

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection

Rusk 7Q: Part 3 of 6

Dean Rusk, autobiographical sketch told to Richard Rusk  
circa 1985

The complete interview also includes Rusk 7O: Part 1; Rusk 7P: Part 2; Rusk 7R: Part 4; Rusk 7S: Part 5; Rusk 7T: Part 6

DEAN RUSK: This has to do with the kind of life that was lived in Cherokee County in the first decade of this century. There was a considerable contrast between north Georgia on the one side and eastern Tennessee or western North Carolina on the other. The people who settled in eastern Tennessee came down the valley of Virginia and brought a good deal of the culture and technology of Williamsburg with them. But those who settled north Georgia came up through South Carolina and found themselves moving into Indian country and were much more pioneering and simplistic than Virginia of the colonial days. For example, it is almost fair to say that Cherokee County was pre-scientific and certainly underdeveloped early in this century. There was a minimum of medical care, public health; education was in one-room school houses if there was any education at all. Things like typhoid fever, pellagra, goiter, all those things were simply part of the environment in which the good Lord had put us. Of course, all the childhood diseases went through all of us; mumps, chicken pox, measles, all the rest of them. For care in those days--sore throats, my father would put a little soda in some sorghum syrup, heat it up on the top of a chimney on the lamp and when it was warm, would feed it to us in a spoon; of course there were no antibiotics. We had calomel for some diseases--that simply moved your bowels. Clearing the bowels was looked upon as being good for you. But we planted our crops more or less by the phases of the moon spelled out in the Farmers' Almanac. There were very few improved seeds or fertilizer. We had a little guano but fertilizer was mostly the manure that came from the horse, the cow and the chickens. We didn't have a single motor on our farm; the plow was pulled by a horse, so was the wagon, so was the little buggy.

Weeding was done by hand, by hoe, by rakes; the corn was gathered by hand, so was the cotton and sugarcane was cut by hand and loaded on the wagons by hand. There was rural free delivery by the post office and the postman would come by maybe three times a week in horse and buggy and we had our mailbox up on the little road that was a little more important than our road and we would go up there to get the mail occasionally. Of course, we used a Sears Roebuck catalogue which every home had a copy of. The privy was about fifty yards from the house. There was no running water. We had a well on our front porch and we drew all our water out of that, hand drawn by bucket and pump. The only thing that suggested any kind of modern movement was a homemade telephone system that my father and about a dozen neighbors built to connect about half a dozen farms or so. Nevertheless, my father was a college graduate; my mother was a former school teacher. They put great emphasis on reading and we developed very early a voracious appetite for reading and ambition with respect to education. Religion was what people these days would call hard-shell Protestantism. Churches were places where the community gathered and was as much a social event as a religious event. But everybody came. There was not a service every Sunday because the minister would have to serve several churches

and he was sort of a circuit minister. But there were deep religious commitments and beliefs. We were poor but we read in the Bible that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to go to Heaven, so we managed to accept the fact that we were poor but would have been very resentful if anybody else had called us poor. Of course a good many things were done on a community basis. If a man wanted to put up a barn, the neighbors would come in and help him. Usually a group would gather together for corn shucking time to shuck out the ears of corn and get grains and seeds off the cobs or the women would have a quilting party and would make quilts in different homes so there was almost an automatic cooperation in things that could better be done by a group than by individuals. About the only things we bought from the store were things like salt, cloth for clothes, maybe some wheat flour at times, things of that sort.

I remember my father would occasionally come back from the store with a can of Vienna sausages. There were seven links of sausage in the cans, still are, and there were seven of us in the family so that each member of the family got one link of sausage and that was a great treat. So all my life, including my days as secretary of state, if I went to a big reception where there was a big spread, I always went straight to the Vienna sausages because they were a real delicacy. Work began before sunrise and ended at dark. Before sunrise you could feed the animals and do several chores but daylight was spent in the fields most of the year working in one way or another. Except for when my older brother and sister were in school, they would be out in the field doing whatever had to be done. For example, my mother was more or less responsible for the vegetable garden and the children would help. I was one, two, three years old so I am sure that I didn't pull my weight in terms of working the field although in later years I would go back up and pick cotton and pull fodder and shuck corn and all the rest of it. There was a substantial breakfast and the big meal of the day was mid-day and then a fairly light supper because the output of energy during the day at work, but it was tough. The very fact of earning a living out of those red clay hills, which was tough, tended to make rather stern people out of all the Rusk family up there. My father was a gentle man but when he spoke, you knew he meant it and he did have an occasional burst of temper which was not easy to get around. My father was one of the younger members [I forget now I think there were one or two in the family younger than he] in a group of eleven children.

In those days families saw a lot of each other, they were not spread all over the country; first cousins got to know each other and visited each other frequently. You always knew that if you were going on a trip, usually by horse and buggy or surrey or wagon, that you could stage your trip by staying somewhere with a member of your family and you didn't have to ask for a reservation, you would just drop by and say that you wanted to spend the night. We used a lot of pallets; just straw on the floor with a quilt or something laid on top. So it was easy to take care of a good number of people at the same time. We learned a lot about the Bible, we learned a lot about the Sears Roebuck catalogue, the Farmers' Almanac. It took perhaps ten days to two weeks to get an item from Sears from the time the order was put in. There was a Sears quite early down in Atlanta and that made it easy to get orders. On rare occasions my father would come into Atlanta to do a little shopping or whatever else or go up to Canton to the county courthouse. The county courthouse in those days was kind of a community meeting ground, especially when the judge came through to hold court. There was a minimum of record keeping. For instance, they did not record births when I was born and I had to get a delayed birth certificate many years later from the state of Georgia. Everybody knew everybody else over a considerable area and if

strangers came through that was a matter of great curiosity. Strangers, in fact, would be followed from farm to farm until they got through the area. I regret to say that at the time in Cherokee County, a black was not permitted to spend the night in the county. This came out of the Reconstruction period when relations became very bitter. No blacks lived in Cherokee County. We weren't too much concerned about what was happening in Georgia as far as the governor was concerned or about Washington as far as the president was concerned. Our primary interest was whether the cow was giving milk, whether members of the family were healthy, whether the chickens were laying eggs and what was happening at the center just didn't seem very important to us.

Of course, we were affected by such things as the price of cattle but again that was looked upon as almost part of the environment. Our little farm was in the southern part of Cherokee County, about thirty-five or forty miles north of Atlanta. There was a railroad which came up to Woodstock which was about eight miles away toward the west. The roads were largely one track roads, themselves clay, no gravel as a matter of fact. In the rainy season the wheels of the wagons and buggies would cut deep ruts in them and you pretty much had to travel in the ruts because it was almost impossible to do otherwise. The bridges were loose planks across heavy beams. At Roswell, eight miles to the east of us, was the site of one of the old covered bridges; it was always fun to go under there. I don't remember seeing an automobile of any sort while I was in Cherokee County. It was not until we moved to Atlanta that we began to see cars because people up in that part of the country simply could not afford automobiles and all that went with them. My father was a very quiet man; quiet in his family and with his neighbors, and we were a rather formal family inside the family. There was no cuddling each other; we were a rather dour bunch in the sense that we didn't talk very much about the things we felt most deeply. We didn't intrude on each other very much; there was a kind of sense of privacy within the family itself. I don't think I ever heard my mother call my father by name. We knew that when she spoke without naming anybody that she was speaking to him and he would occasionally call her Fanny, her name being Elizabeth Frances Clotfelter; but it was a rather formal relationship but that did not detract in any way from a sense of commitment and family loyalty and things of that sort. It was just the way we were.

Our little house had been built by my father with planks. There was a fireplace and a brick chimney which he had built out of homemade brick. There were three rooms; a bedroom for my mother and father and anyone of the children who needed a corner to throw down a pallet. There was a second bedroom which was more or less for the children and there was a kitchen-dining room combination with a fire stove in the corner with a stove pipe and flue going up into the ceiling. I remember once when we were eating there and we noticed that the roof of the kitchen-dining room had caught on fire at the point where the stove pipe went through. There was quite a scramble to draw water out of the well in time to put out the fire because these things were pine boards and would burn very well. I think after that we usually kept some water around in buckets or in pots in case we needed water in a hurry, we could get some. There was no central heating of course, no air-conditioning in the summer. There were shade trees around the house and that made it pleasant. My father had put in window glass and that was one of the first houses in north Georgia to have glass windows. Our light was entirely from the kerosene lamps with wick and burning kerosene oil and that meant that the chimneys had to be washed every day. I suppose I washed a thousand chimneys in my day because that kind of light does gradually smoke up the

chimneys. But we did a good deal of reading just in front of the fire. It was a wood fire and usually produced a light bright enough for reading. We used to play games with each other involving spelling and identifying names and places. We had in our home a copy of Webster's Blue Black Speller and we used it to drill each other on spelling and we got where any member of the family could spell any word in the Webster's Blue Black Speller.

I began to do that while I was in Cherokee although we continued to do that after I moved to Atlanta, but I had already jumped in even though I was only three years old. I have no doubt that I was strongly influenced by my parents. Perhaps more so after we went to Atlanta when I was more aware of what was going on and more aware of them. But when we moved to Atlanta, my father took a job at the post office carrying mail. We took with us from Cherokee about forty or fifty jugs of sorghum syrup; they were stored under a bed there in Atlanta. We would use sorghum syrup for our dessert; we would spread some of it on a piece of bread or maybe when it was cold weather it would get quite hard and gooey like taffy and we would lick it off of a knife. I remember it was a very sad day in our family when that last jug of sorghum syrup was used up and we didn't have that anymore. My chief memories of Cherokee County came not from the time I lived there myself but the visits we made regularly back to Cherokee County while we were living in Atlanta. We would get a train in Atlanta up to Woodstock and then thumb a ride out from Woodstock to some of my relatives living at or near the old homeplace. Cherokee County is about sixty-five miles west by north of Athens and about thirty-five miles due north of Atlanta-Traveling back and forth to Atlanta was a good all day journey by horse and buggy or wagon and we would usually stop at some kinfolks along the way for overnight when we made that trip. But Woodstock was a one street town, so was Roswell eight miles in the other direction and that, of course, is hard to believe when you look how the entire county has grown-up as a bedroom for Atlanta these days. We had very strong recollections about the tragedy of the Reconstruction period.

Both my grandfathers had been in the Confederate army but it is a great tragedy that Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee could not have lived and worked together to reconcile the North and South after the Civil War. The Reconstruction period left behind a great bitterness in the South toward Yankees and toward the North and I think Lincoln could have prevented a great deal of that, had he lived. Cherokee was more typical of the general South than were the people in the far north of Georgia, up in the mountains. My grandfather Rusk gathered together about one hundred men and took them off to join the Confederate army. I suppose that was partly why he became a colonel so quickly; he was the leader of that group. But there were no slaves up there in that part of Georgia, to them this was not a slave problem as such; the fact that Georgia was at war, it just seemed natural to take part on the side of Georgia. There were some constitutional issues which have long since been forgotten, which were not directly related to slavery.

I had one narrow escape while I was living in Cherokee County. Our barn had a hayloft and there was a door to the hayloft which was maybe fifteen feet off the ground. I was playing there in the hay once and fell out of the door in the hayloft, but fortunately my head fell into a fresh pile of cow manure which the cow had just deposited in the right spot that broke the fall. My mother told me that I cried brown tears for a week after that. But in general, as far as I was concerned, life was fairly normal and fairly tame. The excitements came by accident. There were woods in every direction. As a matter of fact when you set out to clear what we called some new ground,

neighbors would come in and you would have a party to cut down the trees and pull up the stumps to get a new piece of ground ready, we had a total of forty acres. There were other Rusks for several miles in each direction because my great grandfather had settled out a very large acreage up there--a thousand acres originally.

By the time two or three generations worked their will, that acreage had been split up. But there were still Rusk families in that area in different directions. But it was great fun to go hunting through the woods for wild muscadines, for a honey tree. One of the great finds was to find a tree in which bees had built their hive. When you found one, you built a fire at the bottom to smoke the bees away and then you cut down the tree. The trees were usually small trees and you had a bunch of honey to take home. Our vegetable garden was very important to us. We kept ourselves pretty well in fresh vegetables during the summer and mother would can a great many vegetables and fruits to be used in the winter with the Mason glass jars. Canning day was always an important day. It was hard work to do all that canning but it proved very valuable to us as the season wore on. You will have to ask my two older brothers about what kind of child I was in those early days. I have the impression that I was not too troublesome. Apparently, I did run off once in a while to a neighbor's house and they would have to call around to try to find out where I was and come for me. My mother was Elizabeth Frances Clotfelter. That German family came over and at least my grandfather found his way to Rockdale County, south of Atlanta. There the situation was somewhat easier because the farmland was more productive, gentler as far as the people were concerned and my father and mother met in a not unusual way. When my father was at Davidson he had a classmate named Joe Clotfelter, and Joe Clotfelter asked him to come down to Rockdale County and visit during one of their Christmas vacations. My father did and met Joe Clotfelter's sister, Fanny, my mother.

My mother was apparently a beautiful young woman. Her contemporaries have told me more than once that she was generally looked upon as the prettiest girl in Rockdale County and I can believe it because she was always a handsome woman. But life was more gentle in Rockdale County and that reflected itself in the attitudes of the people to a considerable extent. There was more of a relaxed family relationship among the Clotfelters than among the Rusks. Indeed, when there was a fit of temper or something of that sort, my mother would sometimes say, "That's the Rusk in him." Growing up in a family with two older brothers and an older sister and a college-educated father and a school teacher mother, I got off to an early start in such things as reading, writing and simple arithmetic so that when I became of school age in Atlanta, I took a test to see whether I should be started out in the second grade rather than the first grade. I remember the test because I think the only question I missed was when I was asked to spell "girl" and I spelled it "gal" and the teacher who gave me the test smiled. I started out in the second grade. But again in those days there was a high degree of concentration on reading, writing, and arithmetic and spelling--the fundamentals that we at least think about, those of us who are older. We had a lot of drilling; we would have spelling matches all the time, spelling bees in the classroom.

My mother, when she was young, had won a gold medal in a spelling contest and we always had that around the house. I think that probably spurred the children to learn how to spell. That is one of the things that I learned early and stayed with me the rest of my life. There were some interesting people in the children I went to school with--the Lee Street School. One of my classmates is the wife of Harlee Branch who was at Davidson during my time there. He was the

son of the city editor of the Atlanta Journal. Harlee Branch was president of the Southern Company for many years. I still see them from time to time. Another classmate was Suzette Heath and she has been the lifelong wife of Eugene [Robert] Black, who was president of the World Bank and president of American Express. I have seen them from time to time. So many of those early childhood associations continued into the future. But we were all relatively docile as school children and there was very little truancy, very little criminal activity on the part of children. We were trained to behave ourselves and to mind our manners. I remember in the second grade we played out the story of "Sleeping Beauty" and I played the role of the Prince. A girl named Frances Spalding played the role of the Princess. When the time came for me to kiss her and to wake her up, the teacher very carefully put a little handkerchief over her face for me to kiss. Both in Cherokee County and in West End in Atlanta we were people of very modest resources to put it gently but we were immaculate. We kept our clothes clean, we kept the house clean, we scrubbed down the pine floors about once a week, I remember that because on the next day I would always get splinters in my bare feet because when you wash pines it throws up splinters.

The yard was always swept up; there was no trash lying around. There were always some flowers either in the ground around the house or in pots, say on the porch or in a window. We never let ourselves get dirty. Of course there were times when we came in from the field dirty; but we had wash day for clothes, once a week. My mother was given, as a wedding present, a big cast iron wash pot, and I must have built fires under that hundreds upon hundreds of times because you would boil the clothes in that wash pot and then there would be a couple of rinsing tubs and then you would hang them out to dry. I brought that tub with me to Athens and we had it in the vestibule of our apartment with some flowers in it and then some rascals came along and stole it and we have never been able to locate it.

**RICHARD RUSK:** I can remember as a kid driving back through Cherokee County and you going up to rubble of bricks and picking up a brick.

**DEAN RUSK:** That was off my father's chimney--the old home. The little house in which I was born in Cherokee County was torn down by a cousin during the 30s to get planks with which to build chicken houses but my older brother Parks bought the land in the old homeplace and has built a little cottage there and he and his wife live there now.

So we get up there about every six or eight weeks or so and always enjoy it. He is reconstructing a log cabin which perhaps my great-grandfather used when he first came up there. A good many of the family memorabilia are already being stored there. I had fine teachers at Lee Street School but the standards were very strict both at home and at school. My mother would keep in touch with my teachers, as she did with the other children, and home and school worked very well together. In those days you usually had some homework to do. Homework had dropped out of fashion after that but we would always have some sums to do or a paper to write or some spelling to get ready for or something so there was always homework in the home. Although Cherokee County is not all that far away from Atlanta we were still far enough up into the foothills so that there was some of the feuding tradition still existing. It began when a boy and a girl had gotten into trouble and my uncle was going into Woodstock one day in his buggy and he saw the other man coming down the road in the other direction. They got down to the bottom of

their respective hills to cross the bridge over the stream and they got out and started shooting each other and my uncle killed this fellow. He was acquitted in court when he was tried. But feuding was not unknown and strangers had to watch themselves pretty carefully as to how they conducted themselves up through that country.

RICHARD RUSK: Was there crime in that area?

DEAN RUSK: Not very much. I don't recall problems of stealing crops and things of that sort. Of course everybody knew everybody else's cattle and horses and things of that sort. I just don't know. I was never particularly aware of crime.

There was no drinking whatever in my family and I never was aware of any drinking among my kinfolk and neighbors although I suppose some of them did. But I was about twenty-one years old before I realized that the bottle in my father's medicine chest labeled "old reliable corn cure" was a bottle of corn whiskey. But if we had a sore throat or something, he might get out a teaspoon of sugar and pour two or three drops of whiskey in it and have us take it down our throats to ease the throat a little. As a matter of fact, I never took an alcoholic drink until I got to Oxford, until I had graduated from college. A young Englishman had held a twenty-first birthday party and it was normal at those parties to serve sherry. They poured me a glass and I sat there and looked at that glass of sherry for about a half an hour and finally sipped at it and drank it and fell from grace. When I was in Atlanta, about fourteen years old, I saw an ad in the local newspaper for an office boy so I went downtown and applied for it and I found myself working for an outfit called the Knights of the Mystic Kingdom and they had a little club room with an American flag and a cross and they would go out and get membership based upon anti-black, anti-Jew, anti-Catholic, anti-foreign, charge them ten dollars for membership and then the organizers would simple take off and abscond. But while I was working for them, I worked for them for about ten days, I found myself delivering packages for them around town and one day I discovered that I was carrying liquor, that I was bootlegging for them, so I decided to quit that job and try something else.

But I always remember the Knights of the Mystic Kingdom as kind of an offshoot of the Klu Klux Klan and was just a plain racket from the point of view of the organizers. I don't remember anything about the original Klan but during the time that I was aware there was no Klan activity in Cherokee County.

RICHARD RUSK: Why were there no slaves up in Cherokee County?

DEAN RUSK: The slaves were usually to be found on the larger farms and plantations farther south. North Georgia was settled by freeholders who simply went up there and staked out some ground with their families and did their own work and raised children to help them with their work and just didn't get into the slave economy, maybe they couldn't afford slaves, I don't know. It was poor country. About the only cash product that came out of our farm were three or four bales of cotton each year. When my father would go into Woodstock or Roswell he might take along a basket of fresh eggs to trade or some sorghum syrup or something of that sort. There was a fair amount of barter going on at that time. But we did not produce very much for the market as such except for cotton. Of course cotton is a pirate as far as the land is concerned; it takes out the

nutrients very fast so normally you would have to keep replenishing the soil with guano and fertilizer and things of that sort. It was really an uneconomic crop for that particular kind of country. I think the boll weevil was a great blessing in Cherokee County because it drove people away from cotton and turned them toward chickens and things like that.

The boll weevil came to Cherokee County in the teens and twenties. As an example of the kinds of standards set in our family, I remember coming home in the fourth grade with a report card that was all A's except for a C in conduct, and my father gave me a terrific whipping because of that C.

END OF SIDE 1

BEGINNING OF SIDE 2

DEAN RUSK: --through much of the South by combination of education, public health, and steadily increasing productivity. The first outside effort that we were aware of took the form of public health campaigns in such things as hookworm and malaria, things of that sort. When they started to work on those public health problems, they realized they couldn't get very far with them without education and so they began to step up the standards and availability of education. School in Cherokee was not compulsory. Most of the kids I knew went to school. The school year was based on the calendar of the crops. We didn't hold school during planting season or during harvest season. But most of the kids had to walk two, three, four, five miles even, to a one-room school house. The teachers' standards were almost non-existent. The little school that my older brothers and sister went to, which was about two miles away, had a teacher whose only qualification was to have been a graduate of that particular school and be big enough to whip any boy in the class. But it was tough getting back and forth to school in the winter time-- nevertheless we had to learn. Roads made a big difference because they greatly eased the ability to get to town or bring products not only into nearby towns but into Atlanta, and of course automobiles came in. I can remember that my father once bought a new Ford automobile for \$289.00.

That was the old T-Model Ford and one year that was the price on it, but that was after we moved to Atlanta. Electricity made a big difference because it not only provided much better light but also made it possible to begin to use electric power in place of manpower for a good many of the chores around the farm; pumps, such things as that. This was not really until after TVA [Tennessee Valley Authority] came in. Just to illustrate the transformation that occurred, in the twenties and thirties, cousins of mine in a rather shamefaced kind of way would go into Atlanta to get work and they looked upon themselves as failures on their farms. But it wasn't too long, the forties and fifties, before, in fact, they became industrial workers with a country home. They would go into jobs in Marietta or Atlanta and then come back to a couple hundred acre farm up in Cherokee and raise chicken and fatten cattle and so forth, so this made a big difference. Consolidated schools for high schools made a big difference, school buses made a big difference--it has just been a transformation within one person's lifetime. When I was once at a

meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Western Hemisphere in Punta del Este, Uruguay we were talking about some of the problems of development. I took some time out in my remarks to describe to them the beginnings of Cherokee County in my day and what had happened to transform the life of those people within my own lifetime and I told the story in order to show them that development is not something that takes two or three hundred years, as some of the economist talk about, but in these days it can happen pretty fast by this powerful combination of education, public health and increased productivity. We are very lucky in this country when, in the administration of Abraham Lincoln, we invented the land-grant colleges.

We used to call them agriculture-mechanical colleges. Those institutions mobilized brain power and aimed education at those fields that were very important for development -agriculture and engineering. Along the way, we learned that it's entirely proper for an educated person to get his hands dirty -to work. I can remember when the first county agent came into Cherokee County. He didn't know much, but he knew more than we did. He knew that you didn't dig your well downhill from your privy, for example. County agents for the Department of Agriculture taught people how to do such things as contour plowing, where the improved seeds were and how you could get them. Of course, in the early days we could write to our congressman in Washington and he would send us out passels of vegetable seeds and things of that sort. But there developed a momentum that kept moving and steadily things became much better. The principal cash crop which it produced for many years was chickens because that kind of country can grow chickens - the climate is right, it doesn't take much land to grow chickens. Much of the feed was grown on the farm but you could grow corn and other kinds of grains; but if you are growing chickens and the market is reasonable you can always by some additives to the feed that works very well. I suppose now the principal product in Cherokee County would be manpower for the industries in the towns plus services that go with any kind of community such as merchandizing and things of that sort.

There was a little timbering but the turnover is so long that people don't turn to it systematically as a means of making a living. If they have some standing timber they might, at some point, make a deal with a lumber company to come in and pull out some of the timber. Of course, as the large cities began to develop nearby then there are such things as cord wood to be used in fireplaces, Christmas trees and things of that sort because Georgia can grow things. The head of the Kimberly-Clark Paper Company, Jack Kimberly, was on the board of the Rockefeller Foundation with me, told me once that Georgia alone could grow all of the pulp required by the United States if you simply wanted to do it, that it was a heck of a place to grow things.

RICHARD RUSK: What effect did all these changes--increased productivity, better health, I presume now the land wasn't quite so harsh--have on the attitudes of the people?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I missed a good deal of that because from 1927 until 1970 I did not live in Georgia. I went to North Carolina to college, then to England, then to California and from there to the Army, to Washington, to New York, so by the time I got back to Georgia in 1970, it was just an entirely different place. There were paved roads, communications, radio, television, supermarkets not far away.

RICHARD RUSK: I suppose this made you a real believer in what technology could do.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, but I also attach a good deal of importance to the attitude of people toward work. I know that there are those who make fun of what is sometimes called the protestant ethic of work but we learned to work in Georgia. Even today when foreign firms--European, Japanese--come in to build plants in Georgia; I have talked to a number of heads of those firms and they usually comment on the fact that the work force down there takes pride in a job well done.

You don't have the laxity of feather bedding and all sorts of other things that might be found in some of the old parts of the country like the Northeast. I suppose during those years in Atlanta the principal influences upon me were my father and mother, my first teacher in school, Ethel Massingale, and my high school teacher of Greek, Preston Epps, but I think also my contemporaries. We were pretty close knit as a community of young people around the West End Presbyterian Church. There was no fooling around; we were extraordinarily well behaved by modern standards. There was a strong recognition between right and wrong and peer pressures were in the direction of doing the right thing and not doing the wrong thing. So that, looking back on it, was a pretty wholesome atmosphere in which to grow up, a minimum of complications. Now, I suppose that we had our share of what would be called juvenile delinquency. For example, at the end of World War I, while we were living along that railroad track on Whitehall Street in Atlanta, there was a very severe coal shortage. The price of coal just went up through the ceiling. People such as we, who were on modest income, just couldn't afford coal. We could not even get any if we thought we had the money. So when I was about eight or nine years old, we would wait for a coal train to come along on the railroad track which was just across the street from us and we would throw rocks at the men on the coal trains and they would throw coal back at us. I remember that because the policeman on the beat would be sitting down at the fire station with his feet on the rail, chewing the fat with the firemen and he would see us and laugh like everything because he knew that we weren't trying to hit anybody but that we were trying to get some coal. Well these days, the social workers, the cops, the psychiatrist and all the rest of them would turn out to try to deal with this kind of juvenile delinquency, but it was just a part of growing up under those kinds of circumstances. I think one thing we learned from that experience was a good deal of self-reliance; we didn't go around looking for shoulders on which to cry. I remember we had a bicycle at our house and finally one of the tires got to the point where we just couldn't use it any more. Well, a new tire cost three dollars and my father didn't have three dollars for a bicycle tire. We waited for two years until we got a bicycle tire for Christmas.

Now that was something we just took for granted; we didn't fret and snort about it because it just wasn't there. If we thought we wanted to try something on, we would try to make it. For example, we made our own little crystal radio sets when radios came in, and those were easy to make, homemade with coil and crystal and whiskers and so forth and I remember what fun it was to drag that whisker around over that crystal and pick up KDKA in Pittsburgh, one of the first radio stations in all of the Southeast. You can make do with a lot of things because your imagination had free scope. I mentioned earlier that in our sandy backyard we could stand a brick up on edge and push it through the sand and make a track and we were in business with a railroad. I have no doubt that we had as much fun with that kind of a railroad as you and I did in Scarsdale many years later with a store bought train set costing hundreds of dollars.

RICHARD RUSK: You've spoken of some of the good characteristics of the people back in that world. What are some of the characteristics which you thought weren't so good?

DEAN RUSK: I think generally that we had our fair share of prejudice back in those days. There was a prejudice toward Yankees, there was a prejudice toward Catholics. Just across the street from the West End Presbyterian Church was a little Catholic church [that we looked on] as kind of a den of iniquity. We had a neighbor whose backyard adjoined our backyard and he was a Catholic and we looked upon him with great suspicion. I don't remember that we had much prejudice as far as the Jews were concerned. As far as the blacks were concerned it is hard to describe the relationship. I mention this railroad track on which we lived to separate the poor white from the poor black part of town and there were black kids over there our own age and typically for twenty-nine days of each month we would play together--all sorts of games, no problems--but about once a month we would choose up sides and have a fight and of course when you choose up sides, color is the easiest way to decide what side you're on so it was always black and white. We would proceed from fists to flips to slingshots to bow and arrows and finally we got around to BB guns.

RICHARD RUSK: What were flips?

DEAN RUSK: Flips were little rubber bands on a Y-stick and you pulled it back and let it fly; whatever you had in it. I remember once after one of those occasions coming home to my mother to take a homemade 5-foot spear out of the lobe of my ear. It had gone through there and stuck and so it got to be pretty dangerous before we all moved apart.

But, on the other hand, when I worked as a delivery boy for that little grocery store, Mr. Leatherwood's, right across the tracks when I was eight, nine, ten, that sort of thing, we would serve the black families and in the grocery store they were treated exactly the same way, and I would go out and take orders from the black families. If they were sitting on the porch talking, they would often ask me just to sit on the step and wait a bit until they got through with their talk so I listened in a great deal on the talk which they had among themselves. I came away from that with a strong impression that some of my black friends have later confirmed and that is that blacks growing up in this country live in two entirely different worlds. I think that I got some glimpses into what blacks are like when they are all by themselves when I was a grocery boy sitting on the steps listening to them chew the fat.

RICHARD RUSK: You came from a part of the world which had its share of prejudice towards blacks and people different from them, how do you account for the fact that you came out of there a racially tolerant person? Obviously education was one reason and the fact that you traveled.

DEAN RUSK: I think that living where we did on Whitehall Street there in Atlanta we had a lot of associations with the blacks--They worked in the ice house, they worked in the Karo syrup factory, we kids played together although we were not in school together and I think that it is important for people to discover, this almost has to be an individual experience, that when you are with a person of another race, nothing happens. I mean later on, of course Davidson College was not integrated at that time, Oxford was, a good many blacks studied in Germany, it just

steadily became apparent to me that blacks and browns and yellows and so forth were people like everybody else and so I think I did escape the worst types of prejudice based upon the color or race or religion.

RICHARD RUSK: Was the rest of your family as successful in doing that?

DEAN RUSK: Well, my older sister Margaret, bless her heart, was one of the more conservative members of our family in this matter but she found her way home with it. I remember when integration first started she remarked to me once that she just about decided that she would rather see a black man entering a bus and go to the nearest seat than to elbow his way through a lot of white people to get to the rear.

Now she couldn't accept the possibility that she had been wrong all of her life. She rationalized her way to the answer. But there is another element which causes me to believe that with a little luck, the South can still show the way to the rest of the country in race relations. Back in those days the theory was wrong, nevertheless there was an infinity of direct personal relationships between blacks and whites in all sorts of ways and they were combined in common undertakings; in work, merchandising and all sorts of things. Now that the theory had been straightened out in the South, these many, many personal relationships between blacks and whites have been continued and you don't get that in places like Harlem or Watts, or south Boston or places of that sort. So we have an opportunity there to find our way home on these things more readily and more easily than some people in other parts of the country.

RICHARD RUSK: How did the family and your friends from that part of the world take [Margaret Elizabeth] Peg's marriage and give that all the privacy and treat that with all the respect that it deserves?

DEAN RUSK: I think at the beginning, Peggy's marriage rather startled members of my family, but they got over it very quickly. I have a cousin, Mary Lou Westbrook up in Cherokee County, who very shortly after Peggy's marriage gave a family party for your mother and me to come up and simply be there and to show that this had not broken family ties or anything.

Then Peggy and Guy [Smith] have been there and visited with members of my family and except for the two or three months in which the wedding occurred, I never heard any more about it from members of my family. There was a fellow named [Harry L.] Golden, a newspaperman in North Carolina, who wrote a column once--you should get hold of it in the course of this preparation--in which he pointed out that integration was only a problem in the sitting position. That there had long since been integration in the vertical position and in the horizontal position, it was only when people in the two races were expected to sit together that problems arose. After all you look at all the mulattoes and quadroons, octoroons in the South, obviously there has been a good deal of integration over the years.

This is a little comment that won't amount to very much, but the city of Atlanta tore down the old Lee Street School. It had gotten pretty creaky and there was a business development in that area and they built another fine, modern school which they, against my recommendation, named the Dean Rusk Elementary School.

Well, I get over there about every year or so for a little visit and I am struck by the warmth of the young people. I usually drop in unannounced and visit a few classes and things but I am very proud of that school, it is probably 98% black as a matter of fact, but they did invite me to come over there one year about three years ago to talk to the kindergarten and first and second grades. Now that is a tough audience, and I found myself at the blackboard illustrating everything with stick figures and we had a very good time.

RICHARD RUSK: What were you talking about that particular day?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I was talking about Washington and the government in Washington and the Cabinet and things of that sort. Some of the second graders had boned-up on some questions ahead of time and asked questions without any inhibition whatever. I remember one little boy asked me if I had ever disagreed with my president and I said "Oh yes" and I mentioned two or three things where upon the next little boy said "Then why didn't he fire you?" But it is a fine school and when you are down there we will go over and visit and let you have a look at it. There is one element which one hesitates to talk about because it may sound a little corny to some people. There was one aspect of that kind of culture in which I began down in Georgia that I think stayed with me and that is the notion of duty.

The idea that there were certain things that were simply an obligation and that you were expected to do what it was your duty to do. I don't think that came just out of the eight years of ROTC that I had, it came before that; that is a characteristics of culture of that area that maybe is present in other parts of the country, I don't know, but that was a rather strong streak in those days. My interest in international affairs or at least in other countries began quite early. I mentioned that at Lee Street School we used a series of geographic readers called Carpenter's Readers. One year our book would be on Latin America, another year on Asia, another year on Africa, another year on Europe and we studied other cultures even at that young age. Beyond that the churches had missionaries. Our church, for example, had a part of a missionary in China and a part of the missionary in Africa. And about every year or two the missionaries would come back to report to their supporting churches and they would bring back all sorts of artifacts and show slides of different circumstances in which they were working. That interest in elementary school continued in high school and in college, but I think it was not really until I got to Oxford that I experienced the great changes that were occurring on the world scene with the rise of Hitler to power, that I became deeply involved and became deeply concerned.

RICHARD RUSK: What do you remember about the international events in those times, you might as well include the national. Anything make a really strong impression? You must have been quite young when World War I was going on.

DEAN RUSK: I remember World War I. I had some cousins who were in the war. About three blocks from home was the huge Candler warehouse which was a depot for military supplies and there was a lot of activity there during the war years. They even brought quite a few German prisoners to work in the Candler warehouse and I could walk down the railroad track and peek through the fence and see these German prisoners. After all I had heard about the Huns and Kaiser Wilhelm, these looked like fairly normal human beings to me and didn't look quite like

the ogres that we had been told they were. But just after the war, I found myself carrying signs in support of Woodrow Wilson's plan for the League of Nations; we did that at school. We had one or two visitors which caused us to turn out with our signs. For example, General John J. [Joseph] Pershing came through Atlanta and drove out to Ft. McPherson nearby. That brought him past our school, so we were all lined up waving American flags and carrying signs about the League of Nations.

But we were pretty much concerned with our own day to day problems throughout the 1920s. Those were the days of Warren [Gamaliel] Harding, [John] Calvin Coolidge and Herbert [Clarke] Hoover, and international affairs still were not very important as far as American activity was concerned. We had drawn back into a rather isolationist point of view following World War I. I don't remember about the Teapot Dome Scandal; I learned about it later. Georgia was always a Democratic state in those days. Even Al Smith, a Catholic, carried Georgia because in those days the Republican Party was associated in peoples' minds with the Reconstruction period, the damn Yankees, so that I might have been fourteen or fifteen years old before I ever saw a live Republican on the hoof, because everybody was a Democrat. A Republican had no political opportunity to get elected to anything. During the two years that I stayed out of school between high school and college, as I indicated, I worked in a little law office of Augustus [M.] Roan. Well, he didn't have much of a law practice, was just beginning, and so he took on various projects. For example, he handled the football program for Georgia Tech and I found myself selling advertisements in the football program. In connection with that I got some tickets to Georgia Tech's home games.

He would handle such things as the program for the State Meeting of Nurses and so we were doing a good many things other than the practice of law. During that period I spent a great deal of time in the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] practicing basketball. I had been cut off of the basketball team in Boys' High School the first day I turned out for tryouts. I really wanted to play basketball and I spent a lot of time over at our church just shooting baskets in the net of the backyard of the minister whose home was in the manse next door to the church. He had a son my age. But at the YMCA I tuned things up; we had church leagues and our West End Church had a team on which I played so we were playing a lot of basketball in those days so I managed to hone it up enough so that when I got to Davidson I made the freshman and varsity teams. I played all four years and started in the varsity team. Of course it was a very different game in those days. There was a center jump after every point, a foul or a field goal--and this was before jump shots, hook shots. Everyone had his own spot on the floor which was his spot from which to shoot and the idea was to keep maneuvering around until you could get open on your spot and take a shot. Somewhere at home I have one of those little "Fifty years ago" items that newspapers use sometimes to fill in spaces, someone from North Carolina sent it to me.

This was a little story about a basketball game in which Davidson College, the team on which I was playing, defeated the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill by a score of 17 to 12. Now this wasn't a slowed-down game, both sides were trying like hell, but you know you had very tight defense and the shooting was nothing like what it is now. I was six feet and a half but I played center; I sometimes refer to myself as the last of the midget centers. But my freshman year at Davidson there entered at Duke a fellow named Joe Crosson, who was about six feet five inches and we always looked upon him as sort of a glandular freak. Well, I had to play against

him for four years. Of course, he most of the time got the tipoff but occasionally I would when he would not expect me to jump and I would surprise him and jump anyhow. Sometimes he would goof off a little and I would get the tip on him. But even in those days the grind of a basketball season was pretty severe; a lot of practice, pretty tired by the end of practice, weren't feeling like kicking around much that evening, interfered somewhat with studies but it was a lot of fun.

RICHARD RUSK: Didn't you go back and visit the Davidson basketball team at one time when Driesell was the coach?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, one time I went back and went down to the gym where they were having basketball practice, looked on and it was a different bunch than in my day and just for fun I got a basketball and got about fourteen feet out and shot a basket and it went in.

They thought that was very funny and threw it back to me and I tried a second basket and it went in the second time. Well, they threw it back to me for a third try and I decided to quit while I was ahead and didn't dare a third shot. But in those days there was a designated foul shooter, and you would have one man on your team to shoot all the fouls, and I was usually the designated foul shooter on our team. Just to show you a little of the atmosphere and the squareness of life in those days, our coach, who was actually the regular football coach at Davidson, also coached basketball, but he really didn't know too much about it. He went off one summer to basketball coaching school and came back in the fall and starting teaching us intentional fouling and we refused to play it that way, we refused to accept it. We took the view that intentional fouling was unsportsmanlike conduct and we just told the coach that we weren't going to do it. Davidson College in my time was a very strict place. The majority of the Board of Trustees were Presbyterian ministers. It was a church school in the official sense. We did not have dances on campus. I remember being on a committee of students that met with the Board of Trustees to petition them to let us have dances on campus because the dance had to be held over in Charlotte about twenty miles away. Under those circumstances about a third of the young women there were young ladies of ill repute and we thought if we could hold dances on campus that everybody would bring his own girl and things would be different but the Trustees turned that down. We were not allowed to play bridge on campus. Of course, there was no drinking. I was on the student council and one of my jobs was to enforce such rules as the rule against drinking. But I made a practice when I was going to see somebody over in another dormitory to send a friend along in advance and tell them that I was coming so that they could hide their bottles before I got there. I am sure there was drinking on campus, but it was not permitted. We had compulsory chapel every day about ten o'clock in the morning and although that seemed to be quite a chore it did give a convenient time for the student body to meet and to make announcements and to transact student body business. Of course there was a short devotional at each one of the meetings and very often visiting dignitaries would come through and drop into chapel. I didn't mind chapel very much; it was sandwiched in between the regular class schedule and wasn't too bad.

Speaking of compulsory chapel, when I got to St. John's college at Oxford, which was very high church, the Church of England, and they had compulsory chapel every morning at seven thirty. I suppose that was to get everybody up, not have goofing off by sleeping in. But during my first

week at St. John's the Dean of the College called me in and told me that he had noticed on my papers that I was a Presbyterian and when I confirmed that he said, "I hope you won't mind my saying this but you will not be particularly welcomed at our chapel." So I was relieved of seventy-three compulsory chapel for the rest of my time at St. John's -I was always grateful for that. I might say a word about my brothers and sisters. My sister Margaret was the oldest of the five children.

END OF SIDE 2

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