

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection

Rusk 7O: Part 1 of 6

Dean Rusk, autobiographical sketch told to Richard Rusk
circa 1985

The complete interview also includes Rusk 7P: Part 2; Rusk 7Q: Part 3; Rusk 7R: Part 4; Rusk 7S: Part 5; Rusk 7T: Part 6

DEAN RUSK: I was born February 9, 1909 in Cherokee County, Georgia. My great grandfather, David Rusk, was one of three brothers who came over from Northern Ireland, he was among the people we call the Scotch-Irish. He came over about the end of the 18th century and landed in Charleston and found his way over to the western part of South Carolina, in the Pendleton area--the John C. Calhoun kind of country. Then he made his way to north Georgia, the southern part of Cherokee County and staked out several hundred acres of ground there at a time when that was mostly Indian country--free for settlers to stake out. In a little family graveyard up in Cherokee County, I can see his grave and my great-grandmother's grave and note on her tombstone that she was born in 1776, and I have often reflected upon the fact that only four of us have spanned the entire life of this country as an independent nation. My grandfather, James Edward Rusk, kept the original home place going; he was a man of considerable substance. For example, he was the Justice of the Peace in that area and when neighbors had a problem, somebody's cow trampled on someone else's garden or something, they would simply meet with my grandfather under a tree somewhere and settle it. Very rarely did anything go to the county courthouse in that area because they tried to settle their problems locally.

My grandfather had eleven children. My own father was next to the youngest son. He was the only one of those eleven children who went to college. He went to Davidson College in North Carolina, a Presbyterian liberal arts college, because he had in mind going into the Presbyterian ministry. After Davidson he went to the Louisville Theological Seminary and was ordained as a minister in the Presbyterian Church. But he did not have a good run at his profession in the ministry because he had some trouble with his throat and had to leave it. He did some school teaching and then went back to Cherokee County and rented a forty acre plot of land from his sister, my Aunt Mary Roberts, and it was on that forty acre farm that I was born.

I thought all my life that I had been delivered by a veterinarian because our next door neighbor was our uncle, Dr. Roberts, but I learned many years later that a doctor had come over from Woodstock, a town about eight miles away in the middle of a dark, stormy night to preside over my birth. I must confess that I can't remember in much detail about those years in Cherokee County because we left there when I was less than four years old. I do remember the death of my grandmother and the fact that her sons, all together, sang at her funeral. I remember the men playing marbles in our yard, a marble game called Tennessee Nines. I remember the walk about four hundred yards from our house down to the old homeplace, down the road--the heavy forest on both sides and how scary it was to walk along there at night, when one didn't know what would come out of the woods at you--all imagination. I remember going to the hill with a load of

sugarcane to be ground up for sorghum syrup, but life on the farm there was very tough--red clay hills not very productive. There was a little bottom land along the river there where things could grow a little better. My father's cash income in the course of a year on that little farm was perhaps a hundred dollars with a few bales, but we grew our own food and made our own quilts, things of that sort.

The old house in which I was born was built by my father. It was one of the first houses in that part of Georgia to have glass windowpanes. Of course we had a well on the front porch and we had a privy about fifty yards behind the house. One thing I do remember is that my father and about a dozen neighbors joined together to put up a homemade telephone system connecting about twelve or fifteen farms in that area. It was one of those telephones where you turned a crank and each house had a particular ring: one long, two shorts or a long and a short. When the phone rang for anybody, whatever the signal, anybody else could pick up the phone and listen to what was being said and there were three long rings on the telephone system which was a signal for everybody to come to the phone. They used that in case of fire because you might need help from neighbors or if a mad dog came through and they had to follow that dog from farm to farm until somebody could kill it. I used to say they also used it if an agent of the federal government came into the area because we lived very much among ourselves and outsiders were not very welcome. As a matter of fact, anybody from as far away as across the river was looked upon pretty much as a foreigner.

This little house had three rooms. Our diet was very inadequate. We lived on the pork that we got from slaughtering pigs after the first hard freeze. We very seldom had any beef because we only had two cows and we needed the milk. There were always some chickens--maybe twenty, thirty chickens--but we only ate chicken on very special occasions. We ate a lot of fatback and bacon. We did have some smoked ham. We bought our wheat flour but we grew our own corn for cornbread and ate a great deal of cornbread. The sorghum syrup was our principal sweetener--dessert, very little coffee. The calcium content of our food was very inadequate and most of us have had very poor teeth because of that. We knew that we were poor but if anybody else had called us poor we would have shot them. Of course, I was the third son so most of my clothes were hand-me-downs. My mother sewed most of our clothes. My father cobbled our shoes and cut our hair and we were as close to self-sufficiency as you could be on a forty acre farm and with limited supplies of cash. I have never known how much rent my father had to pay my aunt for that farm, but it could not have been very much. My two older brothers and my older sister Margaret attended a typical one room schoolhouse. In those days they had seven grades in one room and the only qualification for the teacher was that he or she be a graduate of that particular school. I did not attend that school because I wasn't old enough before we moved to Atlanta.

I got something of a feel for life in Cherokee County as well as down in Rockdale County where my mother grew up because after we moved to Atlanta in 1912, we kids would go back to the country during the summer vacation. I spent a lot of time with kinfolk on the farms until I was fourteen or fifteen years old and so I had a good chance later on to get a real sense as to what life had been like on the farm.

In 1912, my father, realizing that this was a man-killing little farm and it was almost destroying my mother physically, took a job at the post office in Atlanta as a mail carrier and we moved to

Atlanta in 1912. Atlanta was maybe seventy-five thousand to eighty thousand by that time, it was sort of a railroad center. We first lived in a little house on Fifth Street which has long since been overrun by Georgia Tech and although it was in the center of Atlanta, it still had an outdoor privy. That is a matter of some importance because one of the things I remember about that place was both my brother Roger and my brother Parks had typhoid fever while we were living there. But we soon moved out to West End and Whitehall Street along the Central of Georgia railroad which ran from Atlanta down to Macon. I entered school there--Lee Street School. I was very fortunate in being able to attend the Lee Street School because it was then the normal training school for the Atlanta School System. That meant that we had only very select teachers for our regular classroom teachers, and we had fifteen or twenty of the teacher candidates around to help out with projects and pageants and teacher's aides and things of that sort. Looking back on it, I feel that I got a very good start in grammar school.

My mother had been a schoolteacher briefly. With two older brothers and an older sister, I learned to read and write and do arithmetic before I was of school age so I took a test to see whether I would skip the first grade and go into the second grade. As a result of that, I started off going to school in the second grade. The teacher I became acquainted with was Miss Ethel Massingale, my second grade teacher, and she and I corresponded all of her life until she died in her eighties, she was not married. But we had excellent teachers, we learned the basic things about reading, spelling, arithmetic and things of that sort--it was a pretty well-disciplined school. One thing I look back upon with some satisfaction was that each year we would study a different part of the world, using what they called Carpenter's [Geographic] Readers, they were little geography books. One year we would use the Reader on Latin America, another year Africa, another year on Asia, another year on Europe and all of our projects and pageants and things like that were built around the area of the world that we were studying at that time. So one got a feeling even at that early age as to what the world was about, people in other parts of the world.

We had seven years of grammar school there. The first three years were in an outdoor school, which was very unusual then. One square building, split down the middle in two directions with walls, but the outside walls were wide open, and we attended school in those classes right through the winter. There were canvas curtains we could raise in case of rain but when it got cold in the winter we had thick woolen bags in which we would tie ourselves. In really cold weather, we would heat bricks at home and bring them to school and put them in the bottom of the bag and about every hour and a half or so we would pause and the teacher would serve hot cocoa. I remember when I was in the fourth grade going down to the city's Board of Education to testify in favor of continuing that open air school, but the Atlanta school system did not continue it. I suspect because it was pretty hard on the teachers to teach under those conditions but I never had colds or anything else. I have never been as healthy as I was going to that open air school.

After the seventh grade I went straight to high school, we didn't have junior high school in those days. Again I was very fortunate because in the Atlanta school system in those days they had two high schools, Boys' High School and Girls' High School whose primary purpose was to prepare young people for college. Then they had Commercial High and Tech High for those whose primary interest was not in going on to college. So Boys' High School in those days was very much like the Boston Latin School, a rigorous program with college preparatory work with emphasis on English, mathematics, Latin, Greek, and science. I greatly benefitted from the rather

rigorous discipline that they had there in that high school. Years later they made the high schools in Atlanta all purpose high schools where every high school tried to do everything. Maybe it is a sign of my age but I felt that maybe they slipped back a bit by losing some of the quality they had in the old Boys' High School.

The principal was Mr. [Herbert] H.O. Smith, a Harvard man who had very high standards and was a rigorous disciplinarian where learning was concerned. He would throw quite a tantrum if he came across shoddy work or anything of that sort. About 90% of us went on to college--it was a public high school. The most striking thing about this experience, as I look back over the years, was the greatest single teacher I ever had in my life, my high school teacher of Greek, named Preston Epps. He had classes of eighteen or so perfectly normal teenage boys but he would just bring us alive by going into the great questions and great ideas raised by the Greeks; Plato, Aristotle and the great works that the Greeks produced. We worked very hard at it and were very enthusiastic about those Greek studies because of the inspirational quality of Preston Epps' teaching.

RICHARD RUSK: Would his wife be privy to his thoughts about you back then?

DEAN RUSK: Probably, but she is now his second wife and the wife that he had at the time he was teaching Boys' High has long since died. But Miriam Epps and I are good friends and she undoubtedly has heard him talk a good deal about those days. After he finished his Ph.D. at Chicago, Preston Epps went on to become professor of classics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and became one of the Kenan professors up there which is one of the distinguished professorships at the University and later became a professor emeritus. He and I, again, corresponded until his death in 1982 at the age of 94. He was a most remarkable man. One of the real satisfactions that I had was later on when I, at the Rockefeller Foundation, was able to find a genuine job that he could do for us on a visit to Greece and that was his first opportunity to visit Greece and he never forgot that nor did I. On Boys' High School you can check some of these things through the yearbook called the Alciphronian.

RICHARD RUSK: How was it determined who got to go to Boys' High School?

DEAN RUSK: You made your own choice, you applied. I don't know, quite frankly, whether they screened out applicants for Boys' High School. There were neighborhood high schools but Boys' High School was not, it was a city-wide school. Boys' High School originally, when I first started there, was a big, old, red brick building on Gilmore Street just across the street from the city auditorium. It was inadequate, drafty. I have developed over the years some real skepticism about whether the quality of teaching has much to do with the luxury of the surroundings in which the teaching takes place.

RICHARD RUSK: Was it a boarding school?

DEAN RUSK: No.

RICHARD RUSK: Did your dad take special efforts to get you in?

DEAN RUSK: No, I just applied to Boys' High from Lee Street School and whether anything went on behind the scenes to certify me I just don't know. I had no problem getting in.

Boys' High was about four miles from home and a friend of mine from West End and I went to school together every day, we would usually stand down at the corner and thumb a ride. His name was James Jacobs who worked for many years with the Southern Bell Telephone Company. I remember one old gentleman, who drove an old-fashioned Chevrolet touring car, would pick us up most days. But there were times when we walked in and walked home.

Boys' High began ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corp] but began its classes at seven-thirty in the morning before the regular school started and so that meant that we got up and started going pretty early in the day to get there in time. I valued the ROTC training and enjoyed it. My final year there I was cadet commander of the battalion. We were instructed by a remarkable noncommissioned army officer named Sergeant Short, who was a good disciplinarian and handled the situation very well.

I was active in school affairs. I was on the staff of the school newspaper. I think I was editor of the yearbook, the Alciphronian, and did not limit my interest just to the classes and school books. I went out for basketball but got cut off the squad the first day because I wasn't any good but made a lot of friends there at Boys' High School who have been with me all of my life. Now that I am back in Georgia I see a good many of those fellows and its means a good deal to me; people like Harvey Hill, Harlee Branch [Jr.], Dr. Paul McGinty. There are others whose names I could provide you although many of them are no longer alive.

Then, I had always dreamed about going to Davidson College. My father had been in the class of 1894 there and he had told us a good deal about Davidson, but the question was how I was going to get there from a financial point of view. I stayed out of school for two years between high school and college working in a little law office with a young lawyer named Augustus [M.] Roan who later became a judge in Atlanta. The idea was that I would work and save up enough to go to college, but it didn't work out very well because I didn't make much more than it took to live on so I didn't really bank any money to use to go to college, but that was a useful two years. Among other things I spent a lot of time down at the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] learning to play basketball and at least got good enough to make the Davidson team when I finally got there but that is another story. One thing that turned out to be a lucky break was that in my senior year in high school, I was asked to be the school page editor for the Atlanta Journal. Each Sunday the Journal would run a full page of letters from the different elementary schools from around the city, each one of those schools would have a kind of correspondent and they would write in letters. It would be my job to edit those letters and paste them together to make up a school page. That paid \$40 a month and that was very welcome money in those days, but it brought me in touch with one of the great figures in Atlanta journalism, Harlee Branch, Sr., who was the city editor of the Atlanta Journal. My little desk was right under the rail behind which he sat. And then there were great sports writers like O.B. Keeler and Morgan Blake and others and I found that a very stimulating experience.

Well, after two years in this lay office, I decided that I had better head for college if I were ever going to get there and so I set out for Davidson. My brother Parks drove me up there and I had

about \$50 in my pocket but because my father had been for a time a Presbyterian minister, I was given a scholarship, a modest amount. Then I was lucky enough to find jobs with which I could work my way through Davidson. For example, every four years the local bank in town named an entering freshman to become bookkeeper and assistant teller in a little bank in Davidson. It just happened that the job came open when I got there. I was lucky enough to get that job and it helped a good deal with the costs. I waited on tables at the boarding house and my senior year I was one of the managers of the student store, I had to just piece things together to keep things going. I entered Davidson in 1927 and graduated in 1931.

Davidson was then and is now a good solid liberal arts college--very good in pre-professional training and undergraduate preparation for graduate studies and elsewhere. It had a good academic reputation, good faculty; it is even much more strong today than it was then. I found the Davidson College experience pretty hectic because I had a full day with the combination of classes and studies and basketball and other things and so I had to run from one appointment to another almost all the time. I continued ROTC at Davidson which I enjoyed every much under the direction of Colonel William R. Scott, one of the finest army officers I have ever known in my life. I used to visit with him until his death in the late 1960s, a very fine man.

I knew when I first entered Davidson that I was going to try for a Rhodes scholarship because that was about the only way I saw that I could take any graduate studies or go beyond the B. A. [Bachelor of Arts] degree. And so partly because of that and partly because things just happened, I took a very active part in student affairs there at Davidson. My freshman year I was president of the freshman class, I was very active in the YMCA work, active on their yearbook, the Quips and Cranks, was an active member of the Kappa Alpha fraternity, but still I knew that I had to keep my academic work in good shape and so I boned up pretty hard. At Davidson I made, of course, a great many friends that have been friends throughout my life although I have not seen as many of them as I should like to. I went to my 50th reunion in 1981 and there were about seventy of us there which was quite a lot for a 50th class reunion that was about 70% of the class.

I took the regular liberal arts program with majors in effect in political science and history and remember with particular appreciation a member of the faculty named Archibald Currie, who had been law trained rather than through the Ph.D. track and he taught American government, principle of law and international law and things of that sort and I always enjoyed that work with him. But the person most responsible for my getting a [Cecil John] Rhodes scholarship was Professor Guy Vowles, professor of German at Davidson; he himself had been a Rhodes Scholar many years earlier and he took the initiative and urged me to apply for a Rhodes scholarship and indeed I think he was on the State Committee of Selection. I applied for the Rhodes from North Carolina because you could apply either from your own home state or from the state in which you went to college. So I applied to the North Carolina committee and was lucky enough to get it. There were two committees to go through for a Rhodes scholarship because when Cecil Rhodes wrote his will back in 1903 or 1904 he provided under his will a Rhodes scholarship to each state in the American union, thinking that there were thirteen states. Well, actually there was not enough money in the will to provide one for each one of the forty eight states, so they went into court and got the will amended to provide thirty-two Rhodes scholarships from the United States as a whole so as a result each state had its competition, its committees of selection,

then those go to a regional committee so that they would allocate by regions the number that would be required for thirty-two from the United States as a whole. And so I went off to Oxford in October 1931.

In talking with young people these days about their plans for the future, I have been impressed with the role which accident, happenstance, luck played in my own life. One example of that came up in connection with the Rhodes scholarship. The chairman of the North Carolina committee was Josephus Daniels who had been Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of the Navy. When I was before the Committee he looked over my papers and said, "Mr. Rusk, I see in your papers here that you live up in Georgia. Why should we give a North Carolina appointment to a Georgian?" And I said, "Well, Mr. Chairman, I have been living in North Carolina for four years, I have spent not only the school year here but the summers here; I worked in a bank in Greensboro in the summertime, I have paid poll tax in North Carolina." "Oh," he said, "you paid poll tax. That's alright." Now paying poll tax was a complete accident because the teller of the little bank in Davidson, a marvelous man named Thompson, was also the town treasurer and he was the fellow who collected poll tax. And just for fun or sentiment, or whatever it was, I paid him a dollar poll tax each year. I am quite convinced that if I had not paid that poll tax, I would not have been chosen as a Rhodes Scholar from North Carolina.

Anyhow, I was accepted at St. John's College, Oxford, one of the smaller but one of the richer colleges there. It had vast holdings in North Oxford real estate and things like that. I started out to read for the degree in philosophy, politics and economics, a degree called the Modern Greats by the people at Oxford. I had some fine tutors there in my own College, and of course, the lectures at Oxford are university-wide lectures and you can attend such of them as you see fit. The University publishes a lecture program for each term and you look through it and decide with your tutor which ones you think you would be interested in and would be helpful to you. The only compulsory academic appointment which I had at Oxford was my weekly session with my tutor. Each week I would be expected to write a paper on a topic that my tutor and I had agreed on ahead of time and I would bring in that paper and he would go over it with me and would criticize it and go on from there. And so, that continuous writing experience, I think, proved very valuable to me.

One of the most important things about Oxford, as far as I was concerned, was that it was the first time I had a chance to experience any of the leisure that goes along with learning. There was no such thing as working your way through Oxford so I had a good deal of time on my hands for bull sessions with my own fellow students.

Of course, every afternoon everyone was expected to take part in sports of some sort. I played lacrosse at the University and tennis, but the idea at Oxford in those days was that you took full advantage of what one thinks of as "Oxford life." The serious cramming for your exams you did during your vacations. The three terms which make up the Oxford year altogether lasts about six months so you have about six month's vacation each year. The typical habit was to load up a suitcase full of books and go off somewhere and do some really hard studying during your vacation period. I spent one vacation, I remember, on the little island of Guernsey, one of the Channel Islands off the French coast, all by myself, living with a family but no other young people around. I spent another vacation for a period up in the lake district of northern England in

the Wordsworth country on a reading party where certainly every morning was put into hard academic work and every afternoon we went out hiking, things like that.

Then I began to go to Germany during my Oxford vacations, and I was in Germany when [Adolf] Hitler seized power and I brought back some very strong impressions of what had happened in those eventful years in Germany. I was there, for example, when the Nazi storm troopers took the streets and public platforms away from the democratic parties of Germany. My first year in Germany was 1933. I went to Germany in the first instance to study international law at the Hochschule fur Politik under Professor [Viktor] Bruns. But soon after I enrolled there and began seminars with him, the Nazis took over this Hochschule fur Politik and turned it into a leadership school for the Nazi party. I then moved across the street to the University of Berlin. But the impact of the Nazis on the education system became apparent very early indeed. For example, in this seminar with Professor Bruns, we began discussing on the first day what kinds of things we ought to cover in the seminar. One of the Nazi students stood up and said, "There is nothing to study but the illegality of the Treaty of Versailles." He demanded that we simply concentrate on that subject. Well, that didn't promise to be a very productive session in international law so I was rather glad that I was forced to move across the street to the University of Berlin where there were some remnants of the educational system, although the Nazis had begun to make inroads there.

So I went back to Germany and spent some time in Hannover learning German and became relatively fluent. I went to Hamburg to study economics; they were very strong in economics at the big trading center, but most of my studies were there in Berlin itself.

It was very distressing to see what the Nazis were in the process of doing. One of the tragedies of the Nazi experience was that many of my own age German students supported Adolf Hitler for what we would call idealistic reasons. They were interested in rebuilding the public morale of Germany following the terrible experiences of inflation and all the rest of it under the Weimar Republic. It was not until later that they realized the extent to which their idealistic views had been betrayed by this man Hitler. They just didn't believe what he had written and Mein Kampf didn't think he was serious about it and let themselves become trapped.

When I was in Berlin, I lived with a German family out in Neubabelsberg, near Potsdam, and there was a seventeen-year old boy in that family. Well, he was crazy about motorbikes and he was offered a position in the SS [Schutzstaffel] Motorbike Brigade and he joined; not because he had any particular ideological views that would turn him in that direction but because he liked motorbikes. Well, he was in the SS throughout the war, served on the eastern front in Germany and all that.

As a matter of fact, I took leave for one term at Oxford in order to continue my studies in Germany because so much was happening there and came on back to Oxford for my final term and took my final exams in philosophy, politics and economics.

The final exam there produces a B.A. degree. It is a B.A. which is somewhat further along in the academic world than the ordinary American B.A. because in the English school system their preparatory school, their public schools, carry work up through what we would call junior

college and so the so-called undergraduate degree at Oxford is more or less the equivalent of a M.A. degree in an American situation.

END OF SIDE 1

BEGINNING OF SIDE 2

DEAN RUSK: One of the delights at Oxford was the fact that some of your professors would have open house every Sunday afternoon and some of the most important people in Europe would drop by for a Sunday afternoon tea with the professor and undergraduates. [Mohandas] Gandhi visited Oxford while I was there. He had come to London for one of the so-called Round Table conferences between the Indian Nationalists and British government and he came up to spend the weekend with the Master of Balliol, bringing along with him two goats to provide him with his goat's milk. He agreed to spend an evening with an organization of Indian students at Oxford called, I believe, the Lotus Club. He agreed that each Indian student could bring a non-Indian student with him to this meeting. A friend of mine at St. John's College who was Indian asked me to go with him. It was a very dramatic evening; a crowded room with about two hundred students in it and Mr. Gandhi sitting on a table up in front of the room in his loin cloth, cross-legged, and he simply spent the evening talking with us, answering questions. I remember one thing in particular that he said, he said, "They will think of me in spiritual terms, that is because of my way of life, the things I say, the way I dress, but they will forget that I have discovered the secret of power in India." His voice became rather harsh at this point, he said, "We Indians cannot return British fire, rifle for rifle, canon for canon, because we simply don't have such weapons, but we can drive them out of India by simply doing nothing because they can't stay here without us." He said, "If we do that, some of us may die, others of us may go hungry, but the British will have to leave." And then in rather harsh terms he said, "That is raw power." And I have never forgotten about that meeting that evening with Mohandas Gandhi.

Another evening I have never forgotten was a debate we had in the Oxford Union that famous Oxford undergraduate debating society sometimes referred to as "the training ground for prime ministers." The Oxford Union held a debate every week on some stated topic. One evening I was there at the Oxford Union when the motion before the House was "Resolve that this House will not fight for King and Country." The man who moved the motion from the pacifist side was the philosopher C.E.M. [Cyril Edwin Mitchinson] Joad. He was brilliant, witty, articulate, and his patriotic opposition was pretty inadequate so C.E.M. Joad carried the day and the Oxford Union voted with a very substantial vote that "This House will not fight for King and Country." Since I was an American and it wasn't my King and Country and also I was a reserve officer in the United States Army, I did not vote on that motion. I thought it was up to me to abstain. But that vote in the Oxford Union that night created quite a sensation and gave rise to a pacifist movement called the Oxford Movement. Adolf Hitler was later to refer to that as one of the signs that Britain would not fight and helped to encourage him to pursue his course of aggression with which we are all familiar.

But there was a follow-up on that debate that interested me. Just a very few years after the outbreak of war, C.E.M. Joad himself and Bertrand Russell, Maude Roydon, George Lansbury, joined in a joint statement that was circulated widely by the British Minister of Information, which in effect said to these same young people, "Sorry chaps, this fellow Hitler is different, get out there and fight." All without the arms, without the training, without the acts of prevention which they themselves had done so much to block. In the United States, we had similar people, among them Norman [Mattoon] Thomas, who wrote a very pained little book explaining to my generation of students why we should nevertheless fight in World War II despite all the things which he had said prior to World War II.

My generation of students was led down the garden path into the catastrophe of a World War II which could have been prevented. I will get into that as we go along. But we nevertheless did what was expected of us, knowing that it was a war that did not have to happen if people had been wise enough or strong enough at the proper time.

When I was finishing up at Oxford in 1934, the United States was still in a very deep depression and I had no particular ideas about a job so I wrote a note to President Frank Aydelotte of Swarthmore College who was the American secretary to the Rhodes trust and told him that if he heard of any job opportunities that came across his desk, I would be interested in hearing from him. So one day at Oxford I got a cable asking if I would accept a position as assistant professor of government at Mills College, at a salary of \$2,000 a year. I cabled back saying yes. Then I went around Oxford trying to find some Rhodes scholars from California to tell me where and what Mills College was. I had never heard of the place. The cable was sent by Aurelia Henry Reinhardt, who was then president of Mills College and she, perhaps as a matter of policy, perhaps out of financial stringency, had the practice of inviting some fresh Rhodes scholars to the faculty, perhaps knowing that the chances were that in the long run she wouldn't be able to keep them on the faculty. But one of the faculty members, a former Rhodes scholar named Buck, had been invited to spend a visiting year at Stanford and so there was a vacancy. She undoubtedly got hold of Dr. Aydelotte and he must have given her my name. But anyhow, I went to Mills College in the fall of 1934 where I started out as a young professor of government and international relations.

I was at Mills College until I was called to active duty in the army in December 1940, in preparation for building up our armed forces because of the war that was then going on.

Those were very interesting and happy days at Mills College. Among other things, I met your mother there. She was in a couple of my classes my first year. She had signed up to have those classes with Professor Buck, who was not going to be there and some stranger named Rusk was going to teach those classes, she apparently cried when she heard the news. In the summer of 1934 she had gone to Japan as part of a Japanese-American student exchange group and she was actively interested in international matters. So that was how I became acquainted with her.

As a matter of fact, in her second year I drove her down to a conference at Riverside, California, put on by the president of the University of Southern California, Dr. Rufus B. Kleinschmitt. This was a Riverside conference on World Affairs that was held in December of each year and it was the usual kind of thing--a series of speeches and discussion groups--and since your mother was a

student who was interested in international affairs, I invited her to drive down there with me and we did and that soon began to bloom into a more than ordinary friendship, so before long we were getting pretty close to each other. It was not easy for a young professor to court a student in a women's college in the 1930s, but we would get up at five o'clock in the morning and drive out in the countryside and have breakfast over a boy scout frying pan and things like that and get her back before everyone started getting up. We would sort of get away for dinner or something like that where we were not likely to run into Mills people.

It was an interesting college in those days. Aurelia Reinhardt herself was an extraordinary woman. She was large physically, commanding voice, very high intelligence; she was very active both in local and national affairs, Republican National Committeewoman from California, close friend of Herbert Hoover and his Secretary of the Interior, Ray Lyman Wilbur, who had been president of Stanford; she was a woman of real quality and determination. She held Mills College together through the depths of the Depression simply by determination, hairpins and baling wire. She was just determined to see it through, just made it happen. She was very active in the Association of American University Women, very active in her own church; she was national head of her church one year. She had a great influence not only on campus but in the entire Bay area community. I liked working for her; she was a good college president. As a matter of fact, I doubt whether Mills could have survived those rigorous years of the Depression without the special qualities of Aurelia Reinhardt. There is a good biography on her which you can read and catch up on that part of it.

Of course, your mother and I have many friends from the Mills days both on the faculty and among alumni of many classes, particularly among the classes from about 1933 to about 1945. We since have been very active in the Mills Club of New York, Mills Club of Washington, and lately we have been meeting with the Mills College group down in Georgia.

Part of that period, beginning about 1936, I began to study law at Berkeley. I was shooting in the long run to become a university professor in international law. I was thinking primarily of political science departments, but as I looked around the field and looked around political scientists, I found that almost none of them had law training; they had all come through the Ph.D. track. I felt that since lawyers and political scientists talk about the same institutions, use many of the same words, that there would be some point in going to law rather than the Ph. D. track in preparation for teaching international law, perhaps in a political science department. So I began to attend the University of California Law School at Berkeley, at Boalt Hall as it is called.

The Law School at Berkeley was one of the top three or four law schools in the entire country, it was then and still is, with a very fine faculty, able student body, a fine library; it was one of the best. It was about ten miles from the Mills campus and there were times when I had to make a twenty minute transfer from a class that I was teaching at Mills to a class at Berkeley. And I had to scurry pretty fast across the tortuous winding roads between Mills and the Berkeley campus, usually my principal problem was to find a place to park once I got over to Berkeley.

I took about a two-thirds or three-fourths program at law school, knowing that it would take me more than the three years to finish up because I was teaching full-time at Mills while I was studying law. Of course, that meant a pretty heavy load, reading and studying both for my

classes at Mills and for my law classes, but I managed. As a matter of fact, I was invited to be on the board of the Law Review at the Berkeley Law School, but I was simply too pressed to be able to put in the articles that would have qualified me for full membership on the Law Review.

During all that period, I was a reserve officer in the U.S. Army. In those days, Congressional appropriations were so small that we had a minimum of active training, an occasional two week camp during the summer, but most of the reserve training was done by correspondence work, map problems that were sent out by the area headquarters over at the Presidio, San Francisco. So doing those map problems to keep my reserve commission alive and moving forward was on top of whatever I had to do as a professor at Mills and as a student of law at Berkeley. I was told in late 1939, early 1940 that the prospect was that I would be called to active duty as a reserve officer and so I did not continue my law work in the fall of 1940.

Indeed, I was called to active duty as a captain in the Army Reserves to take command of the A-Company of the 30th Infantry which was then stationed at the Presidio, San Francisco. I had never had active command of regular troops before and I suppose I was rather green, but I had been very active both in high school and in college ROTC, eight years of it, and had been the cadet commander both in high school and in college.

The 30th Infantry was a part of the Third Division, made up of the Seventh, Fifteenth and Thirtieth Infantry Regiments. But they were distributed up and down the West Coast. The Division had not been mobilized as a division for a very long time, but it was stated that the Third Division on the West Coast and the First Division were the only two divisions in our army that rated "ready for combat," but that was ridiculous. When I took command of Company A of the 30th Infantry, we had a little over one hundred men in the Company instead of two hundred and twenty-five called for by the Tables of Organization. A number of those men were holdovers from World War I and obviously too old for active field duty as infantrymen. We did not have our full complement of machine guns; we had no mortars even though mortars were simple metal tubes; we were very limited in ammunition for purposes of training. At one period, I remember, we were rationed to ten rounds per man per season for training on the range to teach people how to shoot. That may have been because we had been moving about everything we could scarp up to Britain in connection with their war effort.

But we did maneuver in Marin County then eventually down at Fort Roberts lower down in California. Then the Third Division was pulled together up in the state of Washington at Fort Lewis. In the summer of 1941, I was transferred from Company A to become assistant G-3 of the Third Division, assistant operations officer. G-3 is the tactical and operations unit of the General Staff. We were heavily involved in maneuvers both on the Olympic Peninsula across the Puget Sound from Seattle and in other training exercises with far less equipment than would be normal if we had any idea of going to combat.

Then in October 1941, I received orders to report to the War Department General Staff in Washington for a G-2, G-2 being the intelligence organization of the army. My division commander protested this transfer; I expressed my own lack of desire to take it, but the War Department persisted; your mother and I were off to Washington. It turned out that my assignment there was to organize a new section of G-2 to gather information about British areas

in Asia and the Pacific. This new section which was committed to me was to cover Afghanistan, the Indian subcontinent, Burma, Malaya, Australia, New Zealand and the British Pacific Islands, a vast area with which I had had very little contact.

When I arrived I tried to find out why it was that I was assigned to that job despite the objections of my division commander, and I was told that a large stack of cards on individual officers were run through a sorting machine and my card fell out for that particular job because I spent three years in England. When I arrived I asked to see the files of information which we already had on that vast part of the world and a dear old lady, almost at the point of retirement, Mrs. North, took me over to a set of file cabinets and pulled out one drawer marked British Asia. There we found one copy of Murray's Tourist Handbook on India and Ceylon; it had been stamped confidential because it was the only copy in town and that was the only way to keep track of it and be sure that no one else ran off with it; there was one 1925 military attached report from London on the British army in India and about a half a drawer full of clippings from the New York Times which Mrs. North had been clipping between World War I and II on that part of the world and that was it. It is hard for people to realize how naked we were in terms of information intelligence about so many parts of the world at the beginning of World War II.

However, I passed my first test with flying colors. About my second or third day there on the job I got a telephone call from a full colonel in the War Plans Division of the General Staff who said "Rusk, I forget, is Indochina in South China or in North China?" I was able to explain to him where Indochina was. It is a bureaucratic fact that when someone finds themselves on a desk with a particular tag on it, that person overnight becomes the expert on that particular job and so I was the War Department's expert on that vast part of the world almost from the first day, it is laughable of course but that is the way it happened. We began to build up that section and accumulate information and establish contact with people who had experience in those countries and gradually began to sort things out.

After being in G-2 for over a year and a half, I was then sent to Commander General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. I went out there for a ninety day crash course put on especially for majors and lieutenants; I had by then been promoted to major. As a result of that, I was assigned, in effect, to a pool of officers who were being prepared for General Staff functions overseas. In the spring of 1943 I was assigned to become the staff officer for General Joseph [Warren] Stilwell, "Vinegar" Joe Stilwell, in the China-Burma-India Theater.

I prepared myself to go, put Mother and David on the train for California where she was to stay while I was overseas during the war; she went to Mills and stayed with some friends for a bit and then got a little house up on Underwood Drive on the campus itself. I think we paid something like \$20.00 a month rent on that little house during the war.

General Stilwell happened to be coming to Washington for consultation and so it was arranged that I would fly to India with him. I think that was in early June 1943. We flew to India in one of the new DC-4 aircraft which then appeared to be a magnificent plane. I thought at the time that it was the plane to end all planes--four motored, had long distance capability, had a good record of reliability. We went first to London where General Stilwell had consultations with British military authorities and then flew from London to North Africa, crossed North Africa, which had

been, by then, recaptured by the Allies, on to India. I was put in the Operations Section of General Stilwell's staff at the headquarters in New Delhi and soon became the Chief of War Plans for General Stilwell's headquarters, he had another headquarters up in Assam in northeastern India where preparations were being made for a reentry into Burma, and still another headquarters in China.

The command structure out there was very complex indeed because the British Chiefs of Staff were the executive agents for the U.S. and British Combined Chiefs of Staff for Burma and India, whereas Chiang Kai-shek was the Supreme Commander for the China theater, General Stilwell was, in theory, under the command of Lord Louis [Francis Albert Victor Nicholas] Mountbatten in the Southeast Asia command for India and Burma, but was also Chief of Staff to Chiang Kai-shek in the China theater. So command arrangements were rather complicated, and we had to work more or less on the basis of cooperation rather than direct command.

The China-Burma-India theater was the lowest priority in the war as far as the general Allied strategy was concerned. First priority was of course the war against Hitler in Europe; second priority was given to the operations in the Pacific under General [Douglas] MacArthur and Admiral [Chester William] Nimitz and the China-Burma-India theater was more or less at the bottom of the list. That had an influence on the manpower we were allocated, supplies, the equipment in terms of aircraft and things of that sort that might be needed so we had to make do with minimum resources. General Stilwell, for example, kept pressing for at least two American infantry divisions, but he never got them. He finally got one reinforcement regiment called "Merrill's Marauders" which were used in operations in north Burma but there were never any major American ground forces involved in that area.

We did make a major commitment toward building the Burma Road for a reentry into China. We did not know at that time how the war would develop with the Japanese and we could see the possibility that even if the Japanese were defeated in the Pacific and in their main islands that the large Japanese forces on the mainland of China would continue to fight. In any event, it was important to keep the Chinese in the war somehow in order to pin down, use up those Japanese forces which might otherwise be thrown in to reinforce those who were opposing MacArthur and Nimitz. So we needed this backdoor entry into China for the purpose of mining supplies and we took on the arduous task of opening up a road from northeastern India, Assam, through northern Burma into the Yunnan province of China. For that purpose the terrain was terrible, the rainy season made construction extraordinarily difficult, but through heroic and sacrificial effort, a lot of help from the Indians and the peoples of northern Burma, we were able to push the road through.

As a matter of fact, however, the road was never used significantly for the purpose for which it was built. We had constructed back in the United States several thousand special truck-trailer combinations to be used to haul supplies across that road into China but by the time we got the road open the DC-4 aircraft could do the job of sixty truck-trailer combinations because a DC-4 could make the trip over the hump in the Yunnan province of China in about an hour, could make several flights a day and the two to three week journey by road by truck-trailer combination simply was not practical.

My job as Chief of War Plans for General Stilwell was as much political as military. Most people have overlooked the fact that General Stilwell was sent out to the China-Burma-India Theater with an impossible mission. His job was to try to get the Chinese in China and the British army in India, made up mostly of various Indian troops, to fight the Japanese as soon and as hard as possible. But it was apparent that Chiang Kai-shek was not going to commit such forces as he had strongly against the Japanese because he was looking over his shoulder at the Communist in China at the end of the war, and he could see MacArthur and Nimitz steadily advancing across the Pacific. It was also obvious that Mr. [Winston Leonard Spencer] Churchill was not going to commit the British army in India in any serious way against the Japanese until the defeat of Hitler because the army in India was the only imperial reserve which Churchill had. The army in India provided many of the forces that were able to hold on in the Middle East at a time when the war was going very badly for the allies. So General Stilwell, without any major American forces of his own, was in the position of saying to both the Chinese and to the British, "I will hold your coat, now get out there and fight." The result was that frustration, disappointment, irritation both with regard to the British and with regard to the Chinese, were built into the very nature of General Stilwell's role out there. There were many ruffled feathers to be smoothed, we had some problems with the Indian National Movement, many of whose leaders were in jail. For example, they demanded to know when we would stop killing their cattle to feed our troops. Our supply lines back to the United States were very long across submarine infested waters and it was important for us to subsist on the land as much as we could. We finally agreed that we would not slaughter cattle that were not over twelve years old and that we would do so in screened areas which would not be seen by those peoples who might object. Of course, that meant that we ate a great deal of hamburger, because cattle more than twelve years old tend to be pretty tough and scrawny. The Indian Nationalists also demanded that we give permission to our soldiers to marry Indian girls. We compromised by agreeing that if a soldier were under orders to go home and was within thirty days of point of embarkation either by ship or by air, then we would then give him permission to marry. There was a general rule that troops in active theaters of operation were not to marry local people. I believe that was true in Europe and in the Pacific. As a matter of fact, when a soldier was within thirty days of embarkation, he wasn't too much interested in local marriage, but the principle had been accepted and that seemed to satisfy the British Nationalists.

There was a bitter struggle between General Stilwell and his own subordinate General Clair [Lee] Chennault about how to use such materials as we could move across the hump. General Chennault and Chiang Kai-shek wanted almost a monopoly on that tonnage for his air force, but General Stilwell knew that if Chennault's air operations were beefed up without strong Chinese ground capabilities alongside of it that the Japanese would simply move in and take over his air fields which indeed they did. That controversy moved all the way to Washington and one of my jobs was to draft most of the cables which represented General Stilwell point of view on that standing strategic difference of view.

END OF SIDE 2