science. She planned this competition in which the students would be asked questions, and the student who was still standing when all of the other students had flunked would win this competition. This was kind of an important thing to all of us students. There were only—I forget how many black students there were in the class. I made the point that about 25 to 30 percent of the students at Sulzberger were black when I was there. And there were a number of black students in my class, but certainly we were not in the minority.

But I know that I realized before the competition began that if any of the black students won it, it would probably be me. I really hoped that I was going to win that competition. Well, I forget at this late date what the questions were, but I do recollect that as the competition progressed, one student after another didn’t answer the question. Finally they got to a question that they asked me, and I just didn’t know the answer to that question, and I was crushed. But I sat down, and that left a number of the students still standing.

So Miss Wencose asked the next student what the answer to the question was. That student couldn’t answer the question. She asked the next student what the answer to the question was. That student couldn’t answer the question. And that’s the way it went until all of the students were down. Nobody could answer the question, so this meant that the competition was over. Not only that, nobody was left standing. So Miss Wencose decided that what they were going to do was that they would just eliminate that question, because that question had ruined the competition. So all of the students started to stand up
again, and I did too. She said, “No, Melvin—

[End Part 2.2 / Begin Part 3.1]

So as I said, Miss Wencose said, “Now, the students who didn’t answer that question may stand up again.” When I stood up, she said, “No, Melvin, not you. That was your question, and you couldn’t answer it, so you can’t stand up.” It hadn’t occurred to me until that moment, but I realized when she said that that she had been trying to figure out how she was going to keep me from winning that competition. She didn’t foresee that that was going to happen, I’m sure, but once it did happen, she realized that that was a way she could be certain that the Negro student didn’t win the competition. So I sat back down, and they went on and decided which one of the white students was going to win. But that’s why I remember Miss Wencose.

And I really can’t remember—well, I can remember some of the other teachers for more positive reasons. I remember we had a History teacher there, and I remember that when she was teaching us about the discovery of America and so much, she told us about this fellow named “Jacoos” Cartier. It wasn’t for many years until I learned that J-A-C-Q-U-E-S in French was not “Jacoos.”

I also remember Mr. Hoffman, our Physical Education teacher. I remember him because he kind of kept us youngsters in line. These were youngsters who were adolescent, many of whom challenged the authority figures at the school. Mr. Hoffman had a particularly hard job to do in this way, but he did it with such authority and with such judgment that we all respected him for it, and we learned that we were expected to toe the line. I remember Mrs. Beatrice Claire Overton, of course, because as I mentioned earlier, she was the first black student
to come to Sulzberger, or to come to any one of the junior high schools.

But the outstanding teachers really came to the fore when I went to Central High School. There were so many of them I remember, especially my Latin teacher, Mr. Eldridge. I must have had four years of Latin in high school. It was a favorite subject of mine, and there were two other outstanding Latin students. One was Horace Stern, and one was Leon Duggan. As a matter of fact, the three of us were referred to as the triumvirate, because we were the Latin students there, and everybody knew it. Mr Eldridge was an excellent teacher, and I will always remember him.

I remember Mr. Pennypacker, who taught us English, because he was such a character. Mr. Pennypacker was a thin, gangly fellow, and he would get to acting out Shakespeare there, and dueling, and whatnot, in the classroom, and he was really something to see.

There was the Latin teacher Mr. Howes, the famous Ducky Howes. He was quite a character. General Brookhouse, Mr. Brookhouse, was a West Point graduate, or at least he had gone to West Point. He taught us Mathematics. I’ll never forget him. Mr. Bareither, our Physics teacher. They were a great teaching corps, and they prepared us so that when I matriculated at the University of Pennsylvania, to a great extent the basic courses that I had, the course in English, the course in Latin, to a great extent were rather repetitious. The same thing applied to Spanish. At least I was well prepared, at least as well prepared, I think, as any student there, for the transition from high school to college.
Mr. Delgurcio I also remember. Mr. Delgurcio was one of my Spanish teachers. I later ran into a son of his. His son is a physician in town who joined the staff at Fitzgerald Mercy Hospital, the Mercy Catholic Medical Center, and he was Mr. Delgurcio’s son.

Incidentally, that’s the first time I mentioned in this recording the Mercy Catholic Medical Center in southeastern Pennsylvania. When they closed Mercy-Douglass Hospital, I learned through friends that they were interested in having qualified physicians from Mercy-Douglass join the staff at Mercy Catholic Medical Center. I went over to Misericordia Hospital and talked to Norman Cohen, who was the head of the Internal Medical Department there. I had known Mr. Cohen from before. He had been a gastroenterologist at the University of Pennsylvania, and I guess at the VA hospital, too.

Suffice it to say, he and I had run into each other before. I went to work at Misericordia, and this was my primary hospital from the time they closed Mercy-Douglass until I went to work full-time at the telephone company.

The primary people I remember at Penn were the people in the dean’s office, because as I said, the great problem when I was there was paying the bill. And Gene Gisburne, and George Peters, and Arnold K. Henry, who was the dean, were the people I remember positively because they were a help to me. Not that the teachers were not a help, they were, but none of them was particularly warm or especially helpful.

The only warmth I experienced at college at Penn was from my fellow male black students. We were definitely a minority. We clung together. We all knew each other. We socialized together. We spent
our weekends more with the students from Lincoln and other black schools than we with those from Penn. The only black student living on campus as I remember then was a black graduate student; it was Harry Belinger from San Antonio. I guess Harry was probably in the graduate school of the Wharton School. Maybe he was—he might have been an undergraduate student. Suffice it to say, he was the only black student on campus. The rest of us either lived at home or roomed with somebody in the city.

In terms of teaching, the faculty there was excellent. But as a student myself, I would say that the only thing they gave you was what they were expected to give you, is the teaching in the classroom. There was never anything personal, never anything warm. There was never anything extra. And I realized that without complaining about it, my fellow black students there all had the same experience. It’s what we expected. It was as though we came to the University of Pennsylvania to get an education, and an education was what you get, and that was all you get. But they certainly did a good job of that.

I can remember that John Trent and I had a class together. That was an unusual thing at the University of Pennsylvania. As a matter of fact, it may have been the first time any teacher at the University of Pennsylvania had two blacks in the same class; they didn’t have many blacks going to school there. But I remember that as the end of the semester came, we were talking to this particular teacher, and he admitted that he was having a hard time trying to figure out which one of us to give the A to. He kind of made it plain that he considered John and me as one part of the class, and all of the rest of the students as another.
And from what he said, we inferred that he felt we were both outstanding students, but he just didn’t feel it was right to give As to both of us. One of us was going to get an A, and one of us was going to get a B. This kind of symbolizes to me the fact that we were considered to be special and unusual people because we were blacks at Penn, not part of the mainstream at all.

Then in medical school, of course, there were any number of teachers whom I recollect, mostly, practically exclusively, for positive reasons. First and foremost, of course, would be Dr. Francis Wood, who was the head of the Department of Internal Medicine, chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine, a professor of medicine when I was there. Dr. Wood was very kind to me, looked out for me when I was out ill that year, did what he could do to get me back into the flow of things, and was very interested when he knew that I had decided to apply for a residency in Internal Medicine several years after leaving school.

There was no question in my mind after talking to Dr. Wood that I would get the residency at Philadelphia General Hospital if I wanted it. He made it plain to me that he’d have a difficult time getting a residency for me at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital, but I never really did think that’s what I wanted to do anyhow. I talked to him on the advice of Dr. Holloway, who felt that it was a courtesy I owed my professor. He also probably would have preferred that I should do the residency at the University of Pennsylvania, since he had a great deal of respect for Dr. Wood himself, and felt that that was the premier educational institution in the city, especially from the
standpoint of internal medicine. My own first preference was to go to Philadelphia General Hospital.

I also remember the great Dr. O.H. Perry Pepper. There was an interesting anecdote there. They had a series of courses in my first year in medical school called correlation courses. They were courses in which they taught the medical student the practical applications of the basic sciences he was learning. It was probably in one of these correlation courses that we first met Dr. O.H. Perry Pepper. We’d all heard of him by the time he gave us this lecture. We used to see him around the school; we knew him by sight. He was a very personal guy, very friendly, always, “Hello, doctor, how are you?” to everybody.

At this particular conference Dr. Pepper used to like to—well, he always liked to ask the students questions. At this particular conference he had us at, he was down teaching—as usual, he was an excellent teacher, very flamboyant. The way he taught you things, you wouldn’t forget them. And he asked a student a question, “You, doctor, what’s the answer to that question?” That question the student would either answer it or wouldn’t answer it. Then the next question, “You, doctor, what’s the answer to that question?” and he’d point to this fellow.

And finally he came and he decided to ask me this question. He said, “You, Chisum, what’s the answer to that question?” It tickled me, because there were probably 120 students in that class and I knew that Dr. Pepper only knew one of them by name. He knew that black student was Chisum. But I never had any negative
experiences in medical school because I was black that I was able to identify.

Of course, I remember Dr. I.S. Ravdin, the most spectacular member of our faculty, and really “Dr. University of Pennsylvania,” and “Dr. University of Pennsylvania Hospital.” Dr. Charles Kirby, Dr. Julian Johnson, of course. Thoracic surgery was just being developed from a clinical standpoint when I was in medical school, and the thoracic surgeons were the most spectacular people around because they were the ones who did the things that we admired the most, which received the most publicity, and of course, it was they who did the surgery on me in my second year.

Dr. Kennedy, the assistant to the dean, Dr. Mitchell, the dean during our first year or so there, and then at the end it was Isaac Star, who was the dean of the medical school. All of these gentlemen I came to know. Because of my medical problem and being off for a year, I was in an unusual position, and they were all very helpful to me at every turn. I certainly remember Truman G. Schnabel. I guess it’s Junior; I guess his father had the same name, the famous Nipper Schnabel. He was the attending physician on Ward B when I came back to school, and he was always an excellent teacher, always interested in his students and in his patients. And I came to know him even better several years later, when I did my residency at Philadelphia General Hospital. At that point, he was in charge of the Teaching Service at Penn. That is to say, in charge of Penn’s Teaching Service at Philadelphia General Hospital.

As for the years of my internship, I don’t remember any of the teachers there particularly. Dr. Goldberger, again, was our most
famous one. I probably made rounds with Dr. Goldberger a couple of times, but there wasn’t much to that. He didn’t spend a lot of time there. He talked more about the electrocardiogram than he did about the patients, as I remember.

The people I remember there most, of course, were my fellow students, fellow house staff members, especially Dr. Jack Gardner, who took a particular interest in me. And he let me know that when I came to do my three or four months on the medical service, that he was going to turn a ward over to me and he expected me to run it. He kind of gave me a challenge in this way, and I looked forward to being his intern, and enjoyed the experience tremendously, and certainly learned a lot during the internship, and especially during the internal medical part of it, because that’s what I was most interested in.

Then there was Dr. Frank Lester, who died in that hospital, in diabetic acidosis, years after I had left there. Frank was from Waycross, Georgia, had gone to medical school at Howard University, was a very aggressive, outstanding medical resident.

There was Morley Cherniak from Saskatoon; I mentioned him. I’ve seen him once or twice since leaving the internship. There was Henry Meacham, who was a good buddy, with whom I had an awful lot of fun during that year. Harold Garnes, of course, was a Urology resident there, first a Surgery resident, and then a Urology resident. I do believe Garnes is dead now, but a very lovely fellow, fine physician, and also taught me a good bit while I was an intern at Lincoln Hospital.
Then when I went to Philadelphia General Hospital to do the residency, of course, I ran into Truman G. Schnabel, Jr., again, and there were several other physicians around who helped me a bit. First and foremost, of course, I would mention Dr. Edward S. Cooper, who was my attending on the Penn Service, which I served on at PGH. I had heard of Eddie Cooper for years. He was a very well known individual, and when I told people I didn’t know Eddie Cooper, they couldn’t understand it. But I finally met him.

Well, I’m sure I—I remember when I met Eddie Cooper. I met him, of course, as a medical student. I remember him because he taught me a lesson the first time I met him, and he’s just a great teacher. During my third year in school I was on the Pediatric Service. I worked as an extern during the year at Philadelphia General Hospital, in their emergency room. I remember that a woman brought this sick baby into the emergency room, and we students examined the baby with the intern there. There was no pediatric resident on call, so when they decided they needed a resident they called the internal medicine resident; that was the procedure, and the medical resident was Dr. Cooper. That’s when I first met him.

The thing I remember is when Dr. Cooper came down, examined this baby with us, we all decided that the baby did have acute otitis media, and Dr. Cooper asked us how we were going to treat the baby. Well, the decision was made that at that stage of the game you would treat the baby with sulfonamides. Dr. Cooper said, “Well, how much sulfonamide are you going to give him?” We all looked at each other. We all knew that the dose of sulfa for an adult was two half-gram tablets four times a day, but we suspected that that
would be kind of a heavy dosage to give that little baby, who was, as I remember, four or five months old. So Dr. Cooper said, “It’s easy to calculate the dose of sulfonamides for an infant. It’s a grain per pound, per day.” I have never forgotten that, and I would imagine that none of those fellow students of mine forgot it, either. It was the way Dr. Cooper presented it to us that made it unforgettable.

Then of course, as I said, when I got to PGH later on, he was my attending. And I remember any number of interesting experiences, interesting learning experiences I had, in which he taught me to assume, intelligently and responsibly, the decisions I would have to make as an internist. I might add that the two people who convinced me, without saying anything to me, that if I wanted to be an internist I would need some additional training, were Dr. Edward Holloway and Dr. Edward Cooper. I found that the intellectual atmosphere those two developed was so rare that as the years went by, after I went to medical school, it was farther and farther above me. They obviously knew things I didn’t know and were reading things I didn’t read, and I decided that if I wanted to continue to associate with these two gentlemen on any kind of an equal relationship, I would have to get some additional training. So they were both quite inspirational as well.

My experiences at the telephone company have been very interesting. It has been a different kind of life than the practice of medicine, where I was running all the time, day in and day out. Our existence there was an 8:30 to 5, Monday through Friday existence, and in more recent years, 8 to 5. By and large, the day is over when you leave there, and of course, this was a very new experience for me.
The man who really taught me the job I do was the man who is now the corporate medical director, Peter J. Devine. When I went to work there part-time, Pete Devine already was there full-time. When I came to work full-time, he and I were the full-time medical officers there.

Bob Ehrlich, of course, was the corporate medical director, but as such he was not primarily involved in the routine patient care. He saw problem patients, but to a great extent his job was administrative. But Pete taught me the job when I was there. It was a good bit more time for us to confer with each other when, back in 1975 when I went aboard full-time, the number of physicians working there was increased. That is to say, we were just not as busy then as we are now. The reason I say that is that it would be difficult for somebody to learn the job as easily as I did, or as rapidly as I did, because there is nobody around there now who has the time to spend with you, as Pete Devine had the time to spend with me back in 1975.

One person I’ll have to mention in passing as being a tremendous influence on me was William Beverly Carter, Sr., Dr. Carter, Bev’s father. Dr. Carter was kind of a surrogate father for me when I came out of the Army. My own pop was dead, was gone. Dr. Carter had been a very close friend and good supporter even while my father was living. The Carters and the Chisums always were close. My mother, Auntie Carter, and Auntie Jones used to refer to themselves as the three musketeers. They socialized together. Each of them went to a different church, but they were very active in their churches. They spent a lot of time together playing bridge, doing the things that ladies do, and the friendship that they developed from 1913
when they started nursing school never did let up while any of them was living.

I might add there was a fourth lady in that class. Her name was Holmes. Auntie Holmes lived in Richmond, and although the three here used to see here from time to time, they were just not as close to her because she was at a distance geographically.

But I can remember that even when we were kids Dr. Carter treated us like members of the family. As a physician, of course, he was well-off by our standards. I can remember especially that Dr. Carter bought Bev a pair of ice skates. Just typical of him, at the same time he bought Bev a pair of ice skates, he bought Anne a pair of ice skates and he bought me a pair of ice skates. Those are the only ice skates either one of us ever had, probably the only pair Bev ever had. But just to make the point that’s the way Dr. Carter did things. The Chisums and the Carters were very close. Bev was commonly eating at our table; we were commonly eating at theirs. They lived at 737 North 44th Street. We were at 733 North 49th, later at 812 North 46th, and never too far away from them.

But of course, when I came out of the Army, my own father was dead. I remember going to Dr. Carter and telling him that I had decided that I wanted to go to medical school if I could just get in. He was so pleased with that decision, to learn that his young friend, the son of his associate from so far back, had decided to go into medicine. He encouraged me, told me that he would enjoy following my career. I remember that after I had met Gloria and decided I wanted to get married, I went over and talked to Dr. Carter, and told him that, “Doctor, I met this girl, and I want you to meet her, and I think I want
to get married.” He explained to me how he was glad of that, that as a physician I needed to have a wife. It made it easier for you in practice for people to accept you as a married man than as a bachelor. Dr. Carter, especially after Bev left town, he came to look upon me even more as a son. In a sense, he came to rely upon me in certain ways, and we just spent an awful lot of time together. Most of the bridge that Gloria and I played after we got married we played with Dr. Carter and his wife Helen.

Bev’s mother died, as I remember, probably in 1956, the year after Gloria and I got married. So Gloria knew Auntie Carter, but she never came to know her well, because before we had been married a year she was dead. But she came to know Helen much better, and we spent many an enjoyable Saturday night at the Carters’, playing bridge with them, and just enjoying their society in general. The Carters were great travelers, and we used to share traveling experiences.

I think I’d like to generalize and reminisce a bit. First, about my hobbies. The first thing, I’ve always been quite a reader. In looking back on my life, I think the reason for that is explained by my early education. I didn’t realize it at the time, but when I started South Street School, the school system in Glencoe had a superintendent who has gone on to become famous for his innovations in teaching. I forget the man’s name. I think I’ve seen it since then, on the cover of *Time Magazine*, quite some time ago. But in any event, I didn’t think there was anything unusual about it, but by the time I had learned to read at Central—Central High School; hear me—at South Street School in Glencoe, the system was that as a student there, you had a certain amount of work to do. Once you had
completed this work, you were free to do whatever you wanted to do, you just were not allowed to distract or disturb any of the other students.

What I chose to do was to read. I feel that my habit of reading a lot was developed at that early age, and I attribute it to the opportunities to read that I had back in primary school. Reading became a particular outlet of mine I always enjoyed. I still enjoy it, and I would say that in the years to come I look forward to reading more and more, in the sense that I am quite certain that I read more in the first 25 years of my life—and I say 25 because, well I should say first 26 years of my life, excluding professional material—in my 26th year I matriculated in medical school at the University of Pennsylvania.

What I am saying is that, excluding professional material, I’m certain I read more in that 26 years than I have in the 40 years since, because I just haven’t had the time. I’ve been busy practicing, busy taking care of the patients, busy doing my job, and I haven’t read the classics that I would like to read. Some I never did get to. I remember I still have not read Les Miserables. I look forward to reading it. There are any number of other books like that that I know that are considered to be standard reading that I have not caught up with even as yet, but I still hope to.

Next, another hobby of mine, of course, is jazz music. I can recollect as a youngster, probably in Glencoe, certainly in Philadelphia, that we had an old Victrola, a spring-wound machine that you had to turn up between every record. I can remember playing the Duke Ellington record which on one side had the “Creole Love
Call” with the vocal by Adelaide Hall, and on the other side it had the “East Saint Louis Toodle-oo,” or it may have been called the “New East Saint Louis Toodle-oo.” But I can remember playing that record as a kid, cranking up the machine, playing one side, turning the record over, cranking up the machine, playing the other side, changing the needle. I can recollect that from way back there.

The first thing I started spending my own money for was phonograph records. The 78 RPM records were the records available then. I can remember the first record I bought—well I can remember the first two. One was the “Yacht Club Swing” by Fats Waller, and the other was the “Jumpin’ Jive” by Cab Calloway. Those were the first two records in my collection, and I probably bought those when I was in junior high school. As time went along my interest in jazz continued, as nurtured by the radio, with some of the big performers you could hear, like John Kirby was on the radio. Later on, King Cole was on the radio. Of course, this was the time of the stage shows, when we would see Duke Ellington, and Jimmy Lunceford, and Count Basie, and the Mills Brothers, and so forth, when they would come to town either at the Lincoln Theatre, or at the Nixon Grand, or downtown at the Earl Theatre.

Bev and I used to cooperate in phonograph records, as we did in everything else. I was expected to buy the Duke Ellington records. I was expected to buy the Earl Hines. I was expected to buy the Lionel Hampton. I was expected to buy the Erskine Hawkins. Bev’s favorites were Count Basie and Jimmy Lunceford, and if we were going to have a record session, either he would bring his records over to my house, or I would take my records over to his, and that’s the
way we would listen to our jazz. By the time I came out of the Army, of course, the 33 1/3 RPMs were the way to go, and we eventually bought a 33 1/3 machine and I continued to buy those, continued to add to my collection in that way.

I might add that I attended Duke Ellington’s first concert at Carnegie Hall. By that time, Duke Ellington was my favorite performer, my favorite musician, my favorite pianist, and I considered myself to be an expert, such as you could be, just in recognizing his records, knowing the performers, being able to identify the performers from listening to the record. My favorite saxophonist was Ben Webster, favorite tenor saxophonist. My favorite alto saxophonist was Johnny Hodges. Favorite baritone saxophonist was Harry Carney, and so it went. I was just a Duke Ellington fan.

I was in college, of course, in 1943. This would have been February of 1943, probably just before or just after my graduation from school. Anne was in training up in New York City in nursing school, and I remember Anne got the tickets, and she and a classmate of hers named Louise Louvelle, from Detroit, and I, had seats at the very top, the very back of Carnegie Hall. I remember we had to look down at about an angle of 45 degrees to the stage, and as far away as the stage was, the acoustics and the electrification of the music was so perfect that even when Johnny Hodges and Freddie Guy were out playing the duet on “Come Sunday,” you could hear every note. It was a tremendous musical experience, one of many that I experienced by Duke Ellington.

While on the subject, I can remember going to the Apollo Theatre while I was an intern. Lorenzo Douglas and I went to the
Apollo to see Duke Ellington when he was there. This, of course, would have been very likely in the fall or late summer of 1952. And the bill was not only Duke Ellington and his orchestra, but it was Pearl Bailey and Bill Bailey, and Louie Bellson was the drummer in Duke Ellington’s band at the time. And of course, Louie Bellson and Pearl Bailey were man and wife by then, and this was part of the humor of the occasion, Bill Bailey’s comments about this new brother-in-law he had. But it was a tremendous musical performance. I’ll never forget it, Pearl and Bill and the Duke up there giving the show at the Apollo Theatre.

I still collect jazz records, of course, don’t have nearly as much time to listen to them as I used to, but I still enjoy my jazz from time to time, get to a concert of one kind or another.

Another hobby now is golf, of course. Bev Carter always tried to interest me in golf. Bev was an avid golfer. When I left my practice in 1961 to go to Philadelphia General Hospital to do the residency, there were several things I promised myself I would do when I went back into practice. One of them was I wanted to have some regular means of physical activity that I would enjoy. I decided that the first thing I was going to try was to take up golf to see if I really liked it. Not too long after I started the residency, Bev took me and introduced me to his pro, Walter Johnson. Walter took me downtown and I bought a set of clubs, a set of irons, a set of woods, and I started taking lessons from Walter Johnson.

The first time Walter took me out on the course would have been late that first summer. He went with me, took me out to Carracome [?], and I know I had a 95. I thought I had it made. I
didn’t realize it would take me 10 years before I would score that low again. To this day I don’t usually score a 95; my score is usually somewhere between 95 and 105. But certainly one of the most enjoyable hours, enjoyable times of the week, is the Saturday mornings I spend, usually at Freeway, sometimes at another course in the vicinity, usually with William H. Brown, III, and Dr. Lorenzo Walker, out knocking that little white ball around.

My other outlet, of course, is travel. Before I went to work at the telephone company, my travel schedule was a little different than it is now. I soon learned when I was in practice that it was just as difficult to leave my practice to go away for a week as it was to go away for a month. This is one of the difficulties of having a solo practice. I would describe it, I would say that trying to bring the practice to a halt so I could leave on vacation was like trying to stop a steam engine single-handed, and bring it to a halt. Then once I got back off vacation, getting the practice started again was like trying to get that steam engine rolling again when it was at a dead halt. The momentum was just overpowering. You lost an awful lot of energy in those two activities. This was one of the things that made me decide that I was in the wrong type of health delivery system, in solo practice.

For that reason I soon learned in practice that I would go on vacation only once a year, because I only had to go through this trauma once, of stopping the practice and getting it started. Gloria and I used to spend three or four weeks on vacation once a year, until I went to work at the telephone company full-time in 1975. At that point, it was just as easy to quit for a week, or ten days, or two weeks;
it didn’t matter to anybody, at least it didn’t matter to me. It was no more difficult to leave for one week or four weeks; it didn’t matter. You just leave, you get off the train, the train goes down the tracks. When you get back you get back on the train, figuratively speaking.

So since ’75, we’ve taken shorter vacations, and more frequently during the year. We established a habit of going on vacation for a week in the wintertime. We find that shortens the bite of the winter for us, let’s say it weakens the bite of the winter for us. It makes the winter seem shorter to go off where it’s warm for a week in the middle of the winter, so to speak, usually in mid-February. In that connection we’ve been to Rio de Janeiro about four times—not about four times, four times, actually. The first time we visited Rio was just as a part of our winter vacation. I guess that probably was in ’74, the year before I went to work full-time at the telephone company. That was about a three-week vacation to South America in which we spent time—it was an American Express tour—spent time in Equador, well, in Colombia, and in Equador, and Peru, seeing Machu Picchu while we were there, and three days in Buenos Aires, and then a couple of days in Sao Paulo, four days in Rio, and two days in Venezuela, Caracas, before coming home. As much as we enjoyed the whole trip, we felt we’d have to get back to Rio again, and we’ve been lucky enough to get back there three times, the last time about four years ago, at the time of Carnivale. So we’ve had the fantastic experience of seeing the Carnivale in Rio.

We’ve been to Africa several times. It occurs to me that last night I talked about our trips to Tangier, and then to East Africa to see Bev, and then to Liberia two times. Then, of course, our last trip to
Africa was the trip to Egypt about three years ago, where we had such an enjoyable time seeing the sites up and down the Nile River, Cairo, Abu Simbel, the Valley of the Kings, and so forth. We had what I consider to be was the fascinating experience, of course, of going to Carnac and seeing the obelisk there, and then several days later being in Paris and seeing its twin on the Place de la Concorde.

Gloria and I, our first travel experience together was on our honeymoon, when we drove from Muskogee, Oklahoma, northeast to Vermont. We must have spent around two weeks in and around Manchester, Vermont, travelling around, seeing the sites up there, Fort Ticonderoga and so forth, before we came home. Then after that, the following year we drove back west, I do believe. The point of it is, every year we took a trip by automobile somewhere, until 1967.

In that year, Gloria had been invited to participate in a meeting in Brussels, and we decided to work a vacation around that meeting. So that was our first trip to Europe. On that vacation, after spending those first several days in Brussels, we spent one night in the Netherlands. She had been invited to visit the laboratory run by two colleagues of hers in a little town called Soesterberg. Gloria and I went by train from Brussels to Amsterdam, rented a car and drove to Soesterberg, spent the day there, drove back to Amsterdam that night. The following morning flew on to Zurich to start our vacation, and we spent about four days in Zurich, as I remember, then about six days in Paris, then a couple of days in London before coming back home.

We enjoyed that so much that we’ve been back to Europe any number of times since. Several of these vacations have centered around another hobby of mine, which is wine. When Gloria and I
were designing this house, my only request of her and the architect was that they should leave a room for my wine cellar. The study of wine, the consumption of wine, reading about wine is a particular interest of mine, and about the last thing I can say might qualify as a hobby.

Probably my final comments, I guess I would have to say that the most important thing to me, to my personal development, to meeting the challenges of life, is that I am a black American. This hasn’t been so much of a problem to me, as I see it, because my father prepared me for this when I was a youngster, but it has allowed me to always look at myself in a special light, to realize that I am in a particular position by virtue of my color, and I am certain that it’s made me self-conscious to a great extent. Without it consciously worrying me, I always felt that I had to do well for that reason. I didn’t want to let my father down, especially. Subconsciously, I guess that was the point. The Old Man told me he expected me to go out there and always be seen in a good light. I never consciously considered myself carrying the black man’s burden, or at least if I did, it wasn’t a laborious thing; it’s what’s expected of me and what I expected of myself, and I just always did it.

By the same token, my experiences with the members of the majority of this country have convinced me over the years that as a group they weren’t particularly my friends, and this was based on incident after incident that I have not bothered to record here because they are not important. The conclusion is important. I guess—well, let me say that my father, at least my mother, used to always say that she felt my sister and I acted older than our ages because we were
raised by two relatively old people. By that she was referring to the
fact that when I was born my father was 49 years old, and she was 27.
So we weren’t raised by two youngsters; we were raised by two fairly
mature individuals. She feels this kind of rubbed off on us and made
us a little bit more circumspect—
[End Part 3.1 / Begin Part 3.2]

—and serious, and mature in our approach to life, than the
average child would ordinarily be. I know my mother used to often
say that she and her husband raised two old people, referring to Anne
and me.

But I’ve always thought that one of the reasons that I am the
way I am is that, because I was black, I learned I had to be cautious.
It wasn’t that it upset me so much; it’s just the way it always was.
This especially applied to friendships. I decided at an early age, on
the basis of any number of experiences, that most of the white people
I met were not that particularly friendly toward me, and it made me
very cautious so far as making friends in general was concerned, and I
have always been so. I just assume that when you meet somebody, he
or she may have a smile on their face, but that doesn’t mean they want
to be my friend, because I have learned so often that, when push came
to shove, they were not friendly.

That’s one reason, I might add, that I have enjoyed Alpha Boulé
so much. The men whom I’ve met through Alpha Boulé, the
members of that organization, have consistently been friendly men.
When I have come to know them well, they have been true friends
right down the line.
For the same reason I’m talking about right here, I was never much of a joiner. I had to be persuaded to join an organization. It was Dr. Holloway and Dr. Edward Cooper who told me—the Chief probably put Eddie up to it, asked him to give him a curriculum vitae. I gave it to Eddie. I forget what the excuse was that he made to me for wanting it, but after I had been elected to the organization, Eddie Cooper again was calling me. He said, “Now, Jack,” he said, “I’ve got some news for you. The Chief and I are in this together, and I don’t want you to say no. You’ve been elected to an organization and we want you to accept membership. I know you’re going to be glad about it, so accept it, and go along with us. Accept our judgment, and you will be pleased that you did.” And of course, he was exactly right.

But talking about organizations to which I belong, I was in one social club as a youngster. It was the club Viceroy’s, a club founded by a bunch of youngsters, I guess, when I was in junior high school, and some of these friends remain my friends down through the years, especially, again, Bev Carter was a Viceroy. Sam Beard, who is now my brother in Alpha Boulé, and who was made into Omega Psi Phi with me, was a Viceroy. Reggie George was a Viceroy.

Outside of the three fraternal affiliations I mentioned, now four with Sigma Pi Phi, I haven’t joined any other organizations except the professional ones and a few civic things. When I say that, the Philadelphia County Medical Society, the Pennsylvania Medical Society, the American Medical Association. I am a fellow of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, and a member of the American College of Physicians. I have been involved for various periods with
several other organizations in the city, as a member of the board of
directors of the International House of Philadelphia, similar capacity
with Arthur Hall’s Ile Ife organization, a member of the board of
governors of the Arthritis Foundation, as I mentioned a while back.

One more thing I’ll say, and probably in conclusion. I
mentioned how being black I felt had affected my personality. By the
same token, I would say it’s my observation that, if indeed you are
going to be born a member of a minority, the best country to be born a
member of a minority in is the United States of America. I think that
you have a better chance to present your own viewpoint, and a better
chance to do better, to improve your lot, and to secure fair treatment,
as a member of a minority here than anywhere else in the world that
I’ve read about, and certainly anywhere that I have visited.

I think it’s rather difficult to be born on Earth not a citizen of
some country, and I think that this is the best. That doesn’t mean that
it’s perfect—far, far, far from that. But at least in this country we are
free to complain, even to scream if we wish, about what we consider
to be the injustices, and we have the wherewithal to do something
about them. I feel that I am lucky to have been born an American,
and I am very pleased to see that many of the bars that made it more
difficult for me to accomplish what little I have accomplished have
been brought down.

As I said, my father taught me at an early age to expect this, and
I think that I was able to meet these problems better than many other
people, men, might be able to. Everybody doesn’t expect that to
happen. I did, and I was ready for it, but I don’t think that makes it
right. And because it’s not right, I think the average person coming
along is more likely to be thrown off balance and, to use the popular expression, get his nose bent out of shape, when he realizes he is being treated unfairly. It shouldn’t be so. It is so even in America, but I think that more is being done about it in our country than is being done in other parts of the world, for which I am quite grateful.

[End of Recording]