INTERVIEWERS: McKenzie Butler, Jessi Scott, Samantha Smith
INTERVIEWEE: Ted Ellett
SUBJECT: Oral History

McKenzie Butler: Can you tell me about your childhood-where you grew up, where you were educated, just a little bit about your life?

TED ELLETT: Yes. I was born in Whitman, Georgia, which is a little tiny town, population about 5,000, and it hasn't grown since; and went to public schools there. Had a happy childhood-and, you know, a small town like that, everybody knows you, so if you misbehave it gets to your parents before you do, and I spent. . .all the time that I wasn't in school I spent half of it in a tree and the other half in a water hole somewhere. I loved to swim and loved to climb trees, and we had a wonderful group of friends, and the town was so small I could ride my bike or go on roller skates anywhere I wanted to. . .and graduated from the high school there. All of it was just public schools, and we just had a wonderful time growing up. My family was a very happy family. I was fortunate to have parents who. . .I guess I thought they were doing it just because they wanted to, but I'm sure that they planned all those good times. I had one older sister who is six years older than I, and she was always my role model, but we weren't competitive because she was enough older than I that I didn't try to beat her into things. We didn't want the same boyfriends. . .and so we just had a wonderful time; and I went to Hollins in Virginia. I had never been to Virginia but there was a teacher who did not teach me but I knew her real well, and she was a graduate of Hollins. And she didn't try to get me to go to Hollins, but I just like the way she did; you know, she was just a nice person, and so I wrote for catalogs and information, and back in those days if a person could pay for their tuition. . .they didn't put you through all the tests, and I didn't know what an SAT was, and so I made my decision when I was a junior in high school to go to Hollins, and of course all the transportation, more than fifty miles, was by train, and so I rode to Hollins in September and came home for Christmas, and went back and came home again at the end of the year. We didn't know what going off for weekends was. You were there and you stayed, but I loved Hollins, and just ate up everything that they had and offered, and the Shenandoah Valley, I still am in love with it. It's a beautiful section of the country. I grew up in flat land and went to school in the mountains, which I adored.

McKenzie Butler: What year did you graduate from Hollins?

TED ELLETT: I graduate from Hollins, majored in zoology, and was taking a pre-med. I thought that might be what I'd want, but the Depression happened the fall of my sophomore year, and I knew I couldn't ask my dad for five more years of schools, so I had a friend whose father was the chairman of trustees at Limestone College, and I was real good at sports. I just enjoyed all of them, and I was pretty good at them, and I had two friends who lived in Macon, Georgia who were students at Limestone, and between the three of them I think they got through to the president to talk with me about coming to Limestone. Limestone had a nice, very well-planned and –constructed gymnasium with

all the things you would expect, and nobody to teach. They couldn't pay anybody, and so we got together and he said, "I would like to have you come teach physical education here but I don't have any money." The college was just living on a thread, just barely holding things together, and Dr. Danberry said, "If you don't have anything that you want to do by the middle of the summer, let me know and we'll work out something." So I had an opportunity to teach just public schools in Florida, where my sister and her husband lived but I did not want to teach. I had avoided education courses like the plague; had never taken one, and so I definitely did not want to teach public schools, and so I wrote Dr. Danberry that I had an opportunity but I did not want it, and so he offered me a job that didn't pay much money, and I had full run of the planning and building up the department, and he was very cooperative. He said the one thing wrong with me was every time I asked for something and got it, then I had something else to ask for, and in the years that I was there I was. . .I taught at Limestone for eight years, and we built up a very good department and ended up, my last year there, we had a major in it, and I had hired a couple of people to be on the faculty to help me. But working with college students I just loved. That was my niche. And I don't regret not going on in medicine, because I found where I really loved to be. And then a person who was a Furman graduate-woman's college graduate-was on the faculty the year I went to Limestone.

McKenzie Butler: What year was that, when you went to Limestone?

TED ELLETT: I was there from 1933 to '40, and this person who was a graduate of the woman's college was on the faculty at Limestone and we were very good friends. She was a good bit older than I, and after a couple of years she came back to Furman as Registrar of the woman's college, and she intervened; just determined that they were going to get me to come to the woman's college to teach physical education, and I came over here and the pool was about a third the size of this living room. It was a tiny little pool in a dark basement room, and the place where you would do any activities had huge square pillars all around it, so there was no way to do anything, and Furman was very, very Baptist at the time and they didn't want me to offer any courses that had the name "dance" in it, and I taught modern dance and tap dance and all that kind of stuff, and I just turned them down, and they offered. . .they kept on for about three times trying to get me to come to the woman's college, and I just said I can't do it. Then Eula [Barton] called me one day and said the dean had had a very serious heart attack, would I be interested in going into the deans. . .and they were hoping that she would recover, and so I had gone into physical education without having any professional training, but in the summers I had gone to Columbia and gotten a master's in physical ed, so I had the professional training by the time I left, but I had never had any professional training in deans work, so I said, "Eula, if you'll let me take the next year and go back and get another degree. . ." or, I really matriculated for a doctorate, but when I came to Furman, fell in love with Carlyle and all, I didn't pursue the doctorate there, but I went back to Columbia, and that's when I was there when Pearl Harbor came, and so I got the courses similar to a master's, only they would go toward a doctorate, and came to Furman, and by that time all the men on the men's campus had gone to war, and they had all this empty space, and before I came they asked if I would object living on the men's campus, and they turned one of the old dormitories into a woman's dormitory and they redid it from a

drab old worn out dormitory, they painted and wallpapered and new furniture and a grand piano and all the things that you would want, so I lived the first year on the men's campus, which was lots of fun, and we made a lot of adaptations for the war, and during that year the largest of the men's dormitories was given over to, I think they called the group V 12. It was the Navy group of cadets, and they lived there, and so they slowly took over most all the things at Furman, and we would go back and forth to the woman's college campus and we would spend the night in the dormitory on the men's campus, and they wanted us to get up at something like 7:30 or a quarter of eight to go to the woman's college campus for breakfast, and the girls, including the dean, decided that we would rather do something on our own, so every night they would send sweet rolls and all the kind of breakfast stuff, and two girls would wake up at about 5:30, plug in a huge coffee urn. We had juices that were sent over from the woman's college, and all the sweet rolls and stuff, so we had our breakfast there in the dormitory when you wanted to get up, which was wonderful, and we just loved that. That went on for about the last four or five months of the school year, and then the second year the men took over completely, the Army cadets, and I moved back and lived on the woman's college campus.

Samantha Smith: What was the first year you were there at Furman?

TED ELLETT: The first year I was at Furman I lived on the men's campus, and the second year, and Carlyle had gone into war by that time. He left in about the first of January.

Samantha Smith: Of nineteen-forty. . ?

TED ELLETT: Nineteen forty, the fall of '41, and then he went into the Army in January of '42.

McKenzie Butler: So had you just met him when he went off to war?

TED ELLETT: I met him the first day that I moved on the men's campus. I met him in front of the old administration building, which was an old residence, used to be, and that was the administration building, and we were outside, and a friend who still lives here in Greenville introduced us, and it didn't take long for Carlyle and me to know that there was something percolating there, and within a couple of months we knew that whenever the Army would let him be free enough, we did not want to get married until he had his commission, and when he finished officer candidate school in the summer of forty-four, he sent me a, I think it was a Western Union telegram. The means of communications are so old-fashioned, I just can't believe. . .he said, "I will graduate" because he was not a military person, and there were one or two people, like the main sergeant, Carlyle didn't like him and he didn't like Carlyle, so Carlyle wasn't sure that he would get out of officer candidate school, but he did, and he sent me this telegram and said, "I will graduate from officer candidate school on such-and-such a day. May I get a train to Quitman? Arrive there on Friday night. We can be married on Sunday, have a honeymoon, go back by his hometown in Virginia, and go back to Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indianapolis in ten days." And so we did, and things were buzzing, and so we were married in August of

1944, and he was stationed at Fort Benjamin Harrison for about six or seven months, teaching in the finance school, and then was sent overseas and went to the worst place on the whole globe. It was a little, a crude island down in the middle of those thousand Philippine islands, and they had just had an extremely important but very bloody naval battle on that island when he got there.

McKenzie Butler: What was the name of the island?

TED ELLETT: Leyte.

McKenzie Butler: The Leyte Gulf?

TED ELLETT: Yes.

McKenzie Butler: We studied about that in our history class.

TED ELLETT: Oh. Well, back in those days that was native. That was crude living, and he was on Leyte. . .I guess less than a year and was sent for about five weeks to Australia, which was wonderful. He just gloried in that, and then sent back to Manila, which was not too good. It was after the bad time in Manila, and we were definitely winning the war by that time, and he worked in a bank building. The finance offices were in an old bank building and the building had been knocked a little bit sideways by the bombing, and the door of the office would not stay open, and the doorstop was a gold bouillon brick that was so heavy nobody could pick it up, and it had the stamp on it, and everybody knew that it could be traced, so nobody ever thought about stealing it, and there the doorstop was a brick of solid gold.

Jessi Scott: Can you tell us a little bit about your husband's early life and his education?

TED ELLETT: Well, he grew up in a town smaller than mine. It was the headquarters town of the Pocahontas Fuel Company, and it was there because there was a vein of coal. It was the largest vein of coal that the mine had discovered, and his father had a department store, and that is not a Macy's or fancy one. It was one where they sold half-soles for shoes and they sold diamonds for the. . .they had food, meats, vegetables, shoes, clothes, hardware, I mean, they had everything. It was about three floors of everything that anybody could use, and of course most of the population were miners. There was a nice group of people who were the administration of the fuel company, and I went up and we stopped and I met the family for the first time as we were ending our honeymoon, and it's a wonderful little town, but just as un-fancy as you ever would find, and my husband was the tenth of twelve children. I'm glad that his parent did not know anything about birth control because he would never have gotten here, but all twelve of them went to college, and they were one of the important, leading families in the little town, and there wasn't room enough for them to do much in Pocahontas, because it could not grow because there were mountains on every side and the coal company would send hundreds of empty coal cars, they had a huge yard where the coal cars would be parked. They'd fill them with coal, and they would head them out toward the coast, and I don't think the

train had to put on the accelerator the whole way of the coast. The grade for the railroad went down the whole way, and all full of coal, that was cheap transportation to get the coal to the coast, because they were as far west as you can get in Virginia, just going from the little town. . .Bluefield was mainly in Virginia. . .no, mainly in West Virginia, but a little part of it was in West Virginia, and going just the nine miles from Bluefield to Pocahontas, you crossed the Virginia-West Virginia line about eight times. It just wound back and forth across the state line. A very interesting place. Most of us grew up in small towns and had great growing up times.

Jessi Scott: What about his education?

TED ELLETT: His education was in the schools at Pocahontas, and he. . .they made him skip grades because Carlyle was really one of the most highly intelligent men I've ever known. He could get a book and glance at a page and tell you what was on that page. He would read a book by flipping pages and just hesitating and flip the page. . .and before the war he had a wonderful sense of humor and was just cute as he could be, and the war took a terrible toll on his emotions and his nervous system, but he loved teaching. When he crossed the threshold of his classroom he was in his heaven, and he was a very effective. . .everywhere I go I run into students who he has taught, and when he was in Manila he met several of his former students on the main street of Manila. You know, things like that just came up. Furman was the right place for both of us.

Jessi Scott: When did he come to Furman? What year?

TED ELLETT: He came in 1938 from his Brookings. . .one year, I think he went from Brookings to Richmond and taught for one year, and then Dean Daniels from Furman was looking for an economics man and he found Carlyle and brought him to Furman in 1938. We both graduated from college in 1932.

Samantha Smith: I was wondering. . .when he was in the service, you were at Furman, right? Teaching?

TED ELLETT: When he went into the service I was at Furman. When he got his commission we were married and we went to Indianapolis, where Fort Benjamin Harrison was, and we lived in Indianapolis for six or seven months when he was not sent overseas.

Samantha Smith: Okay, so when he was overseas what did you do?

TED ELLETT: Then I went back and spent the year and a half with my mother. I lost my father just a few months before we were married and so she and I were both just delighted, and when I went back to Whitman the superintendent of the schools asked me if I would do some substitute teaching and the second year I was hired full time to teach history, which I had a minor in at Hollings, and I filled all the requirements except I did not have any courses in education, and to get a master's from teacher's college at Columbia, you had to have. . .I think you were supposed to have eight credits in

education, and I talked them into letting me do it with four, and I took one course-it was this old comprehensive course, as little as I could get by with, and I didn't object teaching history in high school but I really didn't love it like college. It was a whole different tack. So when he came home I was very happy not to do that anymore. An interesting thing about Carlyle coming home; he had been overseas and the war was over; we had won and they had a lot of things that they wanted Carlyle to do, one of which was to go around in a little plane, island hopping, and verify the payment of the natives who had helped us during the war, and Carlyle said it was as interesting a project as he has ever done, because he had time to come home. He had met all the requirements to be sent back home, but he was real good at this. He would go to an island and the native would be paid by a piece of a banana leaf and would have the thumbprint of the chieftan, and that was his signature, and Carlyle had to verify all these benefits that the natives would get, and of course he said it really was very interesting but he wanted mainly to come home, but they weren't beginning to let him come home, and a Georgia senator, Senator George, who lived in Vienna, Georgia, was a friend of my family, and I think he and my mother probably had dated when they were young, and I wrote him a letter and I said, "Dear Senator George, I am a citizen of Greenville, South Carolina now, but I still feel like you're my senator." I laid it on thick, and I told him our situation, that Carlyle had met all the requirements and had more points to come home but they had him on this job that he was enjoying and was good at, but if he came back to Furman he needed to get here in September to begin the year. And I said, "If you know any way to help get him home, we would be most appreciative." And about three weeks later I had a telephone call and Carlyle was in Houston, Texas. He said he came home from his trip one day and had a note there: "Pack your duds and be at the airport the next morning" and they sent him home just like that, and I never did see Senator George after that but I sure did thank him, and he must have pulled the right strings, and neither one of us knew. . .Carlyle said he didn't know why he was being sent home. He was extremely happy but he didn't know why. But we got back to Furman in time for it to open in September and we took the last few weeks of that summer and went around to visit all of his brothers and sisters, and they were scattered all over Ohio and Virginia. . .from the mountains to the beach, and we had a visit with every one of them and their families, and then got back to Furman in time to start the school, and lived. . .there were no apartments, there were just no accommodations, and the first, about the first three or four months, all of the fall, the faculty members who came back that same year from the war, we had one room in the building that was the infirmary, and we had quite a good neighborhood on that floor of the infirmary to get to know each other, and then Furman brought prefabs on a flatbed frock from Norfolk, Virginia from the navy yard there, and brought them down, just pieces of plywood like a deck of cards, and they put up these prefabs, and we thought that was a castle. We were so happy to have them. You could look through the cracks in the floor and see the grass underneath, but we loved it, and we lived in the prefab less than a year; we found a duplex not far away, and lived there for about another year, or a little over a year, and during that year we bought this lot and built our home, which was not far away from the men's campus, and we thought that's where he was going to be, and it was less than a year, I think, that Furman decided to move where we are now, and I must admit Carlyle and I both loved that old campus. That's where we had fallen in love, that's where we'd chaperoned dances, and then such a part of the college, but we were

wrong. We would never have had the school that we have if we'd stayed downtown. Furman owned a lot of land on that side of town, but never could have had the school that we have now, which we both loved. I know I've rambled.

Samantha Smith: No, it's been wonderful. This is so interesting to us.

TED ELLETT: Our first son was born while we lived in the prefab, in the duplex, and then when we moved out here we had a second son, and I've been here ever since. I watched almost every nail go into this house, and there's not one concrete block in the whole house. I have a workman who does odd jobs for me and he just cannot get over the material that went into this house. They didn't take any shortcuts. It's not a mansion but we sure did love it.

Jessi Scott: How long was your husband at Furman when he came back?

TED ELLETT: He was at Furman for thirty-eight years, from 1938 to 1977; retired in 1977 and by that time his health was really going down pretty fast, so when he had a sixty-fifth birthday he retired.

Samantha Smith: When you guys came back to Furman after the war, did you notice any big changes in student attitudes and faculty?

TED ELLETT: Yes, there were a lot of them. Those years right after the war, the men students particularly. . .there were some women students but, you know, compared to, there were very few women who were really in service, and the men's campus. . .and we had a whole field of prefabs for students, not only for faculty but for students, too, and Carlyle said that was the most rewarding two or three years, because those men came back from the war, they weren't young, had never taken on responsibilities, so these men, many of them were married and some of them had families. A lot of them had families by that time. They knew what they wanted, they were motivated to study, and he said that was really a rewarding time to teach.

Samantha Smith: During that time did you still keep in close contact with the women's college?

TED ELLETT: I've always kept in contact. I did not return to the faculty. Every now and then I would teach one course. I never taught physical education. I didn't go to that little tiny swimming pool in that room full of supports, but I taught two or three semesters, just one course, and when our children were born I did not teach after that. I was just a housewife and a mother.

McKenzie Butler: I was going to ask you about, when Samantha was looking at some of the older yearbooks from the women's college, and she noticed that in 1944, the yearbook was done by the women's college. So we were wondering since a lot of the men were off at war, did the women's college take responsibility for the yearbook during that year?

TED ELLETT: That's right.

McKenzie Butler: Okay, so did a lot of the women, did you notice at the women's college, a lot of the women take over a lot of the responsibilities that the men would have had at Furman and at the Greenville Women's College after the men left?

TED ELLETT: They certainly did. I have a couple who are very, very good friends of mine and it had to be the year after the men came back. He was president of the men's student government and she was president of the women's student government, and those were the years when I knew a lot of the students. Well, I really knew most of them when I, before I was married and lived on the two campuses. There were very few students I didn't know back in those times. They didn't run off on weekends either; you know, you didn't have any money. You did things on campus that were fun and you just didn't think about taking a long weekend and going to the coast. There were no planes. The fastest travel was an automobile that doesn't go as fast as the ones now, and the women did take over, and they were very capable and they did a very good job. And the buses that took us between the two campuses were worn out. Oh, those buses, there was a whole life around those buses, whether they would make the trip from the men's campus to the women's campus and not break down halfway, which every now and then they did, and then when we added the new campus, and for one or maybe two years we had some students on the new campus, students on the women's campus, and students on the men's campus, and we were running three groups of people, and that took a lot of planning and everybody had the jitters.

Samantha Smith: I guess so. Did you and your husband help at all with that or. ..?

TED ELLETT: No, that was not my responsibility. See, the new campus was not started until after the war was over and we were back, and all settled.

Jessi Scott: What about contributing to the war effort? I had read that a lot of students, or women, made bandages and sold war bonds. Do you remember anything about that aspect?

TED ELLETT: About the women doing what now?

Jessi Scott: About contributing to the war effort?

TED ELLETT: Oh. Yes, a few of our women students went into the service. One of the students who was in the dormitory on the men's campus, Lynn Eyric, went into the women's Marines, and we had several women who went into jobs that would not have been open to women. I remember one, Mabel. . .what was her last name? Anyway, she got a very good job with the Liberty Mutual Insurance Company that was really a surprise to everyone, because it's a job that women just hadn't had before, and the old picture of the woman with her biceps like this. . .

Jessie Scott: Rosie the Riveter?

TED ELLETT: It was all over. . .the poster girl for the war. Women went into jobs that they had never done before: factory jobs, maintenance jobs. . .which the college women didn't do many of the maintenance jobs but women really learned that they could do almost anything that was necessary, and we were proud of it.

Samantha Smith: Such a fascinating time, I think.

TED ELLETT: Have any more questions?

Samantha Smith: Of course, lots!

TED ELLETT: I can read without glasses but I read faster with them.

Samantha Smith: Let's see, could you tell us a little bit about President Plyler, the flight programs that he brought in, and I know he did a lot. . .

TED ELLETT: You know, down on the men's campus Bea and John Plyler, of course I didn't call them Bea and John in those days. Bea and I are the same age and we're still very, very close friends, but they lived in a nice old home, turn of the century wraparound porch, and when Furman went on vacation they cut off the heat because all the homes and the prefabs and everything had free water and free electricity form the Furman plant, and Bea said she can remember every now and then standing at the stove with an umbrella over her head, with the rain coming down, and sometimes they didn't have any heat. We always had water. Down in our prefab, we lived down on the banks of the Reedy where the Governor's School is now, and Carlyle had a garden, and it was in six feet of leaf mold, and oh, those tomatoes outgrew everything. He would get a stepladder to pick his tomatoes, and John Plyler was quite a gardener, and. . .well, I won't say something that I just thought of, but it would be better not to be in the records, but he would plant the seeds and he would give the little seedlings to everybody who wanted to plant them in a garden, and so we had a supply of tomato plants, and in that good rich soil they just outgrew themselves, and Carlyle would come home for lunch because we were right on campus, and he would take a dishpan-this was back in the days when you sometimes washed dishes in a dishpan-and he would pick half a bushel of tomatoes just on his lunch hour, and I had so many tomatoes, we gave them away**,** our friends almost hated to see us coming because we had tomatoes. I wish I had some friends like that now, but I told him, I said, "Carlyle, if you bring another bunch of those tomatoes in this house I'm going to leave." And I didn't mean permanently, I was just going to leave. He came in and had lunch, and he could not stand it. Those tomatoes were just growing on the bushes, and I went to a movie and left him at home, and when I came home he had made homemade tomato juice, and I was so proud of him. Dr. Plyler was a wonderful president and he worked under a lot of very difficult situations. Before we were married, the first year before Carlyle was drafted, we chaperoned every dance that they had, connected with the college, and an interesting thing: of course Furman, you know, was very Baptist, and run with tight reins by some of the Baptist organizations, and it was all

right for the students to go to a dance, but the fraternities could not sponsor the dances. The alumni who lived in Greenville, of the fraternity would sponsor the dance, and then, of course, the students did all the work of putting it on and they were the ones who were there, and I remember Dr. Plyler calling me into his office one day, and he said, "Miss Tidwell, I am sorry to ask you this, but it's perfectly all right for you and Dr. Ellett to chaperone dances, but I'm going to have to ask you not to dance**."** I was shocked. I couldn't believe it, and I said, "Dr. Plyler, you know, I believe if it's all right to have a dance but the chaperone can't dance, I will stop chaperoning" and we got through it, and that one little tiny incident happening to me, I'm sure that John Plyler had to make a lot of decisions that maybe he didn't quite approve of, but he had a vision for the school, and he came under some not very happy situations, sort of disagreements between the strict Baptist people and the ones who wanted to go forward, and he was able to handle those beautifully, and not let Furman be just a little strict, no fun school; and then, of course, he was one of the main people who envisioned the new campus, and everybody thought Furman had lost it's mind when they bought 11,000 acres of land ten miles out of Greenville, or eight miles out of Greenville, and said, "We're going to build a new campus." People really thought he was a little touched. And there's not a place on that campus that doesn't have Bea Plyler's fingerprint on it. She, I'm sure, made a lot of right comments, wouldn't it be nice to have such-and-such, and the elegance and the type of buildings that we had, probably the fountains and the plantings, and you know Furman had a landscape, a British landscape architect come over and live in Greenville for over a year, and planted the campus before they built a building.

Jessi Scott: Do you remember the pre-flight program at all during the war?

TED ELLETT: The program. . .

McKenzie Butler: The pre-flight program, when the soldiers were trained at the airport, they also lived on the men's campus. We had read that during the war President Plyler had brought in these air programs to raise money for the school since a lot of the men were gone fighting.

TED ELLETT: You mean the Cadets. I think every man's college in the whole country was probably assigned a group of cadets, because the men's campuses were left without men. I mean, they were all. . .the pre-meds and the theology students were about the only ones who were not drafted.

Samantha Smith: So what did the Cadets do on campus?

TED ELLETT: They lived on the campus, they ate in the dining halls, they took courses. The faculty members taught economics or taught math, taught science, and the cadets got a basic college education before they were sent to Donaldson or to Air Force bases around anywhere.

Samantha Smith: Okay, that helps.

TED ELLETT: And they trimmed those courses with the focus on military studies, and they'd teach them to fly. And another contingent we had at Furman were glider pilots. You know, the gliders that had no motors and they would be towed up and then cut loose? And we had a fairly big contingent of glider pilots, and they were all a nice group of men. I don't remember any bad problems with them.

McKenzie Butler: The women generally welcomed them onto the campus-they enjoyed having them there, especially with all of the men being gone?

TED ELLETT: Yes, and most of them were very, they were very happy to be at Furman instead of on the front line in Europe or the Pacific. Most of them ended up on the war lines, but they responded, they were a very nice cut of young men, and I remember the glider pilots, in my memory they were a little bit older than the cadets who were just going into their other studies.

McKenzie Butler: I had a question about, during the war, what kind of materials did the students and faculty not have as a result of the war? I know a lot of things were rationed. What kind of school supplies or little things that we don't really appreciate. . .

TED ELLETT: Everything was rationed. Oh, everything was rationed.

McKenzie Butler: What were some of the biggest things that you remember that really affected daily life?

TED ELLETT: You know, I cannot remember really being bereft of anything. Everybody just accepted what there was. You had little stamps for gas and you had stamps for meat and you had stamps for sugar and stamps for shoes. There was hardly anything that wasn't rationed, and there were a lot of things that did not come in certain types of packages, the most minor one being the tinfoil around sticks of chewing gum. They couldn't have the little aluminum foil because that was necessary to the war effort.

McKenzie Butler: Is there anything. . .I know you said everyone accepted not having certain things like the aluminum for your gum, but is there anything in particular that you missed the most, or that women in general missed the most?

TED ELLETT: You know, at the time we would probably have said we would love to have a nice filet, and we knew we weren't going to get it, but the dietitian at the woman's college and Sarge, who was head of the dining hall at Furman, they managed to have very good meals, and we didn't have saccharin and Splenda and all the sugar substitutes, but when you didn't have certain things you just planned around them, without them. And I don't think we really suffered over anything except the loss of lives. That was the only thing that was really severe.

Samantha Smith: When everyone started. . .after the war, when the soldiers came back, I know you said that Mr. Ellett enjoyed teaching during those years that it was really

rewarding? Do you think overall that was kind of a sentiment that was on campus, that people were just happy to get back to normal life?

TED ELLETT: Oh, definitely. Everybody was happy to be at home and not have war going on. The hardest thing during the war was facing the fact that on all fronts, all of Europe and all of the Pacific, they didn't know what was going to happen. It was much worse than the terrorists of today. You don't know when they're going to strike but this was a daily thing on a huge scale.

McKenzie Butler: I've got a quick question about, I was thinking about, how did you hear about the things that were going on in the war?

TED ELLETT: That's a good question, because communications were not like they are today. Sometimes it took a little while for news to get from Europe to here, and I know Carlyle and I, I think we wrote letters every single day to each other, but sometimes it would take a long time for them to reach their destination. Our first anniversary, he was in the Philippines, and I made a little tiny, miniature wedding cake, and found a little miniature bride and groom, and made it all up as fancy as I could. I didn't go to a professional for that wedding cake, and sent it to him, and when it arrived I think it was completely covered with mold, but that was all right. He knew what it was, he didn't have to eat it, and we still have that little miniature bride and groom that went over there to him, and when he was overseas I think I was limited to one box a month to send him things, and the things that he wanted-he wanted cigarettes; don't put this in the Furman records, he wanted a little bit of liquor and you weren't supposed to send that through the mail at all, but every now and then we'd stick little mini-bottles, as much as you could get into a box and have them not tear it up; and candy bars and, you know, just little incidentals like that were the main things that he wanted that they couldn't get over there. I'd forgotten all about those boxes. I sent one every time I was allowed to send it, and it all went through the APO; you know, I didn't know where he was specifically, so you'd have to send it through the APO-now what does that stand for? Army Post Office? But everything went to a big center, and you had certain code letters or numbers and that would send it to wherever the individuals were.

McKenzie Butler: Did you have a general idea of what area Dr. Ellett was in when he was away. . .

TED ELLETT: You know, I remember one letter that he sent while he was on the boat; see, they didn't have airplanes that would take them over there, they had to go on troop ships, and he, the officers censored themselves, but occasionally I think they were censored so they were very strict in not saying where you are. He couldn't say our boat docked near Iwo Jima or near Guam or something like that. You didn't mention any names of places, but I remember Carlyle saying that they had anchored off of a little island, and some of the natives came out in little boats with things (they) wanted to sell or show or something, and he was so in hopes that I would know that it was off of Guam-you know, I wasn't familiar with what they had on the islands or what the people looked like, but every now and then he would describe the looks of a person, but he couldn't say

where they were, and then it was some time later that he could tell me that they were on Leyte, and of course when he went to Australia, that was just good, high living and they lived in quarters and they could go out for dinner and order prawns and, oh, that was just a wonderful recreation. But in the Philippine Islands they lived in a tent that is a big square with, I guess it was some sort of wood that came up three to five feet, and then the canvas, four-sided pyramid-type roof to it, and they went through, oh, they don't call them hurricanes in the Pacific, what is it?

Samantha Smith: Typhoons?

TED ELLETT: Yeah, typhoons. They had typhoons that came through there, and he could tell us about the weather.

Jessi Scott: I know you mentioned this before when we weren't recording, but can you tell us a little bit about what happened to him after basic training? I found that to be really interesting-after the finance school? Can you tell us a little bit more about that?

TED ELLETT: After what kind of training?

Jessi Scott: After his basic training, when he aced the test.

TED ELLETT: Oh, he took those tests even before basic training. They came immediately upon checking in at Fort Jackson. I think that's the first thing they did. They probably let them go to the bathroom before, but they went for tests first thing.

McKenzie Butler: Where was Fort Jackson? What state was Fort Jackson in?

TED ELLETT: It's near Columbia, and it. . .they talk about closing Fort Jackson, but I think it's still in active duty, and they have thousands and thousands of acres still considered Fort Jackson. I know there's one route that I go to the beach that you go down to Columbia and get on I-20 and then you cut across and you go a little, sort of a frontage road that goes for miles, and Fort Jackson is everything to the right from there into the heart of the city almost. Columbia was, of course, a very, very populated military city. Greenville had. . .we felt it, but it was nothing like Columbia with Fort Jackson.

Samantha Smith: You also said that you. . .people had asked you to join the WAVES. Is that right? Could you maybe tell us again about that? I know that you talked about it before we were in. . .

TED ELLETT: I never considered it. I did not want anything to do with a uniform except the man who was in it. You know, I hate to say this. I think that World War II was necessary because I think there was no way to get around Hitler's power without war. I'm sort of like thinking there's a little bit of good even in the worst person. There's bound to be some way that you can avoid a war, but sometimes it's almost impossible. If people had any sense they would learn how to live with each other. And

you know when I was young I can remember World War I. See, I was born before World War I, and I had two first cousins who were my oldest first cousins, and they were in their twenties when I was born, and they were both in World War I, and of course all of our family kept up with everything that was going on, so we were very conscious of it, and one of the earliest memories that I have in the little town where we lived, every now and then you would have a one ring circus come to the town, and the circus animals sometimes were brought in by rail and sometimes they were brought in by foot and wagon to the one little place where this tiny little circus was, and the circus animals and people and all were coming on the street that was behind our street, just one block behind us, and being brought up in a small Southern town, I had a little black nurse who stayed with me and she could run faster than my mother, I think, and keep up with me, but almost every child had a little nurse, and I saw this batch of animals coming down and I started just flying, running down to get closer to it, and tripped, and cut my hand, and that scar right there came from falling on a broken bottle. I tripped and fell and almost cut off my thumb, and the nurse, not much older. . .well, she was a good bit older than I, but I mean she was probably a young teen or pre-teen, and of course we made it back to the house as fast as possible, and I was holding my hand, and the little dress that I had on was blue and white checked, and the collar or something had little lace on it, and when I got home there was a huge circle of blood right in the front, and I can remember telling my mother, red, white and blue. I thought I was being very patriotic, and she called the family doctor and he came to the house. We set up an ironing board near a doorway from my mother's and father's bedroom, that opened onto a little side porch-one of these porches that, you don't build houses that way now, and they put me on the ironing board and he gave me chloroform; they didn't have anesthesia that you could control like they do now, and he gave me some chloroform to knock me out so he could stitch that thing up, and he came back in two or three weeks to take the stitches out, and I wouldn't let him take the stitches out until he gave me some of that "sweet-smelling stuff." But, oh, the technology of living today and the technology that we didn't have back then is just unbelievable.

Samantha Smith: I have one real quick question. You said that your cousins fought in World War I?

TED ELLETT: Yes.

Samantha Smith: Did they fight in World War II also?

TED ELLETT: No, they did not. They were too old to fight in World War II, but they were old men by that time. In 1916 to '18, they were just in their young twenties, and thirty years, twenty-five or thirty years later they were out of the serving in war. I guess people who were professional military people served in both wars, but they did not stay in the military. They were both officers. One was a dentist and one was just a happy-go-lucky captain in the trenches, and he was a prisoner of war just before the war was over, so he was not in the prison very long, but he was out in the open warfare, and making long-distance calls was a very important thing, and everybody was very quiet when anybody was talking long-distance, and his mother and father lived in Atlanta, where my

father grew up, and I can remember frequent telephone calls to Atlanta to find out what the news from him was.

McKenzie Butler: I have another question: I know when we had talked on the phone you had said that you were at the woman's college but then when you married Dr. Ellett you didn't have that position anymore because you couldn't be married. Can you explain a little bit about that? When you're. . .how the deans of the women's college, how you can't be married if you're the dean of the women's college?

TED ELLETT: Do you know, I thought at the time that is the craziest thing. What does marriage do to a person that makes her ineligible to hold a job? But that was an accepted pattern almost everywhere, and as I would think back on it, after the shock of saying. . .oh, I can remember ????? Barton, when we went over to have a conference with John Plyler, where I would be the dean instead of acting dean, and I told her that Carlyle and I were planning to be married this summer if he got his commission, and she said, "Oh, that changes things. We can't have a married dean in a. . ." What am I going to do? To be ineligible for a job, I'm not going to change, but thinking back on it, Furman never had an unmarried dean of women. Now they had married deans of men, and then when Title Nine came across you couldn't have a dean of women and men, you just had dean of students or whatever their titles are now, but you could not designate the sex after Title Nine, but Furman never had a married dean of women in all of its history. They had married deans of men. It was perfectly all right. It was a mans world more than it is now. Still is to a certain extent, but we have a lot more freedom to choose what we want to do and where we want to go.

Samantha Smith: Could you tell us one more time the years that you were acting dean?

TED ELLETT: I was acting dean from the fall of 1942 through the spring of '44; two years. One year I lived on the men's campus, the second year I lived on the woman's campus.

Samantha Smith: And you said that those were the years when the previous dean had been ill?

TED ELLETT: When who had been ill?

Samantha Smith: The dean?

TED ELLETT: Oh, the dean. She had a very serious heart attack more than a year before I came to Furman, and they were hoping that she would recover, but she lived for quite a few years, and she was in the hospital, and they didn't have nursing homes as they have now, but she was in cardiac care-they didn't use that term, but she was in cardiac care for a good long time, and then had a little home up in Saluda, North Carolina, but was never able to do much. She never recovered.

Samantha Smith: And was her name Virginia. . .

TED ELLETT: Virginia Thomas. A very wonderful person. She gave her heart and soul to the woman's college. She was a very effective, marvelous person. She would have been hard to follow.

Samantha Smith: I saw. . .one of the yearbooks that I was looking at was dedicated to her ???

TED ELLETT: She deserved every honor that they gave her. But even the little town where I grew up, the teachers in the public schools were not married. When I was in college, students were not married. Even the men students could not go to school as full-time, live on campus. They could go to college if they didn't live on campus, but they couldn't play football. One of my roommates when I was at Hollings was in love and secretly married a football player from the University of Tennessee, and she wore her wedding ring around a little chain on her neck, because if Hollings had known that she was married she would have had to leave Hollings, and the boy could not have played football at Tennessee. Isn't it. . .you know, you think back on things like that and you think, what in the world. . .nonsense. We've made a lot of progress in social things, and every year going to Hollings I had to ride the train to and from. . .my parents drove up for my graduation, and they were guests of a faculty couple who had lived there a long time and I had gotten to know them real well, and they were sort of like surrogate parents. I'd go up to their house and play games after supper at night time, and they had three daughters, all of them a good bit older than I, and the youngest of the three taught physical education, and she was at Hollings for a couple of years when I was there as a student, and we were very good friends, faculty-student friends, and her parents, her mother was the granddaughter of the founder of Hollings, so they had a home there, they were part of the school, and I guess that is why I went on and was so happy to do physical education, because she was such a grand person and it didn't enter my head that it wasn't just as academically oriented as my zoology.

Samantha Smith: Thank you so much. I think. . .I think we are done.

TED ELLETT: Well, I've enjoyed running my mouth and reminiscing.