

**PRESERVING OUR HISTORY: ROTARY CLUB OF GREENSBORO**  
**ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

INTERVIEWEE: HORACE KORNEGAY

INTERVIEWER: KATHELENE MCCARTY SMITH

DATE: February 28, 2008

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

KS: This is February, 28, 2008, and I am with Mr. Horace Kornegay. This is Kathelene Smith and this is for the Greensboro Rotary Club oral history project. Good morning Mr. Kornegay, how are you?

HK: I'm just fine, thank you.

KS: Well good.

HK: As well as can be expected under all the circumstances. I'm happier now that you're here.

KS: Well thank you very much. I'm pretty happy myself. So can you tell me when and where you were born?

HK: I don't have a very clear recollection of that event, but my parents always told me, and my mother did particularly, I was born in Asheville, North Carolina, on March 12, 1924. And the reason it was Asheville, rather than Greensboro, my father had a job traveling and his traveling job carried the young married couple, shortly after a couple of years, they were married in '22, 1922, that is, and I was born in '24, as I've already said. I was the first of four children; one brother after me and two sisters in that order. And I was born in March and in June, I think, or maybe May, late May, they moved back to Greensboro. The home that my mother – the town in which my mother grew up. She was technically born over in Virginia from very staunch Virginians and if you remember my daddy who was a Eastern North Carolinian, he never let her forget that she was sort of floozy about the fact that she was born in Virginia and he was born on a farm in Eastern North Carolina and so that put him way down the social ladder from her and she had gone to college and of course, he had only gone through the school of hard knock. He was a veteran of World War I and fought in France and survived all that to-do. Finally got back here and got him a job as a salesman of some sort. They sent him to – his work sent him to Greensboro, and that's where he met my mother who had gone to St. Mary's College, graduated, and become a school teacher. And

they were happily married in '22 and I, their first of four children, was born in '24.

KS: Now what was your mom's and dad's name?

HK: My dad was Marvin Loftin, L-o-f-t-i-n [Kornegay], named for his grandfather, who was a judge in eastern Carolina, and my mother -- Kornegay of course, or Kornegay as they called it east of Raleigh, K-o-r-n-g-a-y, and my mother was Blanche Person Robinson, R-o-b-i-n-s-o-n. And her father was an engineer, and he was in charge of building the railroad and later was the president of the railroad out of Virginia that ran all the way by Greensboro. In those days, in the late 1800s – am I getting into too much history?

KS: Not at all, please do.

HK: See, I've got the history now.

KS: Well, good!

HK: I could write a book if I had the patience and the time. But, see, North Carolina has often been described in history by me, not originally in any way, as “a sea of humility, between two mountains of conceit.” That's Virginia on the North, and I inherited some of that from my mother, and South Carolina on the South. Now, for those other people – I'm a professor, you know, teaching, I'm a teacher. I never got paid for it, but I mouthed it a lot. You see, North Carolina, and there's a lot of truth in it being a valley of humility between two mountains of conceit, if you know about the early history of this part of the world. Virginia, you know, had a great seaport at Norfolk. South Carolina had a great seaport down at Charleston. North Carolina was a wilderness and when the colonists came over here under Baron De Graffenried. My ancestors by this name, came over her with the Baron, Baron De Graffenried.

KS: Now how do you spell that? Baron –

HK: Baron, that's a title, I guess, but that's how they always refer to, history does. D-E-, graft, G-r-a-f-t, I don't know, R-e-i-d. Baron Graffenried, it's spelled like it sounds.

KS: Okay.

HK: I've got all this in writing. By the way, where did I see that Kornegay family history? I think it was over at my sister's or my brother's. Not my brother, he's dead. Anyway, I've got all this written up someplace. So, where was I?

KS: About your family that came over –

HK: They came over, my first ancestor with this name came over, he was, according to the history of the family, was born in southern Germany, that's why it was spelled a little differently in the early days, K-o-r-n-e-g-a-y, they sort of anglicized a German name. But all of my ancestors, with the possible one exception, were Anglo-Saxons, you know, out of England and Scotland, Scotland and England. Scotch-Irish, I guess, we used to call them. And anyway, that's the family history. And they settled in North Carolina and unlike a lot of families, my immediate family, not the whole family but the immediate family, had never got more than fifty miles or a hundred miles from the place they first came to shore all those years ago. And I guess that's good and bad. It doesn't show much aggression on their part about; "Go west," you know, Horace Greeley's advice. You remember Horace Greeley?

KS: Yes, you bet. "Go West young man."

HK: Yes, yes. "Go West young man." And mine got as far West as – well, my daddy got as – and he was about as far West as any of them ever got in my immediate family, and he got as far as Greensboro. And that was simply because he married my mother who was from Greensboro, although born in Virginia, of course.

KS: So you grew up in Greensboro?

HK: I grew up in Greensboro. Yes. I was born in March. It was late May I guess it was, or early June, my parents moved back to Greensboro because that is where my mother was from and had some pretty good connections around here. And he was a traveling man, a salesman, for years and then he went into his own business. He was very independent. He never worked for anybody else. And he taught me growing up, "Be your own boss. Don't be indebted to anybody else." He never worked for anybody except himself. And he had an eighth grade education. My mother, as I told you earlier, had gone to St. Mary's and he – he, you know, he was a very independent individual. And so, that's the way I was born and raised.

And during the Depression, of course, we didn't have any money. Nobody had any money. "We were all poor but we didn't know it", as the old saying goes. And all very strong church people, Methodists – Methodist church people. And that's the way I grew up there in Greensboro. Went to West Market Street Methodist Church, I'm still a member there. And when I'm able, I go back as often as I can. It's always meant a lot in my family's life and in my life. That's pretty much it. I got to be a lawyer. I – my daddy was a merchant. He lived by his teachings. He didn't – he never worked for anybody else. It was always himself, and as independent as he could be. He tried to pass that along to his children. I had one brother who tragically, I say tragically, he lived to be in his late seventies, but we lost him. He had a malignancy of his colon and in several months got him; ended his life. And I have two sisters, both of whom are still living; one of them is a widow and the other one lives in Florida now that her husband is down there

because his brother, my brother-in-law's brother, went down there as a young North Carolina boy who had gone to law school here. He went down there and the first thing he knew he got elected Lieutenant Governor of the state of Florida. The first Lieutenant Governor the state of Florida had ever had, and that was my brother-in-law and so, you know, that sort of gave him room, gave my brother – my brother-in-law, my sister's husband, an opportunity to do things that otherwise he couldn't have done. And I don't know, I guess I've bragged enough about my family.

KS: No sir. Now where did you go to high school when you were growing up in Greensboro?

HK: Greensboro Senior High School. Now they call it Grimsley.

KS: Grimsley.

HK: Greensboro – I always say, when people ask me that question, I went to Greensboro Senior High School, and don't forget that. [Both laugh] See, that was back before – we had two, in those days, this ought to be put in – we only had two high schools in Greensboro, if you can believe that. One was Greensboro Senior High, we called it, over there in that big, beautiful campus, and they only had two buildings, well actually three. They had a cafeteria building behind the main building and then another wing of it. Now later they added other buildings – yes other buildings and so it's grown to a real college campus institution over there. And I went to school there, graduated in 1941, June, I guess it was early June of '41 and worked that summer for – as undercover agent. Or maybe that was the next summer. In the meantime I carried a lawyer, a neighbor lawyer's paper, when I was little boy, a youngster, carried his newspaper and he sort of took a liking to me. I say that, his name was Ed Stanley, Edward M. Stanley, Edward Monroe Stanley. And he lived there in the neighborhood, grew up in Sunset Hills, Greensboro. And he took a liking to me or sort of helped me out along with some other people that I need to put in here like Oscar Sapp, Jr., who was my scout master. He took an interest in me and encouraged me to do things. And I paid attention to them because I knew – I had enough sense even at that young age, to know they thought they were giving me good instructions. And I said now, you know, and I thought they were big shots, and they were. For that day and time, they were big shots. I said, "If they did what they want me to do," I said, "I ought to be a big shot some day." I was a little fellow, thinking ahead – thinking ahead. Anyway, I've had a lot of good help. The point of all of this talk is that I've had a lot of good help to make it as far as I've made it, if I have to say so myself.

KS: Now what did you like to study when you were in high school? What did you enjoy doing?

HK: At first I was going to be an engineer. My mother came from the educated side of my family, I mean, above eighth grade stuff. You remember, you must remember,

that in that day and time, when my parents – certainly when my parents, both of them were about the same age, were coming along, North Carolina had some public education. The only, though, advanced – that you could go as far – only as far as eight grades in the public schools in North Carolina up until Governor – came along in 1902, known as the “education governor.” I know his name as well as I know my own, but anyway, when he came along he stressed education. He got elected on that. And then they started doing more. But in those days, and a lot of people don’t know this, in those days, if you got to the eighth grade, that’s as far as you could go in public education. Otherwise, if you wanted any more, you had to go to one of the church-related colleges. And the Baptists, being the dominant religious – or religious group in the state was Wake Forest, and that’s the oldest private institution of higher education in all of North Carolina. Now these people go over to Chapel Hill, they start talking about “the University” and all that stuff, well, Chapel Hill didn’t amount to a hill of beans until Wake Forest was a leading institution. And it educated more of the doctors, lawyers, and successful business men, it didn’t have any women in those days, they didn’t get the women in Wake Forest until after I got there. I don’t – I don’t think that had anything to do with it, but it’s a true statement. [Laughs] And they were down right outside of Raleigh, north of Raleigh –

[A woman walks into the room and reminds Mr. Kornegay of an upcoming lecture]

HK: I’m far busier now here, thank you anyway for telling me. Look, where was I?

KS: About Wake Forest being outside of Raleigh back then?

HK: Outside of Raleigh, it was fifteen miles north and that’s where it was when I went there. And then in 1956, the crowd who went over to Winston-Salem and started the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and made a lot of money, endowed – or gave a lot of money – they were looking around. See, the Dukes in Durham had given Trinity College, which was a little piddling school down in a county southeast of Raleigh, Wake County, east of Wake County, southeast of Wake County. It was a good school, it was a little Methodist school and – like the Baptist had Wake Forest. And they were sort of – you had the Presbyterians, the Baptists, and the Methodists, and the Quakers over around Greensboro. They had a dominant educational role too in all of this.

KS: Guildford College.

HK: In Guildford College, that’s right. And they were the primary higher education schools in the state because you couldn’t get it in public schools until 1902 or later when the state went into the – got into the education business, really, in a big time way. Have I given you too much history?

KS: Not at all! I love this.

HK: Okay. Well, see, and I don't say I know – I don't say I'm too smart about it but – and I don't know why I remember all of this. See, when I went to school, our teachers taught us better than they do today. I'm going to tell you – and it sounds like I'm prejudiced, and the truth of the matter is that I am. [Laughs] If you want to know it, I always believe in being honest, whether you like it or not, I'm being honest. But, I was just fortunate. I came along at a time when very, very few people, less than three percent if you want to know the truth, had much of anything except good families, a love of the country, and a love of God and an appreciation for each other as long as they behaved and then when they messed up, boy, they were out! You were out, you're gone, and don't come back until you straighten out. Now, that's the way it was taught, and that's the way it was. And sometimes I think that we'd be better off today if we were a little more rigid in our demands of our fellow citizens. But I've come down the road a long time and a long way, and I've sort of, I hate to tell you this, given up on making the corrections I think are necessary. But, you know, we're still getting along pretty good. Pretty good. Pretty good.

KS: Now you were in Wake Forest, and what did you study in your undergraduate degree?

HK: Well, it was called Government and History. It was preparatory, really, to go into law school. I'd – I was – I don't know how it happened, but when I was in junior high school over at Lindley Junior High. Are you familiar with that?

KS: Yes sir.

HK: I went – I was one of the first – in the second year they opened Lindley Elementary over in Sunset Hills on Camden Road, and I lived around the corner from it. My father, for some reason, I never gave him credit for having this much sense, but somehow or the other he had an instinct for knowing when to make certain moves and he had at that time, three children. I was the oldest of the three; I was six, a brother who was four, a little sister who was about one or two, and then later I had another – after we lived over there awhile, my parents had another little girl. So I ended up with a family of four children. We lived there until I was eighteen years old. I did and until I was eighteen. Let's see, I was in the Army then. Yes, I'd enlisted. And I say, with some degree of pride, I enlisted. People say, "Did you get drafted?" I said, "No, I didn't get drafted." My daddy was a veteran of World War I. He went to France and fought, survived, came back, and all he talked – most of the big subjects on his mind when I was growing up sitting around the supper table was his stories about the time he invaded France. Saved the world from – what did they have? Hitler? Well, Hitler was – I saved them from Hitler I think.

KS: That's right. That was you.

HK: That was me. [Both laugh] He saved them from, oh, what did we call that dictator – the German dictator in the early, in the late thirties or early forties. You know what I'm talking about? I know all these things by heart, but I just have trouble remembering them now.

KS: So did you enlist before Wake Forest or after Wake Forest?

HK: What, after the war?

KS: Did you enlist in World War II, was that after you had gone to Wake Forest?

HK: Yes, well I had a year and a half. I was over one day when my roommate, we went over to Raleigh, I was in my second year at Wake Forest. I had gone to Wake Forest in '41. In late '42 my roommate and I went over to Raleigh. This was right after Pearl Harbor and the war – the U. S. was getting ready to – it was that summer or one of those summers when I was a sophomore or freshman or something, I went to Florida with a survey team; surveyed all the pocosins and swamps in Florida to build airports to train the aviators to fight in World War II. You didn't know I did that.

KS: I did not.

HK: I learned to be a surveyor, and I was studying history in school and everything and it said George Washington started out as a surveyor.

KS: That's right.

HK: And I said, "Gosh, that's great. I'm going to be another George Washington." It's amazing how – and I wish it was still a little bit that way for our young people. The little things like that. It wasn't about making money. It wasn't about gaining fame, as such, it was just doing something that some other person that you admired in history had done. And when I learned that George Washington had started off as a rodsman and a surveyor, I said, "Man, that's for me. If he can do it, I can do it." I said, "If he did it, I ought to do it. I ought to try to do it, anyway." So – this is foolish talk now to young people, I know that, but it's the thing that kind of inspired me, if that's a good word for it, to try to do more, to learn more, to have some experiences similar to those that my predecessors or my, you know, heroes, that's a better way to put it, that my heroes of the past had done. And when I found out that George Washington had been a surveyor and had learned how to run, what we call a transit, you know, zeroing in on this, that, and another. But in order to get to learn that, you've got to go out and cut down a lot of bushes and wade through water. I stayed in water up to my neck all day long chopping down weeds so that the man, the engineer, running the survey, transit, we called it, so we could see down there and put a spot down there – way down there. And I'd do that, wade through that, and get bit by snakes, and alligators and they had alligators in the water. You see, this was in Florida.

KS: But what an adventure for a young man.

HK: It was! I'm telling you. I'm giving you the whole load now. You may get tired of it.

KS: No, not likely.

HK: Yes, well anyway, that sort of inspired me to keep going. I said, "I don't want to do this all my life so I've got to do a good job here so I will get a promotion." Well, that was one summer; I think it was the summer after – between my freshman and sophomore years at Wake Forest. And so I learned a lot from that. Number one, I learned that being away from home, living in a boarding house, Miss, what was her name, I never thought I would forget her. She would prepare – and the little things like this would be of interest of people today, I think.

Lived at a boarding house there, a station in this little town in Florida up in the Panhandle and we were building airports or surveying raw, rough land on which to build airports in which to train the pilots for World War II. That's where most of the fighter pilots were trained. On airports that I worked hard to build; wading through water up to my neck and fighting the alligators and a lot of times there would be alligators in there and snakes of all kind. I saw snakes that big around. Scared me at first and then I said, "I got to do it. It's my job, I got to do it." So I just went through it and fortunately survived it.

We were running transit lines all the way from the old highway, the big highway, they'd already completed the – what did they call that? The highway across southern Florida? And you could drive for 110 miles and there was only one service station. Now you can't believe this, but it's true. You could drive all the way from Miami, Florida, all the way across the southern end of Florida into Boca, not Boca, what was the name of that place. I didn't think I would ever forget those towns, I knew them by heart. Anyway, all the way across, 110 miles, one service station out in the middle of that place. It was the biggest wilderness you have ever seen. But, if you ran out of gas, you were in bad luck. And I remember driving an old Hudson automobile. I wasn't but eighteen years old. They sent me across there to take this Hudson automobile all the way from Miami across to the other town on the west coast of Florida, and the thing was on red. It had a – it was a 1940, or '39, Oldsmobile – not Oldsmobile. What did I tell you it was?

KS: A Hudson?

HK: Hudson automobile. Yes, old car. It's old nowadays. It was a good car. And that red light started blinking, and I was still about fifteen miles. I said, "Oh Lord, it's going out of gas and I don't know what I'm going to do." Out there in the wilderness; nothing out there. It was just like going through Africa now. But



anyway, I made it and got to a station and I remember getting – gas was about ten cents a gallons and I got a few gallons. And I said, “Give me two gallons. That will get me where I’m going to deliver this old Hudson.” So I got two gallons of ten cent gas. I mean, you can’t believe what I’ve done.

KS: Well, after you had done that in Florida, did college life seem pale?

HK: Oh yes, very much so. Very much so. Then I came on back and went back to college in sophomore year and stayed there ‘til almost, well it was in December, December 14, my little brother’s birthday. Went over to Raleigh from Wake Forest which was then right outside of Raleigh. Went over there with my roommate and they were having all these recruiters; Army, Navy, and Marine recruiters around there. And I was talking to my roommate; we were eighteen at the time, both of us. I said, “You know, we’re going to have to get into this.” He said, “You think so?” And I said, “Yeah, I know we are. That war’s just getting started. Those Germans are tough.” You see, my daddy had been in World War I, and I’d grown up listening to him telling about how tough the Germans were.

KS: Kaiser Wilhelm.

HK: Kaiser Wilhelm. Well, he was a big dog. We didn’t see much of the Kaiser. [Laughs] My daddy talked about him some. But there was another big time German over there and I can’t remember his name right now. He’s the one my daddy talked about all the time. So, I had a little background in terms of hearing things, and so we got there and what did we do? I don’t know. I get so excited about talking about it now. Somebody to listen to me, like you. I don’t know, where did I stop?

KS: You were saying that you and your roommate decided that y’all better go ahead and enlist.

HK: Okay. So we went over there and we were just sort of fooling around feeling like we were progressing and getting things done, walking down Fayetteville Street, main street in the city, in the capital city. We got down there and there was a recruiter down there. And I told him, “We’re going to have to go in.” He says, “Yeah.” I got to asking the recruiter, I said, “Now, if I sign up – “Now I was eighteen. He asked me, he says, “How old are you son?” I said, “I’m eighteen.” He said, “Well, you’re going to have to go in. You’re not going to get away. You can’t – you don’t want to be drafted do you?” I said, “No, I don’t want to be drafted. My daddy doesn’t want me to be drafted. He wants me, if I’ve got to go – my mother doesn’t want to me go much.” I said, “You know how mothers are.” He said, “Yeah, I know how mother’s are.” I said, “She’s worried something will happen to me.” He said, “Well, I don’t know whether it will or it won’t, but you’re going to have to go at your age unless there’s something bad wrong with you. Can you pass your work at school?” I said, “Yeah, I do pretty good in school.” He said, “Well you’ve got enough sense to be in the Army then. You

don't have to have much," he said. I said, "That's encouraging." [Both laugh] We had a quite lively conversation. So I signed up with him. Well, I got home and told my mother and she hit the ceiling. "Why did you do that?" She said, "If they need you, they'll call you. You don't need to go out there and tell them you're ready to go." She said, "You know that's a dangerous thing you've done." I said, "Mama, the man was so nice and he told me –" And I said, I told him, I said "Now I'm almost ending my third semester in college. If I sign up now," and this was two weeks before Christmas, my little brother's birthday. I said, "If I sign up, do I get to stay home for Christmas?" He said, "Oh yeah, don't worry about that. If you sign up with me here –" He was a recruiter, "– you can stay until after Christmas, I guarantee you." I said, "Well now, I want to finish this semester's work, because if I live through all this, I want to come back and go back to school and get my – the rest of my education." He said, "Well I can't promise you that," but he says, "I think the chances are pretty good it will work out." He said, "Chances are, if you sign up now with me, you won't have to go until the first of the year into the active service." So I signed up with him. I went home.

My daddy was sort of proud of me, really, you know, but my mother was so upset and poor thing she was such a wonderful, wonderful person and of course all she could think about was her darling son getting involved in all this stuff. And – but that was the way it was, and I went on in and I got to stay out in time to – first, I had gone back to Wake Forest right after Christmas to study for exams, because we always had tough exams over there in those days, and I guess they still do. But anyway, I went back and studied and mother called me one night and I was studying over there at the library, got me on the phone. We only had one phone in Wake Forest down there, if you can believe it. I'm telling you another story. This ought to go in a book too, I tell you. You're getting a lot of useless, un-worthwhile history here, but it's true history.

KS: It's wonderful history.

HK: So, they got me on the phone. Mother said, "Son, you've got a letter here." I said, "Who's it from Mama?" She said, "I don't know, but it says United States Government, Department of the Army." I said, "Oh my goodness, what are they doing?" She said, "I don't know, I don't open your mail!" You know, that's a mother. I said, "Well Mama, open it up right quick and see what it says." She opened it up and says, "It's got a train ticket in here from Raleigh on the Coastline Railroad down to Miami Beach, Florida." I said, "For me, Mama?" She said, "Yes, it's got your name on it." I said, "Boy, that will be a nice trip, won't it." [Both laugh] She said, "Yeah, but it says report to the Army down there." So that was it and that's – so I went home.

KS: Did you finish your exams?

HK: Finished my exams and they were very kind toward me, the college was, and they gave me credit for the whole semester. So I said, "If I come back, if I live through

this and get back, I'm going to come back here because I want to get my education here." And that's the way it worked out and everybody was very cooperative. I went over there and talked to the Bursar. Now the Registrar, he wasn't too nice, but the rest of them were just as nice as they could be. He didn't want to accommodate me too much, Mr. Patterson, and I've always remembered that he was sort of cranky. But he was a nice man. He had a son about my age, and he was scared his son was going to get called in, but anyway, I understood that. Anyway, I got through it and came back and got my education, lived through it, thank goodness, got wounded only once, no twice, got wounded twice. Stayed in the hospital until the Battle of the Bulge. You ever heard about the Battle of the Bulge?

KS: Oh yes sir.

HK: Well, I was right in the middle of that. When I was in the hospital, gotten shot and wounded; shrapnel wounds in my arm. Carried a boy out with this hand. Stayed in that hole with him, four and a half hours with a tourniquet and I was an Eagle Scout, so I had gotten through the scouts, and I was there with a – and they were nice, young country boys, but they had no more idea what to do for a man with his leg blown off than the man in the moon. And they all looked at me and said, "What are we going to do? What are we going to do? He's going to bleed; he's bleeding!" I said, "We've got to put a tourniquet on." They said, "What's a tourniquet?" I said, "A tourniquet is something you put around there and tighten it up and keeps his blood in his body, but you can't leave it on there but thirty minutes and then you got to let it go and let a little blood come out to keep from gangrene from setting in." He said, "How did you know that?" I said, "Well, I was a Boy Scout." You know, if anybody ever asked me, they never did though, to make a speech about the importance of Boy Scouts, I could tell you the full story, it would impress people. But, nobody asked me to do that.

And I sat there for four and something hours in the hole, shells – Germans throwing shells all around us, holding that boy's leg, and I had only one arm I could use, the right arm, thank goodness. So, when the shelling stopped, or eased off, I said, "We've got to get him out of here and get him down. See, we were right on the front lines and it was about a mile down a – well, it wasn't a real mountain, but it was a steep hill all the way down to where the first aid people were. And I told them how to make a stretcher. We made a little home-made stretcher, got him on there, and I carried one end of it with a rope around my neck, holding the other side because that arm wouldn't work, and this hand on the other side. And one of my friends, buddies, that wasn't wounded much; he carried the other end of it. We carried that boy down that mountain and got him down to the first aid people. They immediately took him and got him in some kind of transportation and carried him to the field hospital down there. As far as I know, he lived, I hope he did. I didn't ever – I never knew who he was and he never knew who I was.

KS: That's amazing.

HK: But, you know, there are things you do and you don't think about any credit or getting any praise or – you just do it because the way we thought, and I think I wasn't alone in this, my associates and friends there, same way. This is what we're supposed to do. And so, we got him all fixed up, got him saved and then they put me in the hospital until the Battle of the Bulge came. When the Bulge hit, they took – and I'd pretty well had gotten to where I could use that left arm, they had me back on the front lines and down on the battle field again, because, you know, men were short, and they needed everybody they could get that was ambulatory and I was; there wasn't anything wrong with my legs. I could walk, run, duck, and dive and all that stuff. So, that's pretty much the story and I got through it and let's see, what happened next.

KS: Now, when you came – so you went for training in Florida though, initially, and then did they send you right to France or did you go to England first?

HK: No, no, no, no, no. I got in the – Oh yeah, I'm glad you asked that, because that has some significance in all this. Excuse me; I don't know what's the matter with me today. See, I enlisted as a – I was going to be a hotshot pilot. Well, I found out I had a punctured eardrum, so they wouldn't let me fly and I ended up as a machine gunner in the Hundredth Infantry Division, right on the front lines.

KS: Wow.

HK: And so all of my fancy ideas about being a hotshot pilot were through and over with. I never got to fly an airplane. That was a big disappointment to me, but there wasn't anything I could do about it. The truth of the matter, nobody ever – I don't know whether I ought to tell you this, but when they found out that my disability was a blown out eardrum, they offered me a discharge. I'm going to tell you something that nobody other than my own father knew about. They offered me a discharge, they said, "You're not going to be able to fly. You're listed to be a pilot, so we're going to give you a discharge." And I said, "What am I going to do? How can I walk down Main Street in Greensboro in civilian clothes, all of my friends in the service?" This sounds like a boast, but it's just the way I was thinking. "I can't do that." I said, "I don't want a discharge. I'm going to stay in the Army." "Well," he said, "Okay, we'll send you to the Infantry." And that's how I ended up as a machine gunner on the front lines and then I ended getting wounded over there, but I got through it all and after awhile I carried that fellow with one arm down.

KS: Is that what you won the Purple Heart for?

HK: Yes, I got the Purple for getting shot up, and then I got another wound, but it didn't amount to much. And I don't think – I got one for that, a Bronze Star, I got

a Bronze Star. You got – some of that stuff is over there. I don't know whether you looked at it.

KS: Yes, I did when I came in. Now, you also got a – Honorary British Legion?

HK: Yeah, yeah. They inducted me into the British Legion over there. I don't know why they did that, do you know?

KS: I don't know. I'd like to know. You tell me! [Laughs]

HK: It's a long time ago, something I did over there. [Laughs]

KS: Well, let me think. Were you in England at all before you went to France?

HK: No, I never did get to England. My outfit went directly from New York in January – not January, in August of '44, we went directly into southern France. I was in the invasion there. We invaded – we came through, you heard me say, "The Gates of Hercules," that's the Mediterranean, into the Mediterranean, came into southern – southern France and came up the Rhone River, not the Rhine, but the Rhone, R-h-o-n-e, Rhone River Valley. Across the – all the way up and through Bitche, up there we had a big battle up there, B-i, "Bitch" they called it. That's where they got – now if I had my wallet out I could give you – show you my card so I could prove it to you. Wait a minute. I don't know why I keep all this stuff.

KS: It's wonderful. I keep everything.

HK: You do?

KS: Yes sir.

HK: Let's see. There it is. [Both laugh]

KS: [Reads card] "The Society of the Sons of Bitche."

HK: There it is, there's another one. See, I've tried to maintain my memberships to those kinds of things, I don't know.

KS: So do you still see men from this time?

HK: Yes, I haven't been in a couple of years. I used to go to all the meetings that I could. [Looks through business cards] There's the Bar Association. You're not interested in that.

KS: I am.

HK: You are?

KS: Yes sir.

HK: I was in the North Carolina Bar. What is that? I don't know, these cards, you can look at them.

KS: Thank you.

HK: I don't want any secrets from you. What is this? [Looks through business cards]

[End of Tape 1, Side A] [Start of Tape 1, Side B]

KS: You've been in a lot of organizations.

HK: The American Bar and North Carolina Bar and all that stuff.

KS: Now, I'm not finished with the war yet, are you?

[Tape paused and resumed]

HK: If you're not tired yet, I'm not.

KS: So you came up through the Rhone River Valley, and that's where your campaign was.

HK: Yes, yes, we fought the Germans all the way up there. Then cross the Rhine – we got up there North – and I can't remember – now I've been back over there a time or two and took my family one time for our later years to sort of give them an idea; my wife, at that time, whose picture's on the wall up there and my children. I had three children who you see up here and I took them with me and their children, if they had any at that time, I don't think any of them were married then. I took them back over there to show them some of the stuff that I'd been through. Part of it was up at Bitche, "Bitch" we called it. We had a marvelous trip, you know. It thrilled me that I was able to do that for my own family. And I had, you know, gotten out, become a lawyer, had a job, and saved a little money; enough to take them over there on sort of a first class trip. It was along with a group of others, it wasn't just on our own.

KS: Was it veterans?

HK: Yes, you know members of the Hundredth Division; soldiers who had fought together over there in 1944, '45, and fought in the Army of Occupation for a while. And I ended up in southern Germany when the war ended and that will be a day I'll always remember. It was May the eighth of 1945. I was a machine gunner – thirty caliber, belt fed, recoil operating – I did the whole litany of it. And

we were sitting there on the banks of the Danube River, southern Germany, Ulm, U-l-m. It's on the map if you want to look it up. Sitting there waiting for the Germans to attack us and three, God what a memory – three fighter planes flew over, Americans, flew over at about two hundred feet, three hundred feet over our heads and I was lying on the ground behind my machine gun looking at them coming over. When I recognized and I had been – lived through so many of those battles, been shot at so many times, and heard so many of them. I could tell the difference between an American cannon shell bursting and a German's, I was that good. The German eighty-eights had a very distinctive echo to them when they landed close to you as they did a lot around me; German eighty-eights. For anybody that knows anything about World War II, they'll know what I'm talking about. Well, I was there waiting for the Germans to come through there and then these planes, these three planes flew over, Americans, fighters. And I saw them and they went over and they – this is the eighth day of May, '45, they went out of sight over a hill up there and so we sort of eased up a little, looking around. And all of a sudden they turned around and flew back over us and the lead plane at about three hundred feet right up – you could almost touch him I felt like. He gave us this [Mr. Kornegay waves his hand back and forth showing how the plane tipped its wings to the men below.] Oh God, what a happy day. I jumped up with tears in my eyes, said, "Boys, it's over, it's all over."

Now we were expecting – it wasn't any big surprise because the Russians, believe it or not, the Russians, and one time we were pulling for the Russians, were coming into Berlin. If you remember that about the war, the Russians were really helping us. They came into Berlin and that is one of the things, other than our – our priorities over there, Americans and the Brits, they were our buddies, they fought right with us. The Frogs didn't do much. Excuse me for referring to our French allies as Frogs; and that's what we called them. They didn't do much. [Charles] de Gaulle was really a big shot but a – Now [Philippe] LeClerc, he was his second in command. He was a rather decent fellow and I've got another story to tell you about him. Anyway – so anyway – it ended up – we can sort of skip over a lot of this. We survived it there and we ended up – we were then in southern Germany, Ulm, U-l-m and so we were down there, and if I had the map, I've got one somewhere, I could point it out on the map and show you exactly where it was – and down there in the town. I can't remember the name of it. It is a big German town. We went through there, and I was going with a – they put us in an Army of Occupation. The war had ended by then. I told you where I was when the war ended didn't I?

KS: Was that in Ulm?

HK: Yes, that was right outside of Ulm when the war ended. And we were down there, and they immediately took my outfit and put us as an Army of Occupation to keep these Russians from coming in and – they were coming there killing all of the German civilians. We won the war, you know, we defended the Germans. Here we were fighting them tooth and toenail one day and the next day we are over

there shooting Russians for trying to kill innocent Germans. I said, "That isn't right. We won the war. We're not – they're no longer our enemies." I tried to talk to those Russians of course they didn't understand me and I didn't understand them, but I just got so sick and tired of it. So we had to stay and end up shooting Russians and they who were supposed to be our allies. Then one of us came with us one day – what was that that happened, that was a good story to tell.

One day somebody did something and I was going to shoot him [a Russian]. I was going to shoot him. He did something. I was going to shoot him. In those days – now this sounds cruel and you won't believe it coming from me but this is the army, but this is a war and I was going to shoot him. And I told my Commander. [He said], "Don't shoot them, they're our allies!" Talking about these Russians. I said, "They may be yours, but they're not mine. I'm going to shoot him." He said, "Don't you dare do that. That would be an international event." I said, "Well, what are you going to do with him?" He said, "Do something, I don't know, but don't shoot him." So I didn't shoot him. I was just a big talker, I guess. Anyway, after that he came back and said – he said, "They're allies!" I said, "They may be yours, they sure aren't mine!" Because they were in there killing these innocent Germans and, you know, the war was over as far as I was concerned and murder would have been murder. I said, "You're here and you're fighting the war, you've got every right under the Lord and under the laws of the land to shoot anybody who is going to shoot you first, or you think he is, or sincerely believe he is or any members of your family or your friends. But after that's over you don't have any right to shoot somebody. You see, I live by the old Anglo-Saxon rules. Those Germans and those other people didn't.

KS: Well, weren't the Russians still mad about how the Germans treated their people when they invaded.

HK: Oh yes, oh yes. They were mad. They had – they didn't – and if I say this I don't mean them any harm, but they did not have the same degree of morality that we had. It didn't bother them to kill people. It always did trouble me to have to shoot somebody, I didn't like that. And I thanked the good Lord many times that I don't know – I don't know of anybody I ever killed, and I live with that. Although, I fired as much ammunition as anybody who'd ever served over there, I guess, because I was a machine gunner and I put down fields of fire all over the place. And I prayed every night so many times that I never hit anybody, but I don't know if I did or I didn't. I'm glad I don't know.

KS: Now when your Infantry occupied Germany, where were y'all then?

HK: Ulm, Germany. Down in southern Germany.

KS: So you stayed there when the war ended.



HK: Stayed there, I was there when the war ended. Stayed there for several weeks anyway and that's the time I went up one day – during the Occupation, to keep the Russians from killing the German civilians. They were no longer our enemies and I felt that we had an honor and a right and a duty to defend them against those crazy Russians. The Russians were crazy; a bunch of crazies. And so, you know, they said, "They came over there and killed our –" and I understood that, but it didn't make it right in my book. Now I had a different degree of morals than they did, I guess.

One night, let's see, I went into a place down there -- now let's see how did that go? Oh, no, this is sort of another story but, after the war had ended I had a couple of friends and we got a jeep and we were riding around going up and down the German road over there into that town, and I wish I could tell you the name of it because it is a big German town, and most of it was totally destroyed because we bombed it, the Germans bombed it, everybody bombed it, except for the church in the middle of town, still standing, if you can believe that; with a big spiral on it, the church. And then there was another building that still had two or three floors in it and I said, "Stop here!" So we stopped the jeep, we got out, went in up to the second floor and started in and I was sort of the leader of the group, and started in this room, the door was closed. And I started to open the door and there was a little pressure on the other side, and so I had to use some weight to force my way in. And when I finally pushed the door open, there stood a beautiful German young woman in a waiter's uniform, you know, white skirt and all that stuff. And I said – she said, "No, no, no, no, you can't come in." You see, they thought we were French. The French were technically occupying the place at that time. Then I said to her, "We're not French, we're Americans, Americans!" When I said that, she let the door open, she grabbed me around the neck, started hugging me and kissing me. And I said, "Was ist loss? Was ist loss?" And she said in her own limited way, "We thought you were French, Frogs." I said, "No, we're not Frogs, we're Americans." She said, "When are you coming? Please come on over here and save us, save us. The Frogs are about to kill us all. They're stealing everything we have, and they are about to kill us all!" [Both laugh]

I stayed there to hang around there for a few hours and then an old nice German man, must have been eighty-five, standing out there talking to him, I could speak a little bit, and he could understand a little English, and he said, he said – he despised the French because the French really treated them rough after they got the upper hand, you know. See, the French weren't very good soldiers, as soldiers go in those days, but the Americans and the British were the main stays that maintained things and captured and helped. See the French would come in – oh, here's the way it would work. We'd go in and capture – capture the land from the Germans and then the French were sort of tagging along; we called them Frogs. They were tagging along and they were parading under the name of de Gaulle, you know. They'd come along, we'd turn it over to them a little prestige and they'd come in and get all "vinoed" up, get sopped drinking wine, and the Germans would come take it away from them that night; take it right away from

them. This is a true story. [Laughs] And we'd have to come back and recapture it. We got sort of tired of that. They'd come in there and get all "vinoed" up, we called it, vino was the French, or Italian maybe, because they'd love to celebrate American victories and claim them, and claim them, and they would parade around there and I don't know, it was really a sideshow in a sense. I'm talking too much.

KS: No you're not. You told me you'd tell me another story about LeClerc.

HK: Oh, oh, oh, LeClerc. Oh, let's see, let's see now, I've got to get this straight. We were there in – we were riding down the street in a – I wish I had my little map, I could give you the names of these places but I don't remember like I used to. I used to remember everything. Anyway, I can't remember it right off hand, but it's a well-known German town right on the main north-south road over there. So we went in there and we were riding along and I was sort of in charge of the jeep. I said, "Stop, we're going in here." And that's when we went in and got up on the second floor and I've already told you that. We knocked on the door and this pretty girl opened the door, and they had all these tables in there with cloths on them. Again, I had never – in over a year, I hadn't seen a tablecloth on a table; and they had flowers on the table and that's when I told her we were Americans, that's when she hugged me, I told you that. And she said, "When are you coming, when you are coming? You're not a Frog!" [I said], "No, I'm not a Frog, I'm an American" I said, "We're the advanced party." I lied a little bit, you know, to make it sound good. I said, "We're the advanced party, General de Gaulle," not General de Gaulle, "General Eisenhower sent us up here to get everything checked out." That was a big lie but it sounded good, I thought it was good, I was eighteen, nineteen; nineteen by then. She hugged me again then and said, "Oh, come on, please come back and get rid of the Frogs. We can't stand them much longer." I said, "Well, we'll be here, we're the advanced party." That wasn't so; we lied to the Frogs on the gate down there. They had all surrendered – circled this town because the French were occupying it, but we told them a lot of stuff about how General – what was the General's name there – anyway, the American General in charge of everything over there. We said, "He sent us up here to check all this out. We're going to be sending the Americans in here in a week." There wasn't any truth in that, I was just telling that to sort of get in there and see what that big building was.

So we got there and we finally wiggled around and got in it. That's when I got into that beautiful place and they had all these tablecloths and everything and I said, "What's going on?" They said, "General LeClerc is coming for a banquet tonight." I said, "Oh, oui, oui! C'est bon. C'est bon!" I even mumbled a little French that I knew, a little German too. So, we started talking and they had us in there. There were three of us and after they hugged us and kissed us and welcomed us and gave us something to drink and all this wine, vino, I guess we called it vino. I don't know. And about that time, somebody came in – oh, a band came in, an orchestra. And they set up their orchestra and the waitresses had

already been giving us some vino, as I call it, and so the orchestra started playing and we started dancing with the waitresses; these three or four American soldiers just dancing with the pretty German girls, dancing around there. See, there was a law then as an American, you couldn't fraternize, we, the American soldiers, could not fraternize at that time with the German civilians. We weren't supposed to be doing it, but we didn't pay any attention to that because, you know, we were tempted by their hospitality. So we were dancing with them and all of a sudden the door burst open and there stood three French; one was General, one was a Colonel, and was a Major, or something I think, who demanded to know what we were doing there. We told them – gave them some kind of story and ended up he was going to throw us out. And I said, "Well, General –" What was the General's, American who was in charge of everything over there? I forget now."

KS: Eisenhower?

HK: Eisenhower. I guess it was Eisenhower. I believe that's right. I said, "General Eisenhower. We're special envoys from General Eisenhower. Now, you're going to throw us out?" [They said], "No, no, no, we're not going to throw you out. We're just going to ask you to politely leave and go downstairs because General LeClerc is coming to dinner tonight. This is –." Now I didn't realize at the moment that was the sixth day of June of 1945; one year to the day from the invasion of Normandy which was on the sixth day of June of '44. It was a big day in France, and there we were there piddling around. [Both laugh]

KS: Having fun!

HK: Three privates now, in the United States Army all in dirty ragged uniforms, old muddy boots, helmets, and everything on. Now I mean, you couldn't believe it, and here were all the generals, the French generals and all in there. We were having fun now. But finally we – I said, "We don't want an international incident here." So we went down and said – and finally I talked to one of the French generals there, or French – I don't know whether he was a general or what he was and he said, "Now we are having the enlisted personnel –" We were obviously enlisted soldiers and they knew that, we knew that. He said, "Downstairs, down outside in the back in the lot down there, we're entertaining the enlisted personnel." Well, that was understandable, we didn't have any business being up there with the big shots and I knew that, I was smart enough to understand that. And so I got my two – crowd there, we went down and got down there and that's when I was walking out – we were walking out going back there and there were a lot of people there and a lot of pretty German young women, you know, just around sort of joining in the celebration. The war had ended. This was the sixth day of June of '45 and I don't know why, I was just sort of a smart aleck I guess, I said something and I was trying to, you know it's sort of egotistical of me I guess, trying to impress one good looking German girl, young girl. I mean she was twenty – nineteen, twenty. You know, about my age. I was trying to impress her, I said, "Wo gehen sie mein lieblich?" Do you know any German?

KS: No sir.

HK: That means, “Where are you going my dear?” And she said to me in perfect English, “Why do you call me ‘your dear,’ you don’t even know me.” In perfect English. I said, “Pardon moi, mademoiselle, pardon moi!” That’s French. [Both laugh] Anyway, these are things I look back on now with a little bit of comic and a little bit of fun.

KS: Sure.

HK: It shows you some of the unusual experiences I’ve had.

KS: What amazing experiences to have at that age!

HK: I know it. See, I wasn’t but eighteen, maybe nineteen by then. See, I was overseas I think when I was still eighteen, and then fighting over there.

KS: And you won a lot of medals.

HK: Yes, I won some medals.

KS: The Purple Heart and the Bronze Star.

HK: Yes, I got shot up a couple of times. The Stars and everything.

KS: And the British Legion honored you.

HK: The British Legion, yes. Well, I’ve had an interesting experience, and I always secretly, almost secretly, deep down in my heart and prayers thanked the good Lord for letting me survive it all because I had them dying on my right and on my left and I said, “Why am I still here? Why am I still living? What happens?” And for many years I said, “I was left here for some reason. And I say this to you very confidentially and solemnly, it always inspired me to believe that I had some other service to render and it motivated, might be the best word I can think of, me to, after I got out and went back to school, to do my best, to learn as much as I could, become a lawyer, and to do what I thought what they wanted me to do; somebody bigger than I am, wanted me to do to help other people.

KS: Is that the way the war most affected you, was giving you that kind of inspiration? Or being in the military?

HK: Well, it was one of the big things in my life. I don’t know whether it was the most impressive or the most controlling part, but it was big. See, I was raised by nice Christian parents that I always respected and loved, and one of things that guided me through my young and mischievous life was, when I was tempted, and

tempted is the word, to do something that I knew better, that wasn't the right thing to do, to do something, and I'd say, "Well, what would my mother think of this if I did it, if she heard about it and knew about it?" That kept me pretty much on a pretty straight course. Now, not that I'm not that good or not that I'm that holy, or that intelligent. I don't mean to leave that impression with you, because I'm not, I'm just human. But, it was a controlling factor in my life.

KS: Well, I hope that works with my son. [Both laugh]

HK: Well, I'm not going to try to tell you. You're smart, you're smart and I know what you're saying, and you ought to remember that. Not just because I said it, but it's just a fact of life, they're going to do, if they're intelligent as they must be, they're going to have the same thoughts, that's true. I think – you see that young fellow there [Mr. Kornegay points to a picture of his son] he has had some great experiences, good experiences, and I don't know and I can't claim any credit for it, but I do believe that he has done enough to think a lot of times about temptations I know he's had, like I had and like all young men – lively young men have as they go along. I'd like to believe, anyway, that he was governed a little bit by the way his mother and daddy taught him. And before they veer too far off the path of righteousness, they'll think about it and it'll bring them back every time. So you – as my mother always said to me, and I live by this, "You're known by the company you keep," and that, "Birds of a feather flock together." And I've never forgotten that. That's the way I was raised and I've tried to pass it along to him and my others and he's done a pretty good job. He's graduated from college, became Vice-President of R.J. Reynolds which is a pretty good job for him. He graduated over there, I mean retired, over there and they wouldn't let him leave, he's so good. He's recognized as one of the leading experts in flue-cured tobacco.

KS: In what kind of tobacco?

HK: Flue-cured, the kind that is grown in North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia. And he's recognized as an expert in that; probably one of the most knowledgeable. He knows – he can look at it and tell whether it is good or bad. And, you know, tobacco is still a big business in the southeast of this country and he's made some good money out of it. They paid him well and he has a nice family, beautiful wife.

KS: Now, what is your son's name?

HK: Same as mine

KS: Oh, he's a junior?

HK: He's a junior. You know mine, so you can find him. He lives in Winston-Salem now.

KS: So, after the war, you came home and met your wife then. You came home and you finished college.

HK: Yes, I came home, went back to Wake Forest in – I got out of the Army, got discharged on the first day – you might want to put this in – I was discharged from the Army the first day of February of 1944 – no not '44, '46, 1946. Ten days later I had reenlisted, reenrolled at Wake Forest, second semester of my second year, finished Wake Forest, graduated undergraduate. See, I was fortunate in this regard, while in the service, they gave me a bunch of tests and sent me to – so I was in the Army over three years so they sent me for a year to Georgia Tech, and I got two years of credit at Georgia Tech in engineering and so then, let's see how that worked, and then when I got out on the first of February of '46 and went back and reenrolled in Wake Forest, I went in – that credit was transferable from Georgia Tech back to Wake Forest. I was able to finish my third year of undergraduate school of that year, that semester, and enter law school that summer.

KS: At Wake?

HK: At Wake. Law School at Wake. And that was in the summer of June of '46; June of '46. Yes. And graduated from law school in June of '49. I graduated from undergraduate, got my Bachelor's Degree in '47, BS, Bachelor's Degree. Then in '49 I graduated with an LLB degree at Wake Forest Law School. And then later went in and got deal going, really sort of a deal, it really didn't amount to a lot, but it gave me another degree, a Doctor of Law so to speak, quote, unquote, two or three years, more of an honorary thing than an earned degree. So I got three degrees there; one undergraduate, one Bachelor of Law, and one Doctorate of Law. So that's enough, that's enough. And after, let's see, it was eight years and someone said, "You're going back?" I said, "Know, I've been to eight years of college that ought to be enough, isn't it." They said, "You went to eight years of college?" I said, "Yes, I went eight years." See, I went to summer school round the clock, or as I used to say, around the calendar. I went to school around the calendar.

KS: Now once you got back from the war, did college life seem kind of tame? Once you've been dancing with those German girls, it must have been hard to real you back in. [Laughs]

HK: Yes, all those German girls. Yes, I did dance with one, one time, didn't I? I told you about that.

KS: So it seemed kind of tame once you got back.

HK: Was ist loss? That's German, I think.

KS: So did you meet your wife in college?

HK: No, I met her at West Market Street Church.

KS: Oh, great. So after you graduated from Wake, you moved back to Greensboro?

HK: You see, I never left Greensboro, really. That's been my home all my life. And after I finished college, I came back and opened a little law office. I didn't have any close relatives that were lawyers and in those days, you know, they didn't hire lawyers like they do now. See, a fellow goes through law school now, he's sort of a – and it's not a good way to express it but it's true, a "kept lawyer." I was never a "kept lawyer." I started my own office; I couldn't even get an office space. Here I had three degrees and I couldn't even find a place to hang my shingle. I'm telling you the truth; in Greensboro. And I went around and finally my dear friend who later got murdered up in the west, he was a good lawyer and he went up there to practice. He left Greensboro and went up there and one of his client's brothers shot him and killed him.

KS: Oh no.

HK: Out there, they were looking for the land lines or something, I don't know. Stedman Hines was his name and he was a dear, dear friend. And that's always grieved me about Stedman. Anyway, he gave me a little room in his, an anteroom in his – it wasn't anteroom, it was just a closet, so to speak. It was the only thing in Greensboro I could find over there in the old, old building, Banner Building, right there on the corner of North Elm and the street that ran perpendicular to that. Many old timers would know exactly where it was, up on the fifth floor. And there were several other lawyers in the building so, I went in there and the room was so small and I bought a desk for 35, 30 dollars, it wasn't \$35, \$30 to use and I put it in there and it filled the room so much, in order to get around the back side of the desk for the chair to sit in, I had to turn sideways to go there. That's right. [Both laugh] I got a painter for \$2 to come up there and paint my name on the door and put under in lawyer, "y-o" how did he spell it? And I said, "No, that's not right." He had it "y-o-u-y-e-r" or something. I said, "That ain't the way you spell lawyer!" [Both laugh] So I made him change it to do it "lawyer," just put lawyer.

And that is the way I started my law practice. And I had a few clients originally and then Ed Stanley, and I got to put him in her 'cause he really saved me and he – I carried his paper. I got acquainted with him as his paper boy. And I've used a lot of this in speeches to young people. I've said, "Don't ever forget that the little jobs you have as a youngster will help you out in the future." And I tell them the story about how I carried the paper for this particular man who was a struggling young lawyer in those days. And I said, "I carried his paper, I did a good job, I collected every week, and I got my \$.15 and I always paid my bill, and he always got his paper on time. And I said, "Later on he became the federal

judge.” This is a true story. Ed Stanley became the number one federal judge in the state of North Carolina, and I had carried the paper when I was a youngster, and he had always appreciated and loved me and looked after me in so many ways and the strange thing, he was a big Republican and of course, I was a Democrat, my family were Democrats in those days, and that made a big difference in a way. But he always helped me and I’ve always loved him and his family for that. And I think I was able to do a few things for him and his family in later years but that’s another story.

So I use that as an example in the little speeches that I’ve made from time to time to say to young people, “Don’t ever forget where you came from and don’t ever forget those people who have given you a hand a long the way. Now Oscar Sapp, the second, he was a junior, was my Scout Master, did so many things for me and helped me in so many ways and his son was a fine young man; tragically died of natural causes after he became a certified practicing physician; went to Med School. He was two years younger than I was. That was a big grief in my life. But anyway, I’ve told you enough about – I could give you history all day long. I might be wearing you out.

KS: Practicing law for that many years, how do you feel like the practice of law has changed through the years?

HK: Oh, you wouldn’t recognize it. You can write books on that, I think. Well, it’s far less personal, it’s far less, in my view now, these are just my independent recollections and views. And the bar has gotten so large and so, I can’t even think of the proper words, but – well, it’s just not as close as it used to be. When I was coming along, and I hope it is still sort of this way, a full fraternity. Lawyers were friendly with each other. They’d get in – you know one time I had a case against somebody over there and we were just fussing and fighting and feuding and carrying on and then the court judge said, “You all go to lunch now.” And the other lawyer and I – he said, “Where you going to eat?” I said, “We’ll go down here to Boyd Morris’ [Mayfair Cafeteria] and eat over at the cafeteria.” And he said, “Well, let’s go together.” So we went over there and sat together. And my wife was up there, it was a big case, a big case, and she was up there just to hear the case, you know, in the courtroom. And some woman behind her over there saw us eating over there and said, “I told you they really weren’t mad, they’re just putting on, they’re just putting on.” She’d overheard all of it. She told me later, she said, “Who was that woman over there sitting there talking criticizing you and” – whoever the hell the lawyer was and I don’t remember at the moment, said, “They’re not really mad, they’re just putting on.” [Both laugh]

KS: So please tell me about your time in the US Congress.

HK: Oh no, that’s too much.

KS: No it’s not! Please tell me.



HK: Well. Somehow, how can I start out by telling you? I was happy with what I was doing. By that time, I'd become the District Attorney, trying all of the big criminal cases, I never tried many civil cases, but I tried more criminal cases – at one point when I quit and finally went to Congress and left the position of being the Prosecutor, one judge, Judge Russo told me, he was up in North Wilkesboro, he told me, "Horace, you may not know this, but you've tried more criminal cases at this stage, and I know this 'cause I keep these records, you've tried more criminal cases than any other lawyer in North Carolina." And I said, "Judge, are you sure?" He said, "Yes, you have been in court forty-eight weeks out of the last four or five years. No other lawyer in the state's ever done that that I know that I know of. Maybe Basil, Basil White who was a dear friend, maybe he is pretty close to it down in Mecklenburg and Gaston Counties, down southwest of Greensboro." He said, "But you ought to remember that. You've tried over 15,000 criminal cases and you've won about ninety-seven percent of them."

KS: That's impressive.

HK: He said, "That's a record that's hard to beat." I said, "Well Judge, you know the answer to that is, I never tried one unless I knew he was guilty. It was like shooting fish in a barrel for me. If they weren't guilty, I didn't waste my time on them." [Both laugh] I said, "Go on home to Mama." And this is another story. I was in the Army then, over in Europe. These Germans, we captured a bunch of little Germans right there at the end of the war. Hitler had put all these youngsters in there; fourteen – thirteen, fourteen, fifteen year old boys in uniform because we'd killed all the big soldiers, or they'd been captured. At one time I had 10,000 of them under my guard – of German soldiers over there in Europe and a barbed wire fence around them. And the general came by one day; of course, he didn't have the familiarity of the scene that I did. And he said, "Well what are you going to do if they try to escape?" I said, "General, let me tell you something confidentially. These people are not going to escape; they're not going to try to escape. They are glad to be where they are." He said, "What do you mean?" He said, "They're German soldiers." I said, "Yes, I know that, but they're getting food, they're getting drink, they're getting meat and most of them are fairly young, and we don't mistreat them. I mean, we've got them hemmed in, in a barbed wire fence, but we feed them and we sort of look after them the best we can with the number of them. There are 10,000 of them out in the field, just the open field." He said, "Well, I hadn't thought about that." I said, "Well, you ought to come over and spend some time with me. They're not going to – I'm going to eat with them. They're not going to bother me." And it was true, and I've always thought about this. I have learned – there's one thing I've said sort of boastfully I guess you could say, "There are a lot of things in this world I don't know, but human nature isn't one of them." I can apprise and figure out people about as quick as anybody you have ever known, and I've learned that through practical experience. And I learned as a youngster and eighteen-, nineteen-year-old soldier. As long as you don't mistreat somebody, you can hem them up and fence them in

and in a sense in the eyes of some people, maybe mistreat them a little bit, but you can always count on them not to turn their back on you; as long as you're fair. If you don't mistreat them and you're fair to them, they'll respect you and you can get along with them. And I've found that throughout life. I've always gone by that rule.

KS: Did it help you in politics?

HK: Well, I think it did. Politics is a little different game, but it helps you in politics in this sense; that you learn how to deal with other human beings, fairly, honestly and in the way that they feel half-way intelligent, they'll respect you for it. You don't have to give in everything they want. You don't have to cater to them, so to speak. As long as you're fair and honest, they'll respect you. And if you can gain the respect of another individual, you've got it pretty much made. That's been my rule in life.

[End of Tape 1, Side B] [Beginning of Tape 2, Side A]

KS: What was your time like in Congress?

HK: I hate to put it this way, but it's about the worst job I've ever had.

KS: Really!

HK: Yes, yes, it really was. I look back and tried in my own silence at times, sitting here by myself all alone thinking, that's about the worst job I've ever had.

KS: I'm surprised.

HK: Well, I know, most people are, but let me take just a second or two. When I was a prosecuting attorney – it may have a lot to do with the way I think, and the way I've lived, and the way I've acted, and the way I was trained, but I when I was say, as prosecuting attorney, I was control. I had the say-so. If it went good, I felt good for it. I didn't brag about it, but I felt good about it.

[Tape stops and restarts for continuation of interview]

KS: Mr. Kornegay, we were talking about your experience in the US Congress and how you didn't particularly like the job too much; lack of control of all those people.

HK: Yeah, it was entirely different. You know the move from – come in –

[Someone enters the room and the tape is stopped and restarted]

HK: Okay, now where were we?

KS: About the Congress, about there being so many people there and not having a lot of control.

HK: Yeah, it was an entirely differently, as I started very briefly, and I'll just touch on it to sort of connect these two. As a prosecutor, and I had been very active in that for years, you have control, you're sort of the boss. I mean, I didn't enjoy being the boss as much as I did having say-so of about what I did, and how I did it, and when I did it, and how I related to other people. And then when you get into Congress, you're there with just one of many 500 and some and when you're a freshman, you're nothing; you're just nothing when you're a freshman Congressman. You're sitting back there, usually in the back row, sitting back there and listening to all the old timers and, they're celebrated people who've been there forty, fifty, sixty years; John McCormick and all those people. Wonderful people, now I'm not downing them, don't misunderstand me, I'm just saying that it is quite a move, and until you've been in the House of Representatives for example, and that's what I'm going to talk about, it's twenty years before you get any recognition at all or any degree of responsibility for anything. And so most of us didn't stay there that long 'cause we sort of got tired of it and a better opportunity, a least we thought, and moved on to something else. And so the difference between those two federal jobs is so terrific and so big and so large, that, you know, being a member of Congress – after you've done it all, you don't look on that as any degree of excitement 'cause you're just sitting there among 520, 535, whatever it was, 535 in the House, I think, and everybody else is ahead of you, so to speak. Seniority is the rule, and you just have to stay with it until you're there twenty years now, it takes about twenty years to get any recognition at all or degree of responsibility.

KS: You served on the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce and the Committee on Veteran Affairs. That must have been great. Can you tell us about your experiences on these important committees?

HK: Veteran Affairs. Yes. Well, the Interstate and Foreign Commerce was the bigger of the two and in a sense, the most – now it depends on what you were – interests you had. If you were just totally interested in Veterans Affairs, of course then Veterans Affairs is number one. But I was interested, of course, in Veterans, I was a veteran, and I was interested in taking care of them in a reasonable way. Now I wasn't, even for veterans, I didn't vote to give them the moon with a fence around it, and a lot of them think that I was a good friend. Some of them, but most of them did, and I said, "Look, you know, we just did our duty. We're not entitled – they didn't give us the world with a fence around it. We just did what we should have done without any big rewards, if you want to know the truth of it." I said, "That's my philosophy, you don't like it –"

[Lunch announcement over the speaker]

HK: Okay. Is that going to get on our machine? [Both laugh]

KS: That will be okay.

HK: That will be interesting won't it? We can play that. So let's quit. That will give you a good quitting time. Anyway, that's about it. And, where were we, I was telling you about –

KS: About Veterans Affairs and the House Committee.

HK: Veterans Affairs, yeah, and then the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce. That was a very – that was next to – that was the second biggest and strongest and most influential committee in the Congress, in the House of Representatives, because it handled the major legislation on virtually everything in industry and commerce and foreign trade and international stuff and we just had a tremendous agenda of interesting things.

[Tape is stopped and then is turned back on]

HK: Anyway, Kathelene, I've got a daughter named Katherine, that's close.

KS: So you enjoyed both committees.

HK: I enjoyed both committees, now the Veterans Affairs, I just sort of gave it a lick and a promise because it didn't meet often, not like Commerce was meeting all the time, and we had a very heavy legislative agenda on that committee. Veterans Affairs didn't have a heavy – a heavy schedule of things, but it was important. I don't mean to minimize it. I enjoyed my service there. We had an ideal, a wonderful leader in – a Congressman from Texas, [Olin Earl] "Tiger" Teague. I don't know if you ever heard of Tiger.

KS: Sure, sure. I'm from Texas.

HK: You're from Texas? Tiger Teague, one of the best, and I always was proud of having served with him.

KS: Now when you retired from Congress, you became the Vice-President and Counsel of the Tobacco Institute of Washington. Can you tell me your advocacy for the tobacco farmers?

HK: Well, how I got into that was, it was about that time that these people, and I see one of them on TV even now days, it sort of disgusts me to see him still up there. But, they zeroed in on tobacco as a good political issue. And, of course, tobacco was the number one at that time, and I think it's still big, maybe other things have moved up the line a lot, but it was the biggest economic factor in all of North Carolina. You're not old enough to remember this, but we sold more tobacco, we

grew more tobacco, we had the best tobacco in the world. Everybody from South America to Europe, particularly in the Far East to some extent, was after American flue cured tobacco. It was always a seller. It was a historical crop, it was – it had a history like nothing else, really. For those who were interested and were anxious to learn about the history of things, it was North Carolina and the colonies' first money crop. It's where we made a living, my ancestors, my first ancestor with my name and my mothers came earlier I think, but my father's ancestors with my name came here in 1709 with Baron De Graffenried you've heard of the Baron, and settled – one of the first settlers in North Carolina. And my ancestors with this name were massacred by the Tuscarora Indians; except for one eight year old boy who escaped and got down in the woods and hid out and finally got out and was – and was got back to civilization if you can call it that in those days. See North Carolina was a total wilderness between – as the old saying goes, and I may have already quoted this to you, "A valley of humility between two islands of conceit;" Virginia and South Carolina. Well, anyway that's a good story I learned from my dear mother. But – she was a big Virginian; she never let me forget she was from Virginia. Anyway – or any of her other children. So anyway, that's about the story. I'm going to quit preaching.

KS: No you're not at all. Don't say that. So you were the Vice President and Counsel of the Tobacco Institute, for how long was that?

HK: That was about a year, year and a half.

KS: And then you came back to Greensboro?

HK: No, I stayed up there. See I was in Washington about twenty-seven years all together, but I was back and forth, we kept our house here and my wife, she never – well, she finally made some friends. At first, the only way I got here to go along with it – well, just a very quick glance at what happened. Earle Clements from Kentucky, former Senator and Governor of Kentucky, he had come to Washington in a political assignment of some kind. They gave him one of the, I guess it was, I forget the President who was in, he was a pal of the President at that time. He came to Washington and was up there and then Earle got a job with the tobacco people because then when the war against tobacco started – see, there wasn't any war against it initially, and then it started and then these do-gooders, all these crazies and do-gooders, it started as a good political issue when somebody, I forget now, I use to know the history of every inch of it and I'm sorry I can't quote it all know but anyway, it became a good political issue for a lot of particularly Northerners. They had to be against smoking and against tobacco and it kills everybody, you know, and all that stuff. You know how they used to – I don't know whether you're too young to remember that, but if you smoked, it would kill you and any decent person wouldn't dare smoke. It was almost that bad.

Well, I resented that and I resisted it and I grew up and my – you know and I used to make speeches about how I came from a long line of tobacco growers and tobacco salesmen and tobacco users, so don't tell me there's anything wrong with tobacco. Man, I was – well they picked it up and first thing I knew I was offered a job. Earle Clements out of Kentucky, and they felt sort of the same way out there that we felt here. They had burley out there and we had flue-cured here. So Earle and I got together and he – he had been the Senator and Governor and all that so he got me interested and talked me into staying over 'cause I was ready to go back and practice law, resume the practice of law, in Greensboro. And I promised Annie-Ben, my wife, that I'd do that and so we talked about it and talked about it and finally Earle said, "I want you to stay up here for three years, I'll give you a contract," he was running the tobacco lobbying thing up there. And he said, "I'll give you a contract for three years if you'll move up here, bring your family, bring your wife. Or you don't have to do that but you can do it if you want to; for just three years. So I talked to her and she said, "I don't want to go up there. I want to stay here." I said, "Well, just for three years." I said, "If you do that they're going to pay me all this money and you go up there." And I said, "I know some nice people up there and you can meet them and you'll have a good time." And so she done it and she met a couple of friends of ours up there, that I had made up there, and so began to like it. And so in about six months, she was a bigger advocate of living in Washington than I was. [Both laugh] And she enjoyed other people. She's got a lot of personality about her. That's her picture right there, you can see her picture.

KS: She's beautiful.

HK: Yes, she was a wonderful person.

KS: And her name is?

HK: Annie Ben, a double name. She's named for grandmother and grandfather. Annie, A-n-n-i-e, Ben, B-e-n.

KS: Is it hyphenated?

HK: No, just two words.

KS: That's a good Southern name.

HK: It really is. Beale was her maiden name B-e-a-l-e. She always insisted on putting the "e" on it. A bunch of people who worked in the mill had a name Beal, B-e-a-l, and she wanted to put the "e" on her name. Her daddy ran the biscuit company. He was the "biscuit man."

KS: Oh, the "biscuit man."

HK: The “biscuit man.”

KS: Now, so you raised your family in Washington during that time?

HK: No, here.

KS: You always had them here. Your children went to school here.

HK: Now, none of them ever left here until after they finished public schools here. Now the youngest child, Martha, is Martha – Martha’s up there on the right. She went to St. Mary’s. My mother had gone to St. Mary’s and so Martha – I wanted her to go to St. Mary’s. Now Kathy, the other one on the left up there, she went to Wake Forest all four years, but Martha, on the right went to St. Mary’s for two years and then she went to the University of Virginia and finished there after graduating up there. And both of them married and are married and had families of their own. My son went to Wake Forest, he followed in my steps.

KS: Now with all your work in Washington, were you still involved in Greensboro’s civic activities.

HK: To some extent.

KS: To some extent.

HK: But I couldn’t be as involved as I used to be. I maintained my membership in the Rotary Club, but I couldn’t go to the meetings and eat and do all that stuff. I’d go occasionally.

KS: Because you were back and forth, did you – what events happened in Greensboro do you remember like the 1960s sit-ins and the 1979 Nazi Klan shootout. Were you in town when all that was happening?

HK: I was in and out. I wasn’t directly involved in any of that particularly. Now in the shootouts, you know, I knew all about it, followed it. The sit-ins, I was still here then. In fact, I was the prosecuting attorney when they had the sit-ins I think, as I recall, but they never reached my court. I was in the upper court, Superior Court, and this – they were misdemeanor things. I tried the felony cases, the big cases. These were, I don’t remember, but I never did get directly involved in those, simply because of the levels of the courts.

KS: So who were they prosecuting?

HK: Let’s see how it all started. There were four black boys that went over there and sat down in the restaurant. Woolworth’s had a lunch counter over there and, of course, in those days segregation was the law of the land, and certainly the law in North Carolina in Greensboro. And they went over there to test it. They were

from A & T [North Carolina A & T], they go over there, I think it was A & T, they went over there and sat down and defied the officers to do anything about it, or the place, and the place, they finally served them, I think. I don't remember all the details. But they were arrested and they went to court and fiddled around with it and they tried it. I never did, as a lawyer, ever get directly involved in it 'cause my court was above the misdemeanor level. I tried only appeals and I don't know I forget now how it all happened; it was just a mess in a way.

KS: So what kind of issues do you see facing Greensboro these days? Or how has it changed since you've lived here?

HK: Well, there's been a big change. We're much more – well, I think that, you know, we're much more liberal now than we used to be. I think that's a fair statement. You know, we're much more forgiving. We had, like everybody in those days, they had their rules and they didn't think you were supposed to veer from or step over them. And we weren't as generous in forgiving people for violating traditions and things. You know, if you weren't supposed to eat here, you're not supposed to eat here. Now if you want to eat here, you eat where you want to eat. You know, it's – the whole attitude has changed. I see that and I'm – it's not all bad, it's really not all bad. It's taken a lot of freedom away from certain individuals and some of those freedoms were misused and – [Knock on door, tape turned off]

[Tape restarted]

KS: We were talking about how Greensboro has changed and what do you see as the future – do you have any ideas on the future of Greensboro?

HK: Oh, I can't prophesize the future as much as to be optimistic and – see I'm sort of in a difficulty to give you a real definitive answer because of my love and appreciation and life-long living here, it's really the only town I know and without Greensboro, it would be almost like no America because I was born – you know, grew up here and lived here and my family's lived here and I raised my family here and my friends, and went to school here. It's just something I just can't evaluate, other than to think that to me, it's permanent. It's something that I couldn't imagine not existing or not being here and being available and being a life for me, really. And to raise my children which is important to me. Now, some of them, only one of them is still here, but still, this is their home.

KS: This is home.

HK: This is home.

KS: Now, so what organizations or groups have you belonged to over the years in Greensboro?



HK: Now, let me think. I started out with – after I finished law school and came back here to practice, I guess the first civic club I joined was the Jaycees, the Junior Chamber of Commerce which is a very, and I guess it still is, a very active civic club, you know, and we had a lot of fun and great fellowship. And then I went into, I guess also a little later in the Rotary Club. Then I joined the Rotary Club. At one point I was in the Civitan Club.

KS: Civitan?

HK: Yes, it was very fine, very good civic club here, and I was in there for several years and I, for the life of me, I couldn't tell you why I dropped out of there, but I think it had something to do – maybe it was when I went to Congress or went somewhere, and left here temporarily. So I thought it best to drop out of the club, and that was it. And then I came back and joined – came back later and joined the Rotary Club.

KS: So, of course, I wanted to get to the Rotary Club. When did you join the Rotary Club?

HK: The Rotary Club I joined when I returned from, gosh where was I? I was off doing something up in Washington, I guess, 'because that's about the only other place I've lived other than here. I think it's probably about '49 or '50, maybe '52; somewhere along there.

KS: And tell me about your involvement with the Rotary Club.

HK: Well, I joined – after I joined, I tried to be as active as I could and I was practicing law and I may have been with Ed Stanley then, I can't remember. See, so much happened in all that time. Ed Stanley later became Judge Stanley. I always maintained my membership with the Rotary Club though. I was always very proud of my membership with the Rotary Club and in fact, I still pay my dues, if you can believe that. I don't go to any meetings. I would like to. Every once in a while I'll go when there's something going on. But I still pay my dues and I'm very proud of my membership and I said – and I think they made some kind of deal, gave me some kind of deal that I could maintain some kind of membership, I don't know what it is. But anyway, I'm real proud of that and always want to be identified with the Rotary Club. It's a place that's been good to me and I hope I've served them as best I could. So that's about the extent of it. When I lived up in Washington on sort of full-time bases, I was a member of the Rotary Club up there in D. C. I served on the Rotary up there, before I got in down here and Paul Howard, my old good friend whose son married my daughter; he talked to me one day and said, "You ought to be in the Rotary Club here." I said, "Well, nobody's asked me." And he said, "Well, I'm asking you right now." I said, "Well, you reckon you can get me passed?" He said, "Well, I'll try. I don't know, it'll be tough, but I'll try." [Both laugh] He got me in there and I've kept my membership, haven't been a very Rotarian though. Anyway, but I'm

proud of the membership. In fact, the other day, I got a call from somebody who said, "You haven't paid your dues." I said, "I haven't paid my dues? Did you send me a bill?" He said, "Yeah, but you didn't pay them." I said, "Well, I'll pay them. What is it?" He said, "No, I'm just kidding."

KS: Now, I was trying to think of anything we haven't covered, or is there anything else you'd like to talk about that I haven't thought of?

HK: I think we've covered a lot of stuff.

KS: I noticed, I'm looking at your books, that you still like to read about the war and that you're a historian at heart.

HK: Yes, I'm a devotee of historical – and they're just a few books I've brought up here. I forget how many, I've got two or three thousand books at home; a real library if you can call it that. At one time, during the war, I've mentioned that, not during the war but later in the late, late nineties I guess, but during the celebration of the bicentennial they put out a series of one hundred books, leather-bound, and I subscribed and bought all hundred of them. Plus, then I've got a lot of history books and war books and I don't know, any time you want to look at them or read any of them, they're here. And, you know, the series here and those books and those books, and then they're down there too and then I've got – I had, now I given my children, trying to get rid of a lot of stuff over at my house and they have, thank goodness, taken some of them, a good many of them. There was one volume I was looking for the other day, I can't find. It was one I hate to lose. I don't know what happened to it. It's got to be here somewhere though, but a lot of those books, now I don't know why I sort of fell in love with leather-bound books.

KS: They're wonderful.

HK: Because they are permanent. I mean, you know, they don't – they don't deteriorate on you much. And most of those are leather-bound over there, I think. You're welcome to look at anything I've got, or borrow it if you want to.

KS: You're so nice, thank you.

HK: I'm not going to give them away, but –

KS: Is there anything else that you can think of that we've forgotten to talk about?

HK: I can't think of anything. We've talked about more than you can handle.

KS: I don't think so.

HK: I think that's true.

KS: Well, I really appreciate you agreeing to do this interview Mr. Kornegay. Thank you so much.

HK: Well, I'm honored that you've come over and spent this time with me, and I'm going to take you to lunch now.

KS: Okay, I'll take you up on that, we'll end this interview. Thank you so much.

HK: All right. Bye-bye. Thank you a million! You are a nice interviewer, and being an interviewee under your guidance and direction, I hope I've done an acceptable job.

KS: You did an exceptional job. Thank you very much.

HK: Oh no, acceptable, not exceptional. [Both laugh]

[End of interview]

[End of Tape 1, Side B]