

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW OF CALVIN PAUL, BY KAETHE SOLOMON,
September 7, 1978, 1:30-2:20 p.m., at Emory, Project Office

KS: ...absolute accuracy. It's called "Witness to the Holocaust", it's an oral history project. We are interested in your memories, your experiences, as a liberator, to the best of your recall is all we can ask.

A: May I interrupt you for just a moment? I was not in the true sense of the word a liberator.

KS: You were not?

A. No, I was...at the end of World War II, my Air Force unit--we had been operating out of the airfield at Dejongh , Franch, on bombing raids and that sort of thing, and at the end of the year I was an air crew member...just plain worked as an armorer on the bombers and cleaned out the shell cases; this had to do with cleaning all the armaments, preparing and maintenance of the armaments, on the bombers, but I wasn't actually a flyer. Now at the end of World War II, we--that is, our entire wing--I don't recall, but certainly my entire squadron somehow or other was elected to go by troop train into Austria, through all of the bombed out cities of...Hamburg, I think it was, and, oh my goodness, all of those southern German towns, and on into Linz, Austria; and in Linz, Austria, we occupied across the river barracks that were formerly occupied by the German SS troupes, people like this.

KS: I see.

A. We were there for, I don't know, maybe 4 to 6 weeks, just occupying

that place...

KS: When did you get there, do you have any recollection?

A. It was soon after the war was over, very shortly after the war was over; well, hostilities had just ceased in a couple of weeks, within the last 10 days, that soon after the shooting was stopped. As a matter of fact, people were still getting knocked off now and then, on an individual basis.

KS: It was in '45, though?

A. Oh, yes, in the Spring of '45; and as a matter of fact, somebody took a shot at me one afternoon. I was out...for some reason I had strayed away from our barracks and the safety of our encampments, and was out looking at, of all things, jackrabbits playing in some meadow, in some grass, and I was quite--oh, 500 yards away from our camp when somebody took a shot at me, and it zinged by my hear and scared me no end, so that I scrambled back and got to the safety of our encampment at that time. I remember that nearby was a large slave labor--what do you call it?

KS: A slave labor camp?

A. Stockades, whatever you call it. And there were people from all over there. I had the feeling that somebody just as a prank from that area fired at me just to see how fast I could run, you know, but then I don't know for sure.

KS: There are a few questions, just in order to establish the record, for our information, that I have for you, and then I'd like to go

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back to the diary that you shared with us, since it is so poignantly and sensitively written, and see how much recall we can get with that help.

A. All right.

KS: Your full name, first?

A. Calvin Coolidge Paul. Uh...

KS: And your address?

A. Now?

KS: Yes.

A. 796 Sewanee Court, Jonesboro, Georgia.

KS: And your date of birth and place of birth?

A. All right; I was born June 21, 1924, in Johnson County, Georgia.

KS: And your age at the time? You say you were not a liberator, but at the time you did pass through Mauthausen?

A. It depends on what you mean by liberating. In a sense we occupied territory, that was part of the liberating process, but I wasn't in there knocking down the doors of Mauthausen with rifle butts and you know...

KS: You weren't the first ones?

A. No.

KS: And how old were you at the time?

A. I thought I was younger, but I must have been 21 at that time. Close to 21, give a few months.

KS: And your prospective profession at the beginning of the war,
when you went into the war?

A. You mean when I was drafted?

KS: Exactly. When you were drafted.

A. Oh, my outlook---I had no plans, certainly not college; had no plans whatsoever. This was when I was living in the county seat of a very rural southeast Georgia community, and my prospects for the future were probably clerking in a grocery store in that small village.

KS: Your present profession?

A. I just left CDC, the Center for Disease Control; I was a public health advisor for better than 20 years. I've taken an early retirement, two weeks ago.

KS: I see. Loose and fancy free...

A. I'm not really retiring, I can't afford to, I have three teen age children and my wife, so I can't, I can't retire really, but I'm taking their retirement and I'm going to start a new career in another direction somewhere.

KS: Oh, I see. And your military unit was what? Do you remember?

A. Ah, 17th Bombardment Group Medium, 34th Squadron of the 17th Bombardment Group--that's medium bombers, these were B-26 type Martin Marauders, medium bombers.

KS: And your rank at the time?

A. Corporal.

KS: I see. And was Mauthausen the only camp that you occupied?

A. Yes.

KS: O.K., that just about covers the dry [?] for our records; please go on.

A. I'm trying to remember all of these things for you, and for myself, too. Can you tell me...what was the southern German city where Hitler and his putches and early organization was from?

KS: The Putsch, in Munich.

A. Putsch, Munich, oh yes! I wanted to tell you a little story about Munich. We came through there on a troop train, and we had a rest in the...oh, what used to be the rail complex, the rail station there...everything was bombed to smithereens; everything was! It was just terrible desolation. But I remember we stopped in Munich for a rest period and everybody got off the train and ran around for a little bit, I don't know. I think we were issued sandwiches and drink and had a meal there, I can't remember; but I do remember one thing that happened there. We had a Lt. Steinberg who was uh...you know, he was Squadron something or other--not a platoon leader, but a squadron staff officer; and the train all of a sudden... we were, some of us were late getting back onto the troop train, and Lt. Steinberg was ushering, "Hurry, let's go, get on the train, you guys--we're running late," and the train began to pick up speed as we pulled out of Munich, and of all things, Steinberg was the last guy, and by the time he reached for the train it was running too fast and he fell underneath the rear wheels; can you imagine?

A Jewish boy, in Munich; ironic.

KS: Yes, that's quite an ironic combination, with what we know about Munich and what started there. You wrote about this Greek gentleman who ushered you around...

A. Yes; I don't remember him, I don't recall anything about him.

KS: Well, as a matter of fact, you may want to read some of this yourself. You say here "a Greek who spoke seven different languages took us to where the Germans had been digging into a mountain for an underground factory.

A. That's what it says there. But I can't remember...

KS: You have no recall?

A. No.

KS: And, I was going to ask you a question about the underground factory. And, your experience here with the gas chambers... did you see any actual...

A. I can't...I can't verify that.

KS: You don't remember?

A. I really can't; I can't verify that at this time. I think I've reported there...I really can't--I just can't say yes or no, I can't verify or not; it's altogether possible that I am recording there second hand information that I didn't see with my own eyes, I can't even say that.

KS: Did you have any information about what you were going to see when you got there? Did you go from Linz to Mauthausen?

A. Yes.

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KS: And did you know what you were going to be seeing?

A. Well, by that time, the whole world knew of the atrocities at Auschwitz and all of these other places. I had never heard of Mauthausen, I knew nothing about it. I only remember one of the officers or somebody saying, "Hey, one of those camps is down the river here about 20 miles and we are all going down; if any of you guys want to go down there and see it, you can go; and some of them went one day and came back and said, "Gee, you know, you all have got to see this." And so some of us went the next day or so; and it was sorta like that. I remember the bones, the piles of burned and charred human bones. I can testify to that; I know what I saw there, and I am quite positive that the 167 steps that were cut out of the mountain, that these people were supposed to tote these terrible slabs, I know that was there. I didn't see any of the inmates because that was behind me; I didn't actually see them, but I know what I was told. What I was told there, I will verify what I wrote down, is, in the main, correct; but since I don't believe that I saw some of those things but was told some of those things, I hesitate to confirm them emphatically.

KS: Yes. Now these steps that you referred to...you indicated in your diary here that you had walked up these steps and how out of breath you became, without carrying anything at all, and your description was that people carried very heavy loads there.

A. I don't remember.

KS: You don't remember your reason for going up those steps?

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A. It must have been because they were an attractive...they were part of the thing. That I wanted to do it to, uh, because it was part of the whole horrible thing there. One of the things I also remember, which is the opposite of what we are talking about here, is how I was at the foot of those stairs, in a quarry, in a quarry-like sort of situation, there were 4, 5 or 6 German soldiers under the guard of 2 or 3 American infantry men. Two things struck me about that; one was the abject servility and fear and cringing of those 4 or 5 German soldiers, and the absolute, domineering, ruthless view or approach to them by these 3 or 4 American guards with rifles. These were American infantry people who were identified as...well, they were liberators...they were the liberators of the camp, and they were people who had fought through, I would assume, Germany, through France and Germany, and they had a hostility about them where these German soldiers were concerned that was absolutely hostile, and I was struck--I don't know why I was struck--but I was struck by the absolute menace and hospitality emanating from these infantrymen. And at the same time how terribly servile the German soldiers were; the shoe was on the other foot.

KS: A turnabout period.

A. Shocking; terrible.

KS: Did you speak to any of these infantrymen at all?

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A. No. Because, uh, I don't think they would allow it. This was too serious a business; you know they were too occupied with their responsibility. They seemed to be wanting to find an excuse, if I may say so, for wreaking out some sort of a vengeance on these 4 or 5 German soldiers. They were utterly filled with---what is it---uh, dislike of the Germans, hatred for them. Now, with me, you see, in my airforce unit back in DeJongh, we were way removed; we were not really personally involved in life and death, which these American infantry people were, you know; with them it was life and death sort of thing. And also, they were the ones who liberated the camps and were immediately exposed to the terrible things there, so I understood it; it was just a little tableau, so to speak, and it was memorable. Not that it was worth a whole lot, but I just remember that.

KS: A striking tableau; a very interesting point of view. You mentioned the hospital of Mauthausen, where the biggest brains of the German medical scientists practiced,"and in a room you could find any single part of the human body, well-preserved behind glass enclosures, each section of an organ bisected, showing half one way and half the other". Did you see these?

A. I don't know.

KS: You don't remember?

A. I don't know. I think I did, because I don't see why I would mention that so graphically there if I had not seen them, but

I just don't remember. I don't know why I don't remember specifically

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all those things, but I don't; I couldn't swear that that happened. But it sounds as if I did.

KS: You go on to describe that a German doctor would come here to study and if he "had a whim and wanted to see what the ear or eye looked like, bisect it, one of the prisoners were quickly shot and the part needed extracted."

A. (light laughter..) that sounds diabolical as all get-out.

KS: Do you remember whether or not somebody had told you that, or... is that difficult for you?

A. I cant verify that; I really can't. It sounds terrible. The only thing that I do know...(long sigh)....I do know that the terrible thing that happened there, the environment was such that... what I am saying there is very, very...it probably happened, probably happened. But there is also the element of being a callow youth at age 21 and writing this in the sense of being histrionic, you know, being overly histrionic and trying to put in something here that might sound good to the folks back home, if you were trying to impress the people back home. So that...I rather think that what I said in these instances was true, but I...I can't recall.

KS: It's not a part of your immediate recall?

A. But, anyhow, the dissected thing is---that's not hard to come by-- you know, all medical places have dissected organs; I know that now. It's just at the time, I suppose I thought this was really something.

KS: These things are documented in part of the literature on the Holocaust...

A. Is it?

KS: I'm not too sure whether we have ^{it}/on Mauthausen, but, yes, this did go on. You have a story here about the police dogs--do you have any recollection as to what happened there?

A. What is this?

KS: Police dogs were used by the SS guards to help patrol the fences around the camps and also for the purpose of tracking down escaped prisoners. On the day that they were liberated the kennels where the dogs were kept were raided and the dogs were eaten raw.

A. I don't believe I could have made that up. I didn't see that, but I am rather of the opinion that that is a valid story. It rings of reality to me. I didn't see it, but I suspect that it's true.

KS: You have a very moving description at the end: ^(reading from diary) "Mauthausen a place of horror, unspeakable horrors. To compare anything with it, you'd have to dig into the memory of nightmares. For this alone the whole German race should be weighted down in shackles and made to slave at hard labor for fifty years." How do you feel about the German people now, in relation to your feeling that you recorded at that time?

A. Well, I....oh, my goodness. I'll make one observation here, one

or two observations here; one is that that, of course, was made in the heat of wartime experiences, and by a young person who was motivated by propaganda...the unconscious weight of propaganda and patriotism and all that. But even so, even so, I still feel this was a horrible, horrible thing; a terrible nightmare, and for a civilized nation (or an uncivilized nation) to perpetrate such is unforgiveable, inexcusable; I mean, you can't find words even now, not even now, to...uh...to express your indignation and outrage, and...uh...as a human being, I'm still outraged over it; sure I am.

KS: Did you see "The Holocaust"?

A. I saw parts of it and, yeah...I saw parts of it.

KS: Did you think about your experience? Did the Holocaust movie bring back some of your experiences?

A. I think so, yes. Sure it did.

KS: Did you think about it before, or do you think about your experiences often or seldom?

A. It's seldom now that I think about them. You know, the further I get away from them, I don't think that much about them anymore. I am too occupied with being a father and a breadwinner and all this and the kids sick and the wife sick, and you know, all of these things.

KS: Everyday events take over the past experiences.

A. Yes.

KS: Your children--are they aware of the Holocaust era at all, whether through your experiences or through teachings or sharing of information through the newspaper---has it ever been talked about?

A. "The Holocaust"--I think primarily through the Holocaust (TV) and also through reading. Ah, I'm a great reader; I don't know why but I'm fascinated by reading even though I lived through those times, but I still am fascinated by reading all about Hitler and Hitlerism and all of those terrible days. So my son, my 16 year old son, particularly, has taken up some of this, interestingly, about World War II and that era. But I think possibly, speaking for all three of my children, "The Holocaust" was educational.

KS: They watched it?

A. Yes. I don't remember how much we watched it; it was helpful, educational, no question about it; and I want them to be educated about this--I want them to know about such things...they are just terrible...they are part of the world's history and we just have to benefit, and the best way we could benefit from such a holocaust is to pass on and try to learn and pass this memory on to our children so that when they are faced by racial prejudices and they need to get along in this world and to understand, that they won't follow suit and find a reason for another holocaust, a small, large, or what-have-you holocaust so that this doesn't happen again. Yeah, I think this is very important, but I must confess that I really have not stressed this with my educating of the children or living with my children; I haven't necessarily talked that much about it. As a matter of fact, when I mentioned to them that I was going to be interviewed by a lady who was going to talk to me about my visit to the concentration camp, the family as a whole said, I think, "Huh? What?" You know, they weren't really aware of this, and I realized that I

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hadn't told them; or if I had it was in a negligible way. So anyhow, that just goes to show that I haven't really talked very much about this, and I don't know why I haven't.

KS: Would you share this information now, if...just as a result of the interview...
"This is what this lady asked me, and I don't think I've ever told you this before, but I've told this woman at Emory"---would this be something that you would do with your family now, if they ask you?

A. Oh, indeed I do. As a matter of fact when I was trying to, when I was taking this out for the first time to bring it to you, all of a sudden my 13-year old said, "Dad, what about this concentration camp bit", and I said, "Well, I've got it written down upstairs someplace and I'm going to get it out and when I do I'm going to turn it over to you and let you read it. So...I don't know whether he could read my scribbling or not, but, surely; I'd like to have all of my kids--my wife, too, if she would read it--to read exactly what I wrote there. I'd like to do that because essentially what I've said there is correct and I have no reservations about the validity, the veracity of what I tried to say there; it's just that I hesitate when you as a researcher ask me to confirm it now. Those things that are in there, I can't do that because I just can't say for sure...but, essentially, the things that I've said in there are correct and I do...I would be pleased if every one of my kids would let me force them to read this.

KS: Mr. Paul, what is your religious affiliation?

A. My religious--oh, I'm a Baptist, Southern Baptist.

KS: Did this experience have any effect on your religious outlook...belief in God.. was there any effect, do you remember anything going back to that time?

A. I doubt that this had anything to do with my religion as such...uh, it depends on what you mean by religion. Now, I think I am a Christian, a very good Christian...may I say this, the difference between a practicing Christian, as you probably know, and a whole world of people who are grouped under the

label of Christianity, there's a great difference in people who really honestly

believe in being the best they can be, you know, day by day, not taking advantage of you in any way possible, but just doing what our Faith tells us that we should do; well, anyhow--I've gotten off into a tangent here.

O.K. All right. I believe that I am a Christian and a Baptist and I believe devoutly in the things that I believe in.

KS: Did you see the Holocaust as being leveled at any particular race, religion or creed; we read about the number of gypsies, the political prisoners, the Hungarians, the Russians, the Yugoslavians, certainly Jews, did you see this as being a particular type of vendetta against a particular group of people or just a general madness?

A. You mean at that time? At that time at Mauthausen?

KS: Yes.

A. I think it was...I think I saw it as a Jewish thing, because I began reading, oh, voluminously, at an early age, and I was aware of what was going on before the war started and was quite aware of the Jewish question as far as Hitler was concerned; yeah; before the war, through the war, yeah, the hate of the Nazis--Nazi Germany led by Hitler--oh--the Jewish, yeah. But I must confess to you that during that time I had the impression that there were many other people too that were in those concentration camps and being persecuted in the same way, the Greek, for example. And I saw some Czechs...I remember some Czechs who had just been released; somewhere I was on a mountainside and there was a dirt road and there was --oh, a half-a-dozen Czechs--I don't know how I knew they were Czechs, I just remember they were Czechs...one of them stopped just for a moment. Anyhow, they were coming by me at such a pace...they had been freed from some incarceration and they were heading for their homes, their homes apparently in Czechoslovakia, and whatever was motivating them to get home was such that I was taken by them and I remember that I stopped one of them

and gave them a chocolate bar because they had been starved, all of this, and This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

I remember how thankful he was; but you get many impressions, just from little vignettes like that. But that's not the only thing. I...at Mauthausen and in the labor camp next to our place in Linz and everywhere, I got the impression that this holocaust was a monstrous...a monstrosity that just reached out and engulfed all people. They got Czechs, Greeks, Russians, Poles, Jews, Frenchmen, Dutch, and they clobbered them. They just made inhuman humans out of them, but most assuredly, the Jewish people. Now I didn't see any people at Mauthausen that I recognized as Jews...I don't know who they were. I remember seeing, oh, starved skeleton people still able to move, but I don't know that they were Jewish or who they were. Some of them were Greeks, some of them were Jews. Did I answer that question?

A. Yes, you did.

KS: Did you in any way communicate, do you remember communicating any of your impressions such as indicated in your diary with fellow soldiers who shared with you?

A. Oh, yes, there was give and take; one of the reasons that I went was that some of the people had already been there and told me of all these gruesome things, and it was fascinating and was something that you would have to see for yourself, and I had already, of course, seen pictures of Eisenhower when he toured Auschwitz, or wherever it was. And so like everybody else, we soldiers were...

KS: You were aware...

A. We were aware of this horrible thing; we all knew what was going on to a certain extent, because all of this had been--some of it had been speculated about--and most of the free world knew what was going on, to a certain extent. Certainly I would think that most of us...we just weren't really sure until the war was over and Eisenhower and others opened up the camps and we saw the pictures and saw them as living human people.

KS: Did you share any of this information when you returned?

A. I'm sure I did; with the family occasionally.

KS: And you don't remember any reactions at the time they shared it?

A. No.

KS: And your own feelings for any of the German civilians that you may have met at the time...do you remember?

A. Yes, I have the other part of that diary here, and in that I remember writing of our meeting one of the, uh...when we got into Linz, another soldier and myself were down by the river, if I remember right, and we ran into a fraulein there, one of the Hitler supporters, and I remember that I asked her about Hitler, and I remember how she was adamant in her contention that Hitler was a good man and he saved Germany and that the American soldiers were like children and the German soldiers were brave, stalwart--the best soldiers in the world, and a number of things, and I remember her saying, "When I look at these American soldiers along here, why they act like little children, they run and knock on doors and then hide and laugh to themselves when one of our people come to the door and there is no one there, and German soldiers would never do anything like that." Anyhow, she said the same old things about...she said Hitler was good for Germany, that the Jews were the cause of all the problems, that Jews will never work--they always ran stores and banks and never had their hands dirty with honest labor; you know, the things that you might expect her to say were the things that she said, and...

KS: She had somebody in her family involved in the Nazi party?

A. I don't remember; I can't recall now. I only know that she said that when Hitler came to power he really put everybody to work, he fed everybody --no more starving, he did good for Germany, so she was all for Hitler. Now this was before I saw Mauthausen, and I don't remember anything other than that I was turned off by her, but I think that is reflected here in the sentence I had on her.

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KS: I see. As you reflect on those years, can you see how this would reflect on your feelings in today's political situation, can you compare the Holocaust with what's happening today?

A. I'm not so sure that I am aware what is going on in Cambodia, but if what is happening there is what I hear is happening there, then this is a terrible thing that's happening in Cambodia.

KS: Do you see it as a similar situation, or different -- just the general mass torture?

A. Oh, I think there is a traditional hostility and a hatred there between the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese; I think there is a little similarity--you're getting back, you see, you're getting right back to what we were talking about in Hitler's preoccupation with his racial prejudice where Jews are concerned. In this...what we are talking about...why this has to be spotlighted so that our children may be educated and can benefit from it. We can't allow one tribe developing all of this hatred and hostility for another tribe, but this was exactly what happened with Hitler's Germany and their preoccupation with the Jewish race.

KS: You mean it's a possibility that it could reoccur?

A. Sure it can. It's bound to. You mean the holocaust?

KS: A situation such as the holocaust.

A. Oh, I think so, surely; oh, I think it has been going on for a long, long time; it's just another vicious episode in a long history of racial intolerance.

KS: Inhumanity.

A. Yes, inhumanity. That's what we're talking about, really, humanity here. What we should be preoccupied with is the preservation of harmonious relations within humanity...within the field of humanity, and not be preoccupied with my difference from you, for example, male v. female or race v. race, tribe v. tribe.

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KS: Our project has as one of its goals that the type of information that you have imparted to us will be studied and learned from, so in the future we can learn to be human to humans.

A. Oh, I wish I could just...I could talk a long time about that. I grew up down in a rural area, as I said in the beginning, and one of the things I learned early was racial prejudice...hatred.

KS: You learned hatred?

A. In the....ah, not hatred...there wasn't a hatred in that I hated black people, but I assumed within the culture a separation and a different attitude toward black people which is the kernel of the idea. I had to go to college--I was fortunate enough after the war to go to college--and to let the college teachers and my experiences there tell me that you must learn to think for yourself. Everything is not what your mother and your father taught you necessarily. You have to learn to think for yourself. And 2 and 2 equals 4 regardless of whether it is black, white, red, yellow, mathematically; colorations have nothing whatsoever to do with the end of it.

KS: So you are saying you have to be taught to hate, that men can be taught?

A. It comes to you sometimes through osmosis, almost, a cultural thing, but what I am saying is that since my early days when I turned around myself at the University of Georgia, I have progressively progressed way away from my former attitude to the point where I am really...I hate...I think one of the biggest maligns is prejudice. I really do. It's something that horrifies me and I really, really...in spite of it, I've been hurt by this attitude and the more I get hurt the more I want to stand up and teach about it.

KS: You've been hurt by the attitude because you expressed your own stand against prejudice?

A. Yeah, I paid a price for it.

KS: And how were you apprised for that stand, what was said to you?

A. Oh, listen, as recently as last week I was terribly disappointed when I didn't get a job that I should have had, that I was qualified for, and which the interviewing and hiring agency practically promised it to me, and I think the reason I didn't get it is because when she asked me as the last question, "Do you mind working for me as a female?", I was so taken aback by this until I said, "No, I don't mind, it just gives me the opportunity to tell you that I don't hate black people either", and I went on to express how I was regenerated in this, and I think I overdid it; and that individual took my information back to her committee and discussed my qualifications, and I have a strong feeling that some of them on that committee said, "We don't want no damn southern boy who feels that way."

KS: Was she black?

A. No, she was white. I think that it didn't mean much to her, but I think that the people she went to to review my qualifications with, somebody there, said we don't need that type of person here, sounds too liberal. Still I was hurt--that was just last week. I was hurt two weeks before that and two years ago I was hurt, and four years ago; oh, for a long time I've been hurt significantly by this...

KS: Because you made a pronouncement about your feelings?

A. Because I try to be honest about it as I see it. I don't try to wave a flag or say, hey, or you know, I just respond as a human being as to you or anybody ...you say this is wrong. I don't believe in that. I go to a race course down at Robins Air Force Base 4 years ago. They started a Race Relations Course there, everybody has to go, and they set me up. Because I'm a reservist coming down there, they say, "You've got to go." And then they say, "Listen, those jigs down there and those gentle bunnies and those big shots will try to sway you, you know, to bend in their direction; don't do it." And then

when I come back I say, "Well, there were some things there that were a little hard for me to accept, but in the main, after talking to the instructors and the director and everything, I believe that they are just trying to sell the same thing that I have been trying to---the same viewpoint that I have."

KS: What?

A. That everybody is equal. But this is a horrifying thing for me to have told all of these secretaries and other people, most of whom came from a small town in south Georgia like I did, see. There was a guy (30) who should have come back and said, "Nigger lover" and "No good"---that's what I should have done, no problem. But I came back and I said, "I believe this point of view--you know ...(sentence unintelligible at end of tape, side one)." Why they just brainwashed you." And then the colonel comes out, "Boy, you are north of the Mason-Dixon line". I says, "Colonel, what do you think about this Race Relations course? What do you think about it?"

KS: (closing window to eliminate noise of lawnmowers in background) Excuse me a moment.

A. And he says, uh, "They're not going to get me down there with those ^{black} jungle bunny types. I don't believe anything they're saying and I'm not about to go down there to that 'blankety-blank' course." I was flabbergasted. Something that was created and put there for the education of the soldiers on that base about hopefully harmonious understanding, and it was something that originated in the Pentagon, they put out a lot of literature, a lot of planning on it, and here we have a colonel that I know from what I found out later that he was backed up by the Brigadier General and Major General at the command level. He was saying the same thing. We go through this.

KS: And this was as recently as?

A. 19--well, four years ago. This caused me to get a negative officer's

report, which kept me eventually from being promoted to colonel, or from consideration for colonel.

I can tell you another thing if you'd like, do we have time?

KS: Sure.

A. All right, in this context, about the same time, I reported down to the-- this was headquarters, Air Force Reserve, at Robins Air Force Base, I reported there for two weeks of active duty and soon after I reported there I went up-- stairs to the third floor of this pentagon-like headquarters building, and walking along the hall towards the office where I had some business I noticed that in every open door there was a young black boy or girl student sitting at a desk with a pencil poised and a pad of paper here and just waiting expectantly-- not one, but every office that I passed by...and I was so struck by it--I knew immediately what was going on, and I went back downstairs, and when I got back downstairs I spoke to Major Child (sp?), and I said, "What's going on here? Why don't they use those summer hired students in a meaningful way?" "Well!...blah-blah-blah..." I said, "So obviously they just told them-- well, the commander said we got to hire some blacks here, blankety-blank we don't want to bother with them, just give them a pencil and pad and set them down at a desk and tell them that if we need them we'll use them." So that's what I know happened. It's so obvious. And the major was saying, "Besides, the General don't like them hanging around up and down the stairs; we got to do something about them goofing up on the stairways, and he don't like when he comes to work in the morning to have a group^{of them} standing out front of the headquarters building here so he has to pass through them or by them or something; we got to do something about this." And then, an idea struck him, and he went to the colonel and came back and says, "Since you are so interested in the welfare of the summer-hire students, I think that you ought to be given the responsibility to find a solution to the problem." It's a simple matter; the

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gall of this was...you know, it kind of galled me, but it was a simple matter, and I said, "All you need to do, my goodness, is to treat them just like you would anybody else; these are potential future airmen and airwomen in the Air Force (unintelligible) we would be stupid if we don't do it...try to get them...first of all, oriented; take them out on the flight line, and show them what the airplanes look like, and have a plan...meet with them as a group, tell them how glad you are to have them here and how much they can help us here, and then you want to get with the NCO (unintelligible), and tell them when they will be assigned and tell them where they will be in a group, and tell them you are going to use them, and have a common plan of action, that's what you should do there. Well, I did it--they accepted it and about the same time they had a young black second lieutenant who came in for six months of active duty on some sort of a program, so they turned around and took my program that I wrote up and turned it over to him and had me explain it to him as I visualized it, and he took it and transformed all of it into actuality and well-being and it worked--as far as I know, they still use it. But this, too, was bad for me personally, you see, because even though they used my ideas and solved the problem, it wasn't good for me personally, and I've had a long hard time of it. The colonel that I mentioned a moment ago was eventually thrown out of the service for alcoholism, and long before that, his secretary was running everything anyhow and he had written me up in various ways, that I had caused all sorts of embarrassment, and I couldn't get good evaluations.

KS: You had a difficult time with some of these experiences.

A: Oh, yes. I'm talking too much, but that's exactly what I am describing to you so that I have a personal dislike of prejudice, I know what it's like; it's dangerous.

KS: Yes, it's vicious. And hopefully, through education, this is one of the ways that we are hoping to do away with it.

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A. Yes, and may I say that I wasn't feeling----I didn't----I was a young boy of 21, impressionable; some of that ^{high blown rhetoric or} high-blown verbiage, some of that writing that I have there, I have done better since then, I hope, but...

KS: Well, you were feeling a reaction to an experience you had and at that time in your life, it was the truth. We want to thank you very, very much for sharing this with us. I see you have an envelope there, is that part of the evidence?

A. Yes, I wanted to read it again to remind myself of all these things, to remind myself to talk about them, but I can never get the change to re-read them.

KS: Does that have any more information about the actual camp experiences that you would share with us?

A. No, the only thing it has is this type of event, the Hitler girl in Linz, and some things about a conversation in Austria, and...

KS: To get back to that conversation, I'm glad you mentioned that, in your diary do you remember reading that if you ask an Austrian if he knew anything about it, he'll tell you that he never knew a thing of what was going on. Do you recall that specific incident?

A. Yes.

KS: Was that a unique incident or was that repeated?

A. Well, that was repeated. They don't want to know anything about that. Now, Linz, I didn't know at the time that Linz is practically the home town of Hitler, were you aware of this? He spent a whole lot of his youth there, I found out later; his birthplace was some other place, but a lot of his formative years were spent in Linz.

KS: Once again, thank you very, very much.

(end of tape)

Transcribed by Dorothy Adams