Bob Lundeen Oral History Interviews, July 9, 2013

Title
"Memories of Oregon State College"

Date
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Location
Lundeen residence, Lake Oswego, Oregon.

Summary
In interview 2, Lundeen recounts the details of his undergraduate experience at Oregon State College. Topics covered include his first impressions of the college and meeting his future wife during his first class. Lundeen also discusses life experiences in Corvallis and Albany, college classes, ROTC, early experiences at a lumber company in Westport, Oregon, enlistment in the U.S. Army and his initial hire at Dow Chemical.

Interviewee
Robert Lundeen

Interviewer
Chris Petersen

Website
http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/lundeen/

Transcript

Chris Petersen: Okay, Bob. I want to talk about your days at Oregon State College.

Bob Lundeen: So my understanding is that you received a scholarship to go to OSC. Is that correct?

CP: So my understanding is that you received a scholarship to go to OSC. Is that correct?

BL: No, I didn't really have a scholarship. My folks paid all of the tuition. Of course, tuition was pretty cheap. I think the whole first year cost—the number $770 slips and sticks in my mind, and that included board and room. [Laughs]

CP: What was your first impression of OSC?

BL: Well, my first exposure was when I belonged to the 4-H Club in high school, and they had a 4-H Club summer camp on the OSU—it was OS—probably OAC then, campus where they'd take us 4-H'ers who were pretty young, and teach us things about animal care, sheep and goats, and cattle, and stuff like that. The thing I remember about that is that sheep were one of the animals of interest, so I can remember after manhandling the sheep, as according to what the instructor said, I found out the sheep's wool is very oily. [Laughs] I had this nice, clean shirt on, and it just turned out one big blob of, you know, sheep oil on my shirt. That ruined that for the—[laughs]. That was my first exposure to OAC.

Well, when I moved to Oregon State, let's see, I lived in Buxton Hall. That was the first place I lived. And then I was there for a while, and then I pledged to fraternity Kappa Sig, and I moved over there on the end of my first, I think maybe the third quarter or the third of the year, and lived in the Kappa Sig house, where it still is, until I graduated. And that was a good experience. I had a very good fraternity in those days. And we had a student body president, Doug Chambers. Doug was really a big wheel on the campus. So, yeah, I really liked Oregon State. Like I say, we had a good house, and I enjoyed the people, and I liked the people and the faculty.

There was no such thing as a teaching assistant in those days. I don't know if they have them now, but they didn't then. Faculty members like George Gleeson, who was the dean of, the head of the Mechanical Engineering Department, taught a class. And George was a very—very, very good teacher. And I remember he had a beautiful hand he wrote on the blackboard. I mean, you could always read his stuff, and willing to talk to you. And then Ed Locke was also there. I forgot what he specialized in. We had some other ones that were—I got along very well in school. I mean, I've got to have graduated with a 3.7 GPA. [Coughs] Of course, Betty graduated with a 3.95, so I never could compete with her. [Laughs, coughs]

CP: You mentioned meeting Betty in your very first class.

BL: Yeah, first class on the first day.

CP: Can you talk about your courtship at all?

BL: Well, I must have told you. I met her on the first class, and so I thought it might be nice to get better acquainted. And so I tried—there was one women's dorm, so I would call up. [0:05:03]

CP: Is that Waldo Hall?

BL: Yeah, Waldo Hall. And it was very difficult to get a hold of them, because that was a big—they had a few phones in the hall, and that was it. So I finally got a hold of her, and I was going to ask her out for a date. And it didn't go very well on the first ask, because she didn't even know who I was. I mean, I'd made a big impression in class, I could see. [Laughs] So she got a friend of hers who knew me, and introduced me, so we got—she was a Pi Phi, so we got acquainted from then on, and so that was her. So I—

CP: What kind of typical date, then?

BL: Oh, we'd go down to the—they had a branch of the dairy products, and you'd go, you could get really good ice cream down there. So that was pretty exciting. Go to the movies downtown; that was another exciting out. Of course, nobody

had a car, and you walked every place. Bicycles weren't in at all, and we had two of us in the house who had cars; that was all. One was a—oh, there was no drinking allowed on the campus. You couldn't buy booze in Corvallis. You had to go to Albany to get it.

Every now and then, in the spring when the weather was good, one of the brethren had a car, and we would—we would drive over to Newport or something like that, and get crab, bring them back cracked. And then they had a—there was a beer joint downtown. So we could take the crab down there, and he would cook the crab, and we'd drink beer. Of course, we were underage, but that was a pretty exciting out deal.

CP: Do you remember the name of that place?

BL: No, I don't remember the name of that place. Let's see, what else did we do? This may seem quaint, but it was very popular on the—at least for boys, very popular on the campus. We'd send our laundry home, for laundry. Everybody had a couple of laundry boxes, which were regular items we'd take to the Post Office. And so I'd wrap my dirty clothes up in that, and put the appropriate postage on, put it in the U.S. mail, and my mother would have sent back a box of clean clothes! So that was pretty good. But you know, that was pretty—that was pretty common.

We had a few characters in the house. One of them was a fellow I always thought a lot of. He was a junior, I think, when I was a freshman, a fellow by the name of Jim McLean. Jim had been a fire guard; maybe he was a forester too, I don't know. And he had an accident when he was in the Forest Service. and he had to take—they had to take his leg off, one leg, sort of from the knee down. So Jim always walked with kind of a limp, but really, really nice, a really nice guy. I thought a lot of him. Doug Chambers' father was a Kappa Sig from way back, so the Chambers family—and Doug had a younger brother too, Dick Chambers, and he was, his father was big, they were big in the agriculture business in Willamette Valley. I'm trying to think of who else.

CP: Did you know Andy Landforce?

BL: Yeah. He wasn't in the house, and I didn't remember him that well. [0:10:01] I remember the name. Let's see; what else?

CP: What were some of the activities that the house engaged in?

BL: Well, we had a—Ed Allworth was there. His father was the manager of the MU, and he'd also won the Congressional Medal of Honor in World War II, Ed's father. And Ed—Ed was very active there. We won the—with Ed at the helm, we won the inter-fraternity sing one year. That was something we did at the house for an activity. We had horseshoe pits in the backyard. And the house right next to us was for the Phi Delts, so we'd have tea dances in the afternoons and on the weekends. That was nice.

CP: Tea dances?

BL: Well, in the afternoon, we'd bring in maybe our own band. I don't know who played the music, but that was nice. That was a nice weekend activity. And then, big social events. First year freshmen, I had a freshman—and we did them in the basement of the MU; it was a ballroom. Is it still a ballroom? Okay, and first, all freshmen had to wear green caps. I never thought much of that deal, but that was how it was, so. And then they had the Sophomore Cotillion, and the Junior Prom, and the Military Ball, and about, maybe, five big social events at the—black-tie, and pretty nice. And then after Betty and I got going together steady, why, when we'd go home for the week, we'd go home. Her folks lived on Lake Oswego, and my folks lived on Lake Oswego, too. And so, I'd go and see her, and visit her place sometimes in the summer time.

CP: So your parents had moved from Westport to Lake Oswego by then?

BL: Well, I'm trying to think. Maybe not. Maybe they hadn't.

CP: They eventually did, though, move to Lake Oswego?

BL: Yeah, they eventually did.

CP: What was Betty's background?

BL: Well, she graduated from Grant High School. I remember that. I don't know if Grant High School still runs in Portland or not, but. I think she had a twin—no, she had a younger sister, Barbara. And they had a very nice place there on Lake Oswego. It was at that west end, you know. There's something called the Duck Pond there; it's on the west end. And they had a canoe, so they got to use the canoe.

And her father was a civil engineer, and he worked for a subsidiary of Bethlehem Steel, I think, a company called TrussCon. And he was the northwestern sales manager. So they made a lot of steel products, reinforcing bar and that kind of thing, and then they made these structural supports for a building. That's where this TrussCon came from. You may have seen them, that they're maybe a rectangular box about this big, and then they have reinforced members. So that makes a square, kind of a hollow box, and you used those for a brace. For instance, the Andersons had those in the basement of their house, naturally, since that was what Walter sold. [0:15:00] And so that was—I remember that, in the basement, there, you could see these TrussCon supports a floor above. So, let's see. What else?

CP: How did you find the academics at Oregon State? Your academic career—how did that evolve for you?

BL: It was good. I mean, electrical engineering was not my long suit. I got, you know, physics, and physical chemistry. And chemistry was okay. Physics, we had—oh, I took some mechanical engineering courses. I got along all right there, too. But teaching the physics course, we had a prof. called Willibald Weniger, and his—what do you call a professor's book?

CP: His textbook?

BL: Not a textbook, but it was a kind of a—well it was really like—he taught his lectures from it, and I'm trying to think what the technical word is. So you could buy one, but it was his lecture notes, all in a—

CP: Mm-hm.

BL: And Weniger was certainly not an inspiring lecturer; I can tell you that. [Laughs] Interestingly enough, that text that he had—his syllabus.

CP: Okay.

BL: His syllabus was the same as my father took when my father was going to school there. But you know, the laws of physics hadn't changed, but [laughs]. And Sam Graff was a professor of mechanical engineering. And his daughter Theresa—I think she was the first woman engineering student in Oregon State history, if I remember correctly.

CP: Was she a contemporary of yours?

BL: Yeah, she was a classmate of mine. So she didn't—yeah, I gobbled up the chemistry courses just fine. And we had one of the professors—well, there was another fellow there who was kind of an interesting fellow, Joe Schulein. Joe was a professor, or an assistant professor, of chemistry. But he was younger than the rest of them, so a good guy to talk to when you had some trouble with a problem. And he was more—he could kind of mix better with the undergraduates, like I was. And then we had a professor of quantitative analysis, and I can't think of his name now—a little guy, not very big. But a terrific teacher, and he—mind you, quantitative analysis? He made that really an interesting course. I remember it so well. So, then the professor we had—the beginning chemistry course was taught by a fellow by the name of Bill Caldwell, and that was given in the—God, what building was it? I think it was—the building now is the one that they just redid for the—

CP: Gilbert Hall?

BL: Yeah, I think so. I can't remember. They changed so many of those buildings down there. They've been face-lifted, and—but. So, but I really liked that fellow. He made quantitative analysis exciting. Then I took differential equations, I remember, from the head of the Math Department. Then I took advanced differential equations from him also. They were good courses. So it was a good academic experience. I wouldn't have changed it. It would be hard to improve on it.

CP: It sounds like you got involved in some extracurricular groups that were related to your major as well?

BL: Yup, yeah.

CP: *The Tech Record* engineering journal?

BL: Yup, yup, I did. [0:19:57] I was the—yeah, I was the advertising manager for that. I forgot all about *The Tech Record*. Yeah.

CP: Tell us more about that.

BL: Well, I had a good—it was a little bit like Betty when she was up in Eureka. I had to go around and sell ads to the people, to the faculty members, and anybody else on the campus. So you would get the subscription, collect the money, the whole works. That was good, good academic experience. [Laughs]

CP: What kind of content did they run in that journal? Was it student work?

BL: Yeah, and well, you know, we would put the stuff in, trying to make it as interesting as we could. But I'll be darned if I can remember what was in—and then we had ads from other merchants in town, which we would sell to the other merchants who dealt with the student body there, so, and that was good.

CP: How about the Engineering Student Council?

BL: Yup, yup, we had that. I don't remember that so much. I spent a lot more time—we had, I was elected to Tau Beta Pi, the engineering fraternity, honorary fraternity. And was the president of it in my last year, in my senior year at the college. Trying to think of what else. So, you know, I kept pretty busy.

CP: Did you go to the athletic events on campus?

BL: Yup, yup. We did. Football was always big. Basketball, too. Slats Gill was the football coach—I mean, basketball coach.

CP: That's when they were still playing in Langton Hall, right?

BL: Well—

CP: Before Gill Coliseum was built?

BL: Probably. You know, I can't remember exactly. Yeah, that was the—yeah, that was in 1942. That's the year we went to the Rose Bowl and won.

CP: Do you remember much about that?

BL: Well yeah, it was too bad the war had happened to come on. But we were going to all get a ride down to Pasadena and watch the Rose Bowl, and then the war started, so they cancelled all of that kind of stuff. They were worried about the Japanese, so they moved the Rose Bowl to Duke University, which won the east, whatever. And so we played—the game was played in Durham, North Carolina, and we won.

CP: Was that on the radio? Were you able to listen?

BL: Yeah, we could do that.

CP: So, do you remember, did the fraternity get together and listen to it together?

BL: Probably. Probably. I don't think we had many extra radios around, but we watched—that was a big deal. We had quite a few people who—a number of—back in those days, underclassmen had to take—male underclassmen, we all had to take ROTC. It was compulsory. So, but some of the fellows who—and I remember for some reason, chemical engineers

were in the field artillery. Don't ask me why, but that's what the—if you were undergraduate chemical engineering, you were in the field artillery.

So, I can remember going out for exercises in the field, where we hauled the 75 millimeter guns. We didn't use horses, but we had small trucks, or something like that. It was pretty exciting stuff. I learned what a circular mil was. That's the angle subtended by 1 millimeter at a thousand yards. [0:25:03] I mean, actually, so you could—if you wanted two right, then you would move it two clicks to the right, so you could move the position on the target on your gun to the right or the left. That's what a circular mil is. I remember that. [Laughs] But I didn't want to sign up for advanced war. But we had some of these kids wanted to, and when they graduated, they graduated with a degree from Oregon State, and a second lieutenant's commission. And like, they were on the way to the war in maybe two or three days, just like that. Interesting, I didn't do the advanced war part, so that was when I made my move to go to the University of Chicago.

CP: What kind of an obligation was ROTC? Was it basically like taking a class, or was there more to it than that?

BL: Well, you had to take a class, I think, maybe once a week. It wasn't academically very—and then there was a summer camp. I think you—I think, no, I think only upperclassmen took the summer camp. Maybe it was two classes, two one-hour classes a week. You'd go between the—what's the big hall there in the campus? I think it's still there.

CP: McAlexander Fieldhouse?

BL: Yeah, yeah, we'd go over there. Big enough where you could do maneuvers, and that kind of thing.

CP: So did you do the summer camp as well?

BL: No, that was only for the SA, Advanced War, if you were going. And I wasn't interested in that, so.

CP: You mentioned the freshman beanies that students had to wear. Were there other campus traditions that you remember?

BL: That's the only one I really remember that was memorable. [Laughs]

CP: How about the rules for the different sexes, with the women? There were different rules for women than there were for men at the time.

BL: Yeah, but don't ask me to recite those. Oh yeah, and I think that you couldn't—freshmen then also had to wear kind of a lightweight jeans. But if you were a junior, you could wear cords. So, you had those. And, what else?

CP: How about memories of Corvallis from night time? I know there was a beer place, and there was a movie theater.

BL: Yup, yup. [Pause] Yeah, there wasn't a big—there weren't a lot of great places to really hang out in Corvallis. I'm trying to think. The restaurants tended to be closer down to the river, so maybe in the first two blocks away from the river. [Pause]

CP: Did you have a job when you were in school?

BL: Nope. It's a good thing for both my brother and I. My folks, who certainly weren't wealthy, but they thought if we got summer jobs and earned as much as we could, that was fine; they'd take care of the rest. We never had to interrupt our academic work because we were holding a job, which was also a great contribution from them to both my brother and me.

CP: So you would usually go back and work in the mill in the summer time?

BL: Yeah, and then I would go back and work at the sawmill in the summer time, and pulling lumber off the green chain. The sawmill ran five days a week, generally, [0:30:01] you know, eight 'til five, with people going home for lunch. It was close to people's houses. The company owned all of the houses, so they were close to the mill. And we hauled the—the mill was right on Westport Slough, and so the ground was a little bit soggy. So all of the mill operations were—we built an artificial deck over the place where the mill operations were done, and so the wood and the decking was big planks.

And I remember the first job I had in the mill. The lumber got dried in the sawmill by professional contractors that—and this was unfinished lumber, it was not—this is the way they dried the lumber, but now they artificially dry it, but they didn't in those days, and it still had slivers on it. But they had contractors that would build these lumber piles, and what I remember is that the walkways between lumber piles were about as high as this desk is, but the piles of lumber were set back from that a little bit, so you could just walk around them. And they were pretty big piles of lumber, and they hired us kids to take those lumber piles down, and then they'd take them—after it had dried for a couple of years, take that back to the lumber mill; pick it up with a jitney. Do you know what a jitney is? Well, it's a lift carrier, because it's built like that, and it has—in those days it had hard rubber tires, and the guy sat up in the—you could put a—the lumber was put on jitney blocks, which were a piece of lumber about this wide, and about maybe that long. And then we would use a pair of these jitney blocks.

Say you had a stack of boards about that long, and you'd put a pair of jitney blocks at that end, and a pair of jitney blocks there—a jitney block at each end. Then you would build—you would stack them, this undried lumber, between the jitney blocks until you had built up, and every so often you would put in a stick of lathe between the layers of wood so they wouldn't slide off. And then, when the pile was high enough, then you would let it sit there out in the weather for maybe a couple of years, and it would dry out. And then they had to knock this down, and that's what they sent us kids out to do. Of course, there was no shade at all. I mean, hotter than hell!

And we had to first pull of the covers, which were like 1-by-12s, or something like that, stack them down to where they could do, and then hoist those, all of those pieces of lumber, stack them on the jitney blocks so that this lumber carrier, this jitney, could come by and lift them up underneath. And these jitney blocks, this carrier was a straddle carrier. It straddled the load of lumber here, and then it would get under the lumber, and make these lifts go in like this. And they had a right-angled piece at the bottom that would catch under the ends of the jitney blocks, and then they would just lift it up like this, and lift it off the ground. And the poor that—if you can imagine, the guys that were driving these jitney carriers, they had back troubles all of the time, because they were going on these hard rubber tires and a rough road, and you know, bound. So, kidney problems and back problems. I mean, it wasn't for the faint-hearted, and it wasn't a hugely safe place to work, either. [0:35:06] You had to watch your stuff.

And on the green chain, which was where the lumber first came out of the mill, and it was still soggy wet—it all also managed to have a few branches and stuff like that that were stuck in the mill, stuck in there. So that would come sliding down off of this—well, the way they pushed the lumber around in the mill, they had a steel plate, and then they had chains that ran, and slots with a jig—with the steel plates. And they would pile this lumber, this undried lumber, and there was this, these chains would run under them all of the time, like this. But it kept going. They didn't stop. They stopped at lunch. [Laughs]

So, but the crummy end up here, there was nothing sorted. So you had to sort of unscramble it. And that was hard work; that was what they hired us kids for. So you'd take those off and put them on kind of a trash heap. And then down at the end, where we had cleaned up most of the trash, or all of the trash, we also had contract employees. Like the lumber stackers, these were the lumber unstackers, that would take all of this stuff that was green lumber, and alongside the sorting table, they had rollers like this round place here, which were—which would roll loosely, but support. If you wanted to roll something off the table, you would haul it over that roller. And everybody wore a leather apron, so you could stand there and kind of have that leather apron supporting your knees, and you could roll that piece of lumber over onto some jitney blocks over here, so you could take them out to get dried. That was hard.

But the fellows who stacked them after they came of the green chain, they were contract workers, too. And their hands were so tough after a few years, they never even wore gloves. Their hands were—the palms of their hands were like leather. So that was working the day. Then you could work sometimes at night when they put a night shift on, and then you could work on the planer mill. But the mill had a lot of different saws in it, and there was no place when people work in the sawmill business where somebody hasn't lost a, you know, chunk of their hand, their fingers off. So, that was, as I say, a dangerous business.

CP: Summer vacations weren't part of the—?

BL: Well, the kids... I kept my fingers out of it.

CP: Were you able to engage in any research when you were an undergraduate?

BL: Yeah, we did some things. This fellow Joe Schulein always had some interesting ideas that we could work on, and I forgot what. We were going to file for a patent application. We were going to use a new kind of bubbler for a distillation column, and that was one thing we—Joe set up some problems for us to do, and so it was good. Setting those projects up, we had really, really good teachers. I can't think of any other research problems we worked on except this one that Joe Schulein set up for us. We didn't end up getting a patent for it.

CP: Do you have any memories of Francois Gilfillan, or August Strand, the presidents while you were there?

BL: Gilfillan? Well, when I was at school, George Peavy was the President of the University, and he had been Dean of the College of Forestry when my dad was going to school there, but he was now the President of OS, I guess maybe it was OAC, yeah. [0:40:04] So he actually came to Westport High School and gave the commencement address. He thought a lot of my dad, my dad was the chairman of the school board.

CP: So they knew each other?

BL: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Matter of fact, Oregon State never had a non—what would I call it? Ed Ray is the first non-professional, if I will, who wasn't a forester, or an aggie, or an engineer, or something like that, at Oregon State's head. The first one. Everybody else was on the technical side, and Ed Ray is the first one. A great investment for Oregon State, I may say.

CP: So did you get to know Peavy at all?

BL: Yeah, a little bit. A little bit.

CP: Memories of what he was like?

BL: Yup. Yeah, nice. Yeah a really nice person, he was—let's see; what else to know? I can't think of any others.

CP: Do you remember what it was like on campus when Pearl Harbor happened?

BL: Well, yeah. I mean, all of the boys deserted the campus, practically straight away. I mean, they went off to the war, most of them, in one way or the other.

CP: Enlisting?

BL: Yup, yup. Well, some of them got drafted—a lot of them. But, a lot like me, we wanted a commission, and so we went to some special school. And they had special schools for not only weather forecasters, but they had them for other kinds of—they had one for chemical warfare. One of my fraternity brothers, Vince Ramsdill [?] was that during the war. He never went overseas, but he was at chemical warfare school. Doug Chambers. Doug went, I'm trying to think where. Hollis Ottoway [?], another brother—oh, yeah, I think he went into the Navy, and wound up as the skipper of an LCT when the war and moved to Europe. I'm trying to think what Doug did. Doug died not very recently. I mean, not very long ago.

We had a great 50th anniversary reunion at Oregon State, and I think it was a happy event because that was the main subject of the conversation, you know: let's talk about the war experience. What did we do? Because it was the first time many of us had had since leaving school. Betty was on Mortar Board. She had a lot of her friends that she wanted to see, and a lot of fraternity brothers were there. Yeah, most everybody was still alive.

CP: There were a few Japanese students on campus around that time that were eventually interned. Do you have any memory of that?

BL: Well, yeah. [Pause] We had quite a few Japanese employees who worked at the sawmill, but they lived in a separate camp not for us white folks; it was called Jap Camp. That's just what it was called. And then we had one called Greek Camp, because there was another hamlet a few, well, a mile away from the rest of the camp, which had mostly Greeks

in it—I mean, people of Greek extraction. [0:45:03] Irene Convos [?] was one very good student. I think most of the Japanese boys who would have been sent to one of these concentration camps, because that's what they were—they enlisted in the Army, and I think they wound up, came back from the Italian campaign covered with medals. I mean, they did a very good job. So I knew all of these fellows, and I really kept in touch with them for quite a few years after the war.

CP: Do you have memories of your graduation?

BL: Well, the graduation was—what did we have, a thousand in the graduating class? Something like that? Yeah, the program went pretty rapidly. They passed diplomas out by hand, and that was it. It was done in the Women's Gym in those days, wherever. I don't know what the building is nowadays.

CP: Well, there was a strong sense that you were going to be moving on to the war here pretty soon?

BL: Yep, yup. Well, most everybody had signed up in one way or another, so they knew what they were going to do. But like me, they hadn't been called up yet.

CP: So how did you make the decision to go to Chicago?

BL: Well, it was not—it wasn't my decision to go to Chicago.

CP: To pursue the weather forecasting piece?

BL: Well, when the war came on, over in what was then the old Commerce Building, there was a recruiting poster, and it said on it—and they had been recruiting for everything. So it said if you had graduated in the upper third of your class in science or engineering, why don't you sign up to learn to be a weather forecaster? So that sounds pretty interesting to me, because I met the qualifications. So I was just waiting there to get—I had enlisted already, and I had signed all of the papers, but I was waiting to find out where I was going to be sent. And that was the decision that the War Department made, and I just happened to draw the straw to go to the University of Chicago. It wasn't my idea; it was the Army's idea.

So that turned out to be a great experience, and that was the days when Robert Maynard Hutchinson was the President of the University of Chicago, and there were a lot of Rockefeller—Rockefeller Chapel here. On Sundays, we'd go over there and they had great, great programs there, on music and that kind of thing, and some really interesting lectures which were by notable figures. So I really enjoyed that. Then there was a fair number of social programs, kind of like the USO had put together for servicemen.

And at the University of Chicago we had not only the weather school, well, and it was—the head of that was Carl-Gustav Rossby. All of the important meteorologists at that time were Norwegians, because the Norwegians had discovered, or developed, the Norwegian theory of air mass movements, and how air mass is formed, and how it makes weather fronts, and clouds, and that kind of thing. And that's what they studied, so they had one—one at MIT, one at UCLA, and one at Cal Tech, in these schools that were similar. And I just drew the straw at the University of Chicago, which was really good, because they were nice to me, and Chicago there had a lot of entertainment there for aviation cadets, and so. [0:50:06]

CP: Was it overwhelming to be in such a big city?

BL: Well, we got along pretty well. Public transport, they had good—University of Chicago was down in the south end of the city, so you'd get on the train there, and be downtown in a couple of minutes. So that was good. Then, after that—

CP: How was the curriculum that you were being exposed to?

BL: Well, it was a scientific curriculum. We learned about quite a few mathematical approaches that we never had when we were—in the courses we had been taking at the University of Chicago. It's been so long ago, I can't remember what it was, but they were ones that we wouldn't have taken unless we were interested in characterizing all of those air masses. And there was a lot to do in Chicago, too. We got those USOs and we'd invite—we would meet—we could meet some of these young ladies who came, signed up with the USO, and actually take them out to a date.

And that sometimes posed quite a problem, because you would go downtown and meet them. Typically, you would have been invited by somebody to come to their house, on the weekend, for just a little time away from school. And you might, there at somebody's house, you would meet somebody, and why don't you have a date? So we did, which was fine, except if it was downtown and if it was a dance or something like that, public transport numbers ran down pretty—they got pretty few of them at night. So by the time you'd taken this young woman back to her house, which was in Livingston or something like that, and then catch public transport back to the University of Chicago, it was 4 o'clock in the morning! So you really had to, really had to like that woman some! So, Betty and I got married at the end of the first term. Well, we'd moved over to International House by then.

CP: So she went to Chicago with you after that?

BL: Yeah, she did. Well, we got married in Portland, and then she went—she came back to Chicago for the last six weeks that I was at Chicago. So we rented an apartment, which was walking distance from the university. So she spent her time there, so we had a chance to—and we were good friends with a lot of—there were quite a few married couples who were—as a matter of fact, I would say most of the people who were there that were aviation cadets there were married, and so we had a chance to get acquainted with them, and made some long-lasting friendships, very good.

So, we went then, after I was commissioned—we took the train. Well I told you about, you know, United Airlines cancelling out from us, and we wound up in San Francisco, and we had this—I remember that was the first time we went there, so a really nice hotel in Berkeley. In San Francisco, the transcontinental trains ended in Oakland. We had to take—there wasn't any bridge then. And there were just the ferries. I'm not sure about ferry service or not. Anyway, there was this really nice hotel there, and I remember I've got some pictures in my album. Some friends of one of the—Ed Sedore [?], who was an electrical engineer, was out there. We met him at this hotel in Berkeley. [0:55:03] And then we all went off to the war, someplace, so.

CP: So, did Betty work at the radio station while you were training?

BL: Yeah, well, my first job was to—my first appointment was to go to the airfield at Santa Ana, California, and Betty was going to come down there and join me. And so she actually quit her job at KIEM and was going to come down to join me, and I sent her a telegram and I said, "Hold everything." I'd just gotten my orders to go overseas. So, I think the last place, then, we had to go—we went to a place that's near Salt Lake City and we took some kind of basic training for overseas work, and got suited up with gas masks, and all of that kind of stuff. And that's the last time I saw Betty until I came back from the war.

CP: That must have been tough.

BL: Yeah, it was. She figured we ought to get married—probably wise—we ought to get married because, before I went to the war, because then I'd have a lot more incentive for getting back all in one piece. She was right. I wouldn't take any chances, so.

CP: What was the culture of the base like for you?

BL: Where? The base?

CP: Yeah.

BL: Where?

CP: In China.

BL: Well, we had two bases I was at. The first place was at this place called Suqian in Jiangsu Province. It was a—[pause] well, it was really an interesting assignment. We had some problems about menus there. As I told you, you had to eat duck eggs instead of chickens, because there weren't any chickens around. Vegetables, marginal. They did their best on trying to make American food, but boy I tell you, we ate a hell of a lot of eggs, duck eggs. [Laughs] When we got there, we didn't have any place to—we didn't have any weather station where we—we were still getting that built. We had no place, barracks or anything like that to stay, because that was—the Chinese contribution to the war was to

exercise something called the War Area Service Corps, WASC, and their contribution was to provide accommodations for American soldiers. So they built this base in Suqian, and that's where we lived. And I told you earlier, we were right next to where all of the Chinese locals lived, and that was really, really interesting. It gave me an appreciation for the Chinese people than I hadn't had before, but I've maintained ever since. They are really decent folks, hardworking, and did a lot of things to look after their families. And it was a good experience.

CP: How do you feel that the military service has changed you as a person?

BL: Well, it matured me. I have often told my friends that I probably would never have been able to hold a job like I had, that the weeks, the time I had during the war, matured me more so I would, and it gave me a degree of actual responsibility that I wouldn't have had in Dow if I had worked there for another four or five years. I mean, I grew a lot in judgment, and that kind of thing. So.

CP: [1:00:01] So, after you finished the service, you came back to the States?

BL: Came back to the States, and, well, we moved into Concord, and Betty had the car. So we lived in Concord, California for fifteen years.

CP: And that's when you started working at Dow?

BL: Right.

CP: How did that come about? How did you get involved at Dow?

BL: Well, I went to see George Gleeson when I got out of the war, and George said—he was Dean of the School of Engineering then, so he said, "Well, why don't you go down to the Bay Area and see Union Oil and Standard of California?" That was before Chevron, Shell development, places like that. And they were all big city recruiting stations. Everybody was looking for new engineers, and it wasn't very hard to find a job. And then George said, "And by the way, why don't you go out to Pittsburgh?" And, which I didn't even know where it was. "And I understand they've got a great research establishment out there."

And I thought, well, I don't want to be a research guy. I came to be a chemical engineer, design and build chemical factories that produce stuff. But all of the rest of these places I tried for recruiting told about all of the detail for their retirement plans, which, I mean, interesting, but not particularly useful. But I got out to Dow at Pittsburgh, and I sat down out there with the people that I'd actually be working with. And I thought, "This is really refreshing." So I signed up. And that began a long and very fruitful affiliation.

CP: So, take me through that affiliation. What was your initial position at Dow?

BL: Well, I was a research engineer, and then I graduated to the engineering design business, and then, over time sort of morphed over to the administrative side of things. And then I [pause]—oh, I am trying to think exactly how it worked. And after 15 years, I went through these several positions there. I got this opportunity to go back to Midland, the company's headquarters, and my first time there.

CP: Midland?

BL: Michigan. Midland, Michigan, 110 miles north of Ann Arbor, and join Dow International, which was a subsidiary that the company had formed to look after its overseas operations, which weren't very big at that time. We had a separate company for Canada, which had been involved in the war, making styrene monomer. We had a huge operation down in Texas, which was the biggest operation in the company. We had, just starting something in—oh, it was just starting something in Asia, and we had only three offices there. We had an office in Japan, and Singapore, and Hong Kong, I think. I mean, there was already a Dow establishment there.

And then Ben Branch, who was—and the board decided that Dow was going to do something which was pretty novel, and put the management team out where the customers were. So by that time I was—I had—so we performed—so now we had a group of managers who were located geographically where the action was, and Branch was very aggressive about

building that brand. [1:05:05] And the fact that I had this experience in China, I think, was instrumental in getting me the chance to go to, and head up their operation in the Pacific. Because I wound up with the biggest territory in the world, and that really—we spent twelve years in Hong Kong, I think, and that was the most fun job I ever had.

Then we came back to—we came back to Midland, and I traded out jobs with a fellow who had been running the Latin American job, and not doing a very good job of it, for the job I'd had in Hong Kong. And, certainly the work that was going on in Latin America needed improvement, and why the management, in its great wisdom, sent this fellow there, I'll never know, but it happens in big organizations. So, maybe six weeks, well, maybe three—three months later, I had just gotten back—I was just getting acquainted with a new territory in Latin America. I'd been in Brazil and Colombia, and I think that was about it. And I got this word that, well, we were going to have a board meeting. By that time, I was on the board. I got on the board while I was living in Hong Kong. And we were going to have this special board meeting. So, I got to Midland and it was Gerstacker who called—Carl Gerstacker was the chairman of the company. He called me up.

Carl had been in the finance corps or something during the war, been a colonel in that, but Carl had a long association with the Dow family in Midland, and was very well fixed financially. And, fine man. So anyway, we had this meeting, and we decided that this fellow Zoltan Merszei was not up to the job, so we asked him to resign. And he wasn't very happy about that. And Paul Orrefice became his successor, and then we had another fellow by the name of Earl Barnes, who along with Orrefice had been looking after things in Midland. I mean, Barnes was a research person, an engineer. So we had this troika. Oreffice was the president, and Barnes and I were executive vice presidents. And we got along very well. It was a good; it was a good program.

CP: So were you—did you live in Latin America for a period of time?

BL: Well, we lived for a few months in Coral Gables, but that was it.

CP: So Hong Kong was your only—was your experience with living internationally for Dow?

BL: Right, right. So, yeah, that was good. I had that job until—well, Barnes retired then, as—in Dow in those days, the president was the chief executive officer, and the chairman was sort of the next rank. So Barnes retired, and I became an executive vice president, and then, well, when Barnes retired, I became chairman. And that was what I was until I graduated from Dow.

CP: Chairman of the board? [1:10:00]

BL: Yup. Which I was for about three years, I think. But my job, frankly, was not much changed from when I was—my duties were not much changed from what I was as executive vice president, to being chairman. So that's about it.

CP: So this gives me a good sense of the overview of your experience with Dow. What I think I would like to do is end it for today.

BL: Yeah.

CP: And then come back another time where we can get into much more detail about the Dow years, and then talk about Tektronix as well.

BL: Sure.

CP: I've got quite a bit left to ask you about.

BL: Okay.

CP: And I think this is probably a good stopping point.

BL: Yup.

CP: Since we've gone—we were about 2 hours and 40 minutes for today, so it's a pretty long day. Sound good?

BL: Yup, fine.

CP: Okay, thank you very much, Bob.

BL: Yup. [1:10:59]