

1

BOB PERRY INTERVIEW

(1 TAKE LAST  
PAGE)

7/1/91

P: How transferable is the video to the film

BEEP

P: Yeh there's at least one pair that nests every year and there's quite a few that have nested this year, I don't know how many pair.

S: Now there's a stream down there, where's that from?

P: Well it comes in from up above here, Goose Pond way back that way and then there's a pond up above, do you know where Trevor Price or Doc Adams or any of those people, beautiful neighborhood and beautiful pond up above here and it comes over a spill way down through here and down under Court St., you know there's a pond that's kind of like beside the hospital, yeh, it feeds through that and out of there up the river.

S: It's so pretty around here.

P: Well this, you know as I explained the other day, this dropped off rather drastically at one point and the water level used to be you know, way up in here somewhere but there was, (Tape goes off for a second)

S: So Bob, why don't you just tell us what time period you knew John.

P: Ah, as far as my recollection goes, it was essentially all my life or all of John's life practically ah, his being just days older than I am and growing up three houses down the street from me, far back as I can remember I knew John Daniels.

S: You went to school with him? Elementary?

P: Went to school ah, and I guess possibly even nursery school, right on up through. I'm fairly sure that it, it started right at that point ah, Mrs. Rukee's nursery school and kindergarten at Fuller school, Tildon school, central junior high and Keene High, um,

S: When did you become close friends?

P: Ah, it was probably right at, fairly early on ah, ah, my recollection of the wee years is not (Laughs) tremendous, but just going from the idea that I know he's in some of my father's early childhood films of me, I recall one of a, like a fifth birthday party of mine or something which would put me back at kindergarten first grade area.

S: Do we have those films?

P: Yeh, Larry's made a copy of um,

L: That was the 300 dollars.

S: That's the one we did right. When do you first begin to have memories of ?????

P: It was during Tildon school ah, kinds of days, grade school days that ah, I really begin to have memories of playing with Johnny Daniels and that's the way he was known. The John Daniels, the more formal name, I guess, came along later in life, but he was always Johnny to the kids around the neighborhood.

S: What was he like in his preteen years?

P: Ah, .....relatively average kid if there is such a thing as an average kid ah, definitely not an athlete kind but ah, very bright, well liked I think by ah, just about

everybody, ah, fit in very well with all of the kids around, was one of the kids of the neighborhood kind of thing and was usually around if there were neighborhood activities going on and ah, the kick the can game or hide-and-seek or whatever. He was as much a part of it as he could be ah, I remember his mother probably being more strict than a lot of other kids.

S: In what way?

P: Well he had definite chores to do at home and he had definite times to be home and he knew at the beginning of the day what time he definitely be home and there was no doubt in his mind that he better meet those commands or he probably had a problem.

S: I'll bet

P: I, you know, he took it fine, I don't think he ever really felt as though he missed out on things because of it but I know everybody in the neighborhood realized that he probably had a tighter reign on him than just about the rest of the kid in the neighborhood.

S: Any special ideas about religion or anything?

P: Ah, he was active at the First church here in Keene and very ah, believing in all that that brought to him. He ah, I don't think he ever had doubts or anything ah, I went to a different church and we'd discuss it occassionally but I know he rather enjoyed going to Sunday school where other kids probably fought it ah, quite a bit during their childhood. I know he enjoyed going to church, being part of the junior choir and all of that, and as I've been looking back on it and looking through some of the early childhood papers and whatnot that his mother left with me um, I think a lot of his belief starts showing rather dramatically just in those papers, ah

S: He didn't play athletics or was he akward or?

P: He was terribly well coordinated ah, he was interested but he was never one of the better athletes and therefore I don't recall his ever being on a school team or that kind of thing, athletically, he was more olympics of the mind. I think he would have fit in very well and it isn't that he wouldn't join in the neighborhood football game or something ah, he was never coordinated, I guess is the proper word, enough to be one of the tops in the class.

S: Was that important in your group?

P: Ah, to some of the kids it was but I don't think that they felt that he was, John was inferior or anything because of it, it was just because that was not his forte.

S: What about his own self image?

P: I don't think he terribly missed it, you know, everybody would like to be tops in everything naturally, but I don't think John necessarily felt that he missed out on anything by not being a super athlete or something ah, I remember the uncoordinated part of it. I can recall one time down in his garage ah, where we took two sets of boxing gloves that we had found and he and I and another kid, Calvin Lowe, ah, that we knew, decided that the three of us were going to



find out who could pound the other one and I remember John did quite a number on me, just because he was not a boxer, there was no science. It was just all arms and fists just flying and if he caught you a good one, you knew you'd been caught (laughs) and I remember he did do a number on me that day, trying to stand up like this as a young kid not knowing enough about it and just arms and everything coming at you.

S: How often did this go on, the boxing business, I mean was that a once, you know?

P: I don't know, we did it 2 or 3 times. I remember we did it that one day in his garage and I remember particularly where he clocked me a couple of good ones and we had, it had me thinking twice about whether or not this was fun anymore. Ah, and I can remember doing it once or twice up in the barn out behind our house, ah, with some of the kids.

S: Did the others come up?

P: Yeh, some of the kids were able to keep away from the arms that were flailing all over the place, manage to get their licks and ah, I think it's the only time that I ever recall that anybody ever came to fist ?? for any reason and that was under intentional purposes but ah, he certainly wasn't one to make an enemy to the point where he'd want to get into that kind of thing.

S: Any sense of rebellion during those years or did that not come until later on?

P: Ah, I just think of later on and into the junior high years kind of where, you know, a lot of things were snuck behind mommies back and, you know, I was a part of some of those things.

S: What happened?

P: Oh, you know, just the small kind of secret club that ah he and I and one or two other fellows had and we used to sneak in underneath the crawl space under the dining room at the house on Summer St. there and we had dug out a little club house for ourselves underneath there and occasional cigarette might find it's way underneath there with us or something, that kind of rebellion that I think just about any kid goes through at one point in their lives.

S: Was his relationship with his father different?

P: Ah, I know he had an extremely high respect for his father ah, really almost to the worship point ah, he really ah, spoke very proudly of his dad and not only for the medicine side of things but I know he was very proud of his father's military record and ah, service.

S: Do you remember anything about that a particular incident?

P: Ah, not any particular incidents or anything it's just the overall general impression that I can recall that he, his father had been in the service, mine hadn't been, which was ah,

S: How did he know about his father's military?

P: Oh boy, Emily probably could tell you a little bit better but as I recall he was even living, it seems as though it was in Kentucky or something that he ah, his father was

stationed there for a while. It seems as though the family was there for some period of time, but that ah

S: Yeh, so he actually would talk about that or?

P: Elude to it occasionally, not ah, that I recall any specific incidents but I knew he was proud of the fact that his father had been a part of, you know, helping the country and what not.

S: So it was more patriotism?

P: Yeh, there was a patriotism to it, very definitely.

S: And what did he admire about the father doctor?

P: Ah, just the idea that his father, he felt this as well as just about everybody felt this, that his father was a very respected member of the community and loved physician ah, had a very nice practice of medicine, particularly the,

S: Did he go with his dad on any of the visits or?

P: None that I recall. I don't know that he ever got particularly involved in it or was interested in nosing around his father's office or anything, particularly back at the time when the office was there at the house, I don't recall being, I remember where the office was but I don't remember being in the office ever.

S: Was he physically close to his dad or was his dad ??? doctor admired?

P: No um, I think more physically close to his dad than probably most kids. I think today it's probably a lot more common to see dad hugging his kids or whatever but ah, at that time, at least most of the kids in the neighborhood, mom might hug you but it was only after she chased you down. I know that ah, JOhn's family had a lot more closer relationship there were a lot more hugs and signs of affection anyway.

S: On the father's part?

P: The whole family I'd say that ah,

S: Would he go a lot of places with his father, I mean his father was a busy man, so

P: Yeh, I don't recall that you know, he went out, I don't know any specific times but I know that they were a close family and

S: We've got pictures of the father fly fishing. I don't know if John went on those trips.

P: I don't recall myself ah, I recall seeing, for instance, that piece of footage with ah, another family here in Keene that they knew very well, the O'Brians. The families would do things together ah, my family all knew the Daniels but it was not a close socializing kind of relationship.

S: Were they a different class pretty much or?

P: No I don't think it was a class thing. It's just, they just never happened to meet socially and I think a lot of the Daniels socialization probably was medical related ah, and there just didn't happen to be close friendships between the two to that extent, you know, they weren't enemies by any means but they weren't close socially.

S: So in junior high you were together?

P: In junior high, probably, the years that I remember the



best and we were probably closest where it was just about every day after school that one way or another we would see each other, it was those days that I remember more, you know, I'm going to eat over John's house or he's eating at my house or, and it was the days of ah, I remember the Ye Royal Knights of the Royal Order of the Skull and Bones Society that, a little secret club that we had, that we would see each other quite often during that.

S: Is this under the porch?

P: This under the dining room area um, oh what, I can't even think of the word now, we used it before, ah the

L: NOt patio?

P: No it's just

L: Crawl space?

P: Crawl space, it was all dirt underneath there. It wasn't finished off. We had to actually remove bricks from the wall in the cellar to grab a hold of a pipe and swing our feet up through there and get in and after each time we replaced the bricks. I think thinking in our own minds that somehow we were keeping a secret that probably realistically knowing mom knew exactly where we were and had a somewhat of an idea of what the heck was going on.

S: Was this out of a, like a sense of adventure or sort of like Tom Sawyer adventure?

P: Ah, partially, partially, ah, and it was a place that was strictly us. We were the only ones in there. I knew probably mom and dad or no other other kids went there so, it was a place strictly our own ah, the whole idea is as the name kind of conveys, gives it secret society kind of thing and I think probably, at least once during the year we became blood brothers where you prick your finger and rub the blood together and swear that forever and ever and I guess probably sitting here I'm breaking a blood oath or something but ah (Laughs) those kinds of things.

S: Was this, how did you get these ideas?

P: Ah, I've got most of the idea to John. I wasn't close enough to those kinds of things. I know John had an interest for instance in the masonic order. I can remember his, and I don't remember whether his dad was part of it or not and I don't believe John was ever demolay or anything, but I do remember that ah, he had an interest in that and knew something of what went on in the masonic order. And ah, it was ideas like that, the ceremony, the sense of orderliness that I think impressed John. I think it kind of impressed me because I knew nothing about it and we kind of brought it up close that way and I think I learned something just from having done ah, those kinds of things with him.

S: What else was he interested in, in junior high?

P: As I recall he had an interest in sports, you know, he didn't always know exactly where the Red Sox were or whatever but he was interested enough because I think he knew that other kids were interested and wanted to be part of it. Ah, at least have a good talking knowledge of those things. Ah, academics meant something to him and I think he

had true interest as opposed to mommy saying you better bring home a good report card, I think he was interested in wanting to do well, ah, his religious life I know always meant a great deal to him

S: How was that manifested?

P: Particularly just in his going to church and there were one or two rehearsals of junior choir each week and ah, I don't remember the youth club's name there at the First church, I wasn't a member but I know he was very interested in it and, as I was saying earlier, he definitely didn't fight going to church for any reason, going down there to work on something ah, he enjoyed it and it meant a lot to him.

S: was he interested in girls at this point?

P: Yes (laughs) I can remember a few names (laughs) of women and this was prior to the high school relationships for instance with Caroline and what not. I can remember a few of the girls in our class and that kind of thing and one or two that he had particular crushes on.

S: Would he do anything about it?

P: Ah, in one case, I know, yeh he did. He would ask girls to the dance and that kind of thing. There were probably more junior high dances and that kind of thing in those days, at least my knowledge of today, ah, they would be right at the school, or the Y. Y dances were a big thing at that point and ah, I can remember John, one girl in particular, having a real crush on her and talking quite a bit about her and I guess he actually got her to a few of the dances and what not. I'm not sure that she really reciprocated the interest, but ah, and yeh, women were on his mind at that point in his life.

S: How about any interest in politics or social issues or before high school, ???in trouble or any of that?

P: Ah, he was one to always stick up for the little guy. He had no problem making his views known about the underdog as it were ah

S: Do you remember any stories about that?

P. Ah bot, not in particualr, none that come to mind right off, but I knew that he was never one to make anybody an outcast um, he wanted very much to be friends of all as it were ah, and be a part of the gang as, to the extent that he could be but it didn't bother him particularly if was left out or, for any reason at all.

S: Was he ever left out?

P: Well only at times when we were out a nine o'clock at night maybe playing kick the can and screaming around the neighborhood when you know Johnny Daniels had to be home and in bed at a certain hour and all the rest, you know, he may have felt that he was underprivileged to some extent. that he didn't get in on some of that but I know there were times when ah, at least later on, he found ways around that. Some of the stories that have been told.

S: I wonder where he got this idea of kind of not excluding everybody.



P: I think that's just part of his nature and part of, as far as I can tell, the whole families nature. There was nobody better than anybody else for any reason.

S: Was that the father's kind of teaching or the mother's?

P: I kind of assume that both of them instill that within.

S: Kind ?????

P: Yeh, I don't recall any specific incidents or anything ah, there were very few minority people in Keene and even at that point, the famous story of the JOhnson family for instance in Keene, I don;t recall that much about it and I don't recall it being that much of a furor in my memory anyway. It eveidently was but I think that was the grown ups who were more concerned about that and the grown ups did a very good job of concealing it from the younger generation because ah, it was right after I went away to prep school which is later on, I hurt my ankle while I was away and came back to Keene and had it examined by my doctor here and he sent me to Dr. Johnson to have an x-ray and I remember going over there and there was nothing unusual about going over to see Dr. Johnson, he was the x-ray expert in Keen so that's where you went, at least in my mind, I don't recall anything that way.

S: Were his children in school when?

P: I think most of his children were older than we were. John may have known them, I don't know.

S: Do you remember the O'Neill family?

P: I remember ah, the boy and the girl impartial and the names aren't coming to me, you know, first names aren't coming to me right away but ah, I remember there being there but almost feeling segregated themselves it was not an outcast kind of thing. I don't remember that they were a part of any group but I don't remember anybody particularly snubbing them intentionally.

S: I've never met them, are they visibly afro-american?

P: Oh yes, yes, very dark skinned, very definitely dark skinned.

S: So they would set themselves off?

P: Yeh, pretty much, that was my impression of them and I don't know that I ever knew them other than by name very closely myself. Um, I'm trying to remember, it seems as though they lived down on the Manchester St. area, down off lower main street. That's the impression that I get ah. I also remember another black man, Charlie Juniper who was a boxer and did very well as a heavy weight boxer and evidently may have won the New Hampshire heavy weight championship or something and I think earned some respect around here because he'd done very well by it but I don't remember him in relationship to John for any reason.

S: How about the fellow at the movie theater?

P: George Miller that's right ah, I do remember him and I remember a personal very embarrassin incident with respect to George but that doesn't have anything to do with, anyway, we were relatively ignorant with respect to all of that. I don't think there was an ounce of prejudice in anybody but it was certainly obvious to everybody that they were certainly different, but just being different didn't make them below us for any reason it was just the they were different.

S: But the 2 groups didn't for the most part, come together?

P: No, I know George was very well respected in Keene um, he was either a selectman or a ward monitor or a clerk or something and actually held elective office for awhile and I can remember that prior to my getting involved in that kind of thing. George just kind of left those offices just before I started doing it after I returned to Keene, but I remember he had been doing it for some time, so, yeh, everybody knew and liked George ah, and his wife, so I don't think there was ever any prejudice at least obvious to me.

S: How about kids from a different social class.

P: How do you

S: Like at the high school I went to there were all these groups, you know there were the greasers and the preppies and

P: Yeh there were those groups in the high school but with respect to the blacks, or

S: Just other ways of making somebody the elder, you know



P: Yeh, I don't remember that in particualr that racial or minority issues were the reasons for possibly making someone an outcast, it was more either someone's actions or, I remember there were one or two slower individuals, whether you call them retarded or whatever the word is today, I know that we're not, fun would be poked at them or whatever, so therefore they were felt, possibly lower in some fashion than some other kids, but I don't remember that there was anything based along race or religion or anything. At least that was apparent to me.

S: How about talented, not talented, I'm just trying to

P: Yeh um, the more talented and academically inclined seemed to be a lot closer together and I'm not sure that it could even be called a click but they certainly were a lot friendlier with each other ah and hung around together a lot more but I don't remember there being clicks per say and it may just be that I may have accepted people a lot more universally than some other's did and therefore in my mind no one was socially unacceptable for any reason.

S: By the time John reached high school, did he ever have any problems with who he was and where he belonged and all that or?

P: None that I'm particularly knowledgable of ah, I think he fit in fairly well with just about anybody. By the time high school, it seems as though the more athletically inclined for instance, guys that ah, hung around together, he probably didn't see as much of them or spend as much time with them. Primarily because they were out for team practice or something and John just wasn't there. I know John during high school did try out for the track team and was interestd in trying to do that track and cross country and I spoke here not too long ago with the track coach from that time and he was remembering John's experience in trying out for the track team and ah, he said it was only after a couple of weeks that John just came up to him and said, "You know this isn't going to work out, I know that I smoke too much. It just isn't going to work I'm not going to become a good runner" and trying to convince him to discontinue smoking, wasn't going to be the answer. John just wasn't going to be the super athleyte on the track squad, but he was going to try and wanted to be a part of things.

S: Did he feel badly about that?

P: My recollection was that he lasted longer than the track coaches, seems as though he was, continued to go out and was never a top runner anything but my recollection was that he lasted there longer. I didn't happen to go out for track, I went out for basketball and that I know was not John's forté. Ah, I don't ever recall his joining the Y leagues or anything like thta or an awful lot of activity in the gym, just because it wasn't, it required coordination to the point that he was more all over the place, arms legs and try and keep track of the ball at the same time were forein to him (laughs).

S: Did you notice any changes when he got into high school or?

P: Ah, probably a lot more academically inclined. I know that he had a lot more motivation along those lines than I did ah, I certainly went downhill academically and he went on to be really super interested in grades and what not. Wanting to, you know, really be a good student.

S: What motivated him do you think?

P: Ah, his interest in wanting to be something later on in life ah, whether he had any of his clerical ideas in the back of his mind or whether they were medical or what his actual direction was, I don't know, but I know that it, he was concerned about the idea that he had to do well in high school if he was going to be able to go to college and do well later.

S: How would you define doing that?

P: A's and B's and you know, and being honor roll type of student and I think he actually,

S: What did he like or how would he define that from that time. I mean what did he have in mind, occupation or?

P: I don't remember a particular occupation at that particular time. I just knew that it meant something to him to be well educated and end up being a professional in some sense as it were and in order to do that he knew he had to do well. It wasn't strictly a, you know, I've got to do this in order to be later, I knew he had an interest in a lot of the subjects that he took ah, so a lot of it was out of genuine interest. He participated in some extracurricular activities even right within school. I remember he was part of the audio/visual club or department or whatever. The people who help make the announcements during school and might go show a movie during class because they knew how to run the projector and those kinds of things. I know he got into that and he, I don't remember the specific clubs but there were one or two subject related clubs I think he was,

S: Drama club?

P: Yeh he was in the drama club ah, and he may have been in a Latin club or that kind of thing. I don't remember in particular, but um, we didn't remain as close going through high school only because I seemed to drift downhill and he had a lot higher motivations than I did um, I was still bent on having a good time and he was having a good time while getting something accomplished.

S: Did you talk about that, did he encourage you?

P: Not a whole lot. I know we certainly saw each other and remained friends but it wasn't on an everyday basis kind of thing the way it had been as I recall, particularly the junior high years and it was, it seems as though the times when he was inclined to get into a little bit of trouble or whatever later on, it was more the sights that maybe I had a little bit knowledge, a little better knowledge of what he was doing, the adventures such as sneaking out in the middle of the night, made such a good story and sneaking into places where we might not be invited.

S: Did he have a conflict, you know, on the one hand trying to be a good student and get good grades and on the other....?



P: No, not necessarily, it was, he ah, I think now, for instance of ah, the episcopal church turning him into a saint or whatever the proper clerical terminology is for it, and I look back and I think, you know, at least at that point in his life, there were quite a few people who might not have called him a saint per say, that he was a high achiever but he certainly had a devilish side to him and enjoyed that. I think that kept him human and I think he felt that it kept him human to not be totally book wormish as it were.

S: That kid that he went with that night, wasn't he sort of a cut up, Billy something or other?

P: Was Bill PARrot there? Max Young was there that night and possibly Billy Parrot.

S: I think that's who it was yeh

P: Um, Bill Parrot was not the achiever that John was, very definitely and ah, my recollections of Billy was that he was more inclined to look for a good way to get into trouble than, I don't ever remember that he got into serious trouble or any such thing but ah, certainly didn't have the motivations that John did.

S: Was John more daring than a lot of kids?

P: I think he was in some areas such as this. Despite the fact that um, he had a fairly strict upbringing, I think that brought out some of the rebellion in him and brought cases where he would, act out, not openly, he would just try and do something to feel

S: Do you remember any crazy things other than the ah, the one about escaping?

P: That's of course the most famous one, the middle of the night um, and there were probably other people who were closer to him during the high school years, my impression is that yeh, he would ah, as his sister was eluding to the other day, there wasn't a steeple in the city of Keene that didn't have his name, his initials carved up inside there somewhere, he obviously had found a way to sneak up in there and let everybody know I've been there, kind of thing, um,

S: Did he talk how his mom and dad reacted to all that. They were kind of concerned I guess.

P: I think they were concerned ah, but I don't think that they overly punished him for it as they found things out. As long as he hadn't harmed himself or anybody else in the process, I think there was an understanding that, he's going to be a kid and everybody's got to be a kid to some extent and this was the way that he acted out and he probably was spoken to about it when they found out about things but ah, I don't remember that he was grounded or any of that kind of thing because of any of his action.

S: They weren't tempted to send him away to prep school like you went to prep school?

P: No, no, ah, he did very well academically and had a very good high school record and ah, I think they realized that, he was seriously minded in his direction and that if he hadn't acted out, probably he wouldn't have been as accepted

socially as well as he was. That other kids knew that he had, you know, a little of a devilish streak in him and some imagination sometimes and some of the things that he managed to do ah, you know, and was almost respected for it in a way thta ah

S: So in a way that's

P: That's what helped make him a part of just about anybodies group and, you know, when he wanted to be ah

S: Was he afraid of being known as sort of an egg head?

P: I don't remember if it was out of fear of that but this certainly would have, you know, this devilish side of him certainly would have kept him from getting a reputation of being an egg head.

S: Words I guess we call now

P: Yeh, I know there's one of his teachers for instance that's recalled him, you know, her recollections of him as, he was more devilish than serious minded, to put it that way, and that was her recollection. So that he was maybe not totally serious all the time when he was doing thingd and it wasn't always necessarily just a practical joke, it was

S: I wonder if sa lot of that is like on the one hand trying not to be the doctors son and trying not to be the star student, as you say, trying to work your way into the group?

P: Possibly to some extent but, my recollection is that he didn't necessarily care about having to be one of the group or to be tied doen to a particular group, wanting to be able to mix in well with just about anybody that ah, he came in contact with.

S: At this time did he, was that bunch that he belonged to Felch and all that, was that ah, what was that one?

P: Yeh, I wasn't as close to it, so you know, I knew that he. you know Jean Felch, Max Young, ah Tony Reddington ah interestingly enough, theyw ere all a year ahead of us in school so it wasn't even the same class that ah and theyw ere as equally intellectually minded as they were minded to go find a way to have a good time occasionally.

S: Were they known as a group?

P: AH, yeh I think so, only because I look back and know them, think of them as being together and doing things quite often um, Caroline probably remembers more of that being closer to him at that time than I did and ah, going out to a lake or something together ocassionaly and at that point I...

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P: we disliked each other or anything, it's just that we had gone separate directions.

S: Do you remember much about the Caroline relationship?

P: I remember his going with Caroline Pierce and remember who she was and what not, but I don't think I really knew Caroline very well at that point. It was a case of we knew who the other one was and had we passed on the street we would have been able to say hello to each other but that was the extent of it. We weren't close

S: Were you involved at all when John thought about going to VMI?

P: No, by that time I had gone away to prep school ah, that was, I'm guessing, senior year of high school and I missed senior year of high school having been sent away to school um, and I'll have to say that I was really kind of surprised, the VMI kind of thing, I was thinking more in terms of he would love to have gotten into Harvard or you know, someplace that you think of high academically, not necessarily with the military structure that VMI had.

S: He never mentioned anything like that?

P: Not that I ever recalled as far as I'm concerned. It doesn't totally surprise me that he would look for that kind of discipline, structure and what not but I was thinking more in terms of looking for a true academic atmosphere whatever direction he was going to head in.

S: How about going to the south, did that, do you remember anything in the past, an experience that ????

P: Only the Kentucky days of his youth. I know he, that image, and I don't remember a particular incident, is mentioning that but I know he had that in his mind as part of his past ah, at least that far, but I don't remember it in terms of it being a different world ah, for any reason than New Hampshire, socially or whatever ah, none of that sticks out.

S: Do you think he knew what was in store for him?

P: When he went down?

S: Yeh

P: I think he was very well aware of the atmosphere in the south. I don't honestly think that he felt that there was a tremendous chance that he wasn't going to come back.

S: No, I mean down to VMI

P: Oh, down to VMI ah

S: I mean, did he know what he was getting into or have ideas.

P: Oh, I have an idea that he went in with his eyes open, to VMI um, he would have certainly known what you've got to go through to be a part of that and he obviously went in very intent in doing a good job there because he ended up after 4 years, being valedictorian of his class and it's in some ways, kind of hard to picture his being able to put up with physical rigor, for instance, that that put on him.

S: ??????????

P: Um, I don't remember, oh he had allergies and touch of asthma and what not, I can remember our going to Dr. Fox and



getting our weekly allergy shot kinds of things and his having allergies, that kind of thing, but not sickly for any reason. He was never rugged, relatively tall ah, he was one of the taller kids in class.

S: We don't have a really good idea. How tall was he?

P: I'm going to guess that he ended up probably in the neighborhood of 6 foot possibly just slightly over.

S: 5'8"-5'9" in high school?

P: Ah, he would have been at least that. He was probably closer to 6 foot. He probably did most of his growing you know, by the time he was in high school ah, and relatively thin ah,

S: So when did you get to see him again once he got to VMI

P: I don't recall even once, I never saw him in uniform, I know that. But I know whenever our paths crossed and we knew the other one was home, the phone call would go one way or the other "Hi, what's you doing" and we'd probably get together at least once and very often it was ah, dinner somehow and several times I can remember being on that side porch on Summer St. and ah, he enjoyed cooking and enjoyed the gourmet side of it a lot more than I ever became interested in and he would ah, if he was going to barbecue a steak, it had to be wrapped in foil and have the spices and all of that in with it and do a good job with it that way and I can remember getting together with him there and ahving a class of wine with the steak and that kind of life whereas, you know, just about anybody else would have settled for the beer and the hamburger but John wanted it right.

S: Did that go back to high school too?

P: Ah, it goes back into junior high (laughs) I can remember that ah, Ye Royal Knights that I mentioned ah, when I was talking with Emily here the other day, she was trying to clue my son into, "Ask your dad about this that and the other" and I remember ah, his father evidently had a wine cellar of sorts,

S: Whose father did?

P: John's father and I can remember that as a part of our little rituals or ceremonies that we had before every meeting, that we'd have underneath the dining room that there was always the little sip of wine that we had and there may have a bottle a month or something that disappeared from dad's wine cellar, at least at the rate that we hoped that dad wasn't really noticing the things were totally amiss ah, but I remember, and it would have been something that I don't think i would have ah, had the imagination, for instance, to think about, that was, not only was the wine a part of ah lot of ceremonial and ritualistic things, not only religious but masonic or whatever, ah, but it was onr of the finer ways to enjoy one's self, that was an impression anyway.

S: Was that, ??????? mom and dad?

P: I don't recall if, no and it certainly, to the best of my knowledge ever any alcohol problems or anything like that and far from anything like that, there wasn't any

S: ????????? rituals and all of that P: Yeh, any time I ever went there it was, it was always grace before the meal and it was usually, my recollection, with always with the table cloth, in the dining room and most of the meals were not plain cooking types of things. It usually, either a sauce or at least some spices or whatever, put together with whatever was made and I think he picked up an appreciation of it from that.

S: Did he confide in you about VMI?

P: I don't ever recall, he probably did, I don't recall specifically it was

S: Happy?

P: Ah, happy to the extent that any recollection goes ah, but I don't recall our discussing a whole lot of that, it was more, you know, either what I had been doing or do you recall so and so, we would talk about people that we knew, yeh, there was probably references to what our lives were like at that point, but ah, still getting into ah, some philosophical kinds of things and he'd usually get way in over my head in those areas, ah, just.....I don't really recall particularly any one discussion. The one that I do recall ah, was one when I was down there with my wife which was, had to have been in 63, 64 when he was home, by that time I think he had started theological school, and I can remember sitting down there for, until relatively late there one evening on Summer St. and the three of us getting into a rather deep religious and philosophical kinds of things as to what was going on in the world and he and Judy evidently were not in total agreement, that's my recollection and I don't remember the subjects or whatever, but they were really concentrating on one another, do you really think that? and no I disagree because of this and ah, but earlier ah, even back at the junior high age, I remember religion between John and I, being you know, agreeing number one that there's a god and from there taking off as to what is or what isn't so.

S: Did he ever talk about, during any of those years, what it meant to, how you lived in terms of believing in God and christianity.



16  
P. That, I think, went along with it, I don't remember that you had to be a goody two-shoes just to-- (laughs) being in terms of being saved or any of that I don't remember it getting to that point it was more ah, how correct was the Bible? And how you know--which was the true way of thinking. Were the Catholics right, were the Jews right, at that level.

Sullivan: Statements about how you act (unintelligible)

Perry: I don't honestly recall that kind of discussion. Certainly, I think if he'd had a very deep conviction that God was watching over us and was going to make a big difference in the end, we might have been doing the things we were doing! (laughs)

Sullivan: Were you there when his father's funeral was held?

Perry: No, I didn't get home to his dad's funeral, as a matter of fact, as I recall, I didn't--I was away and as I recall it was possibly a week or so after that I even learned that it had even happened. I knew his father had been sick, for some time

(Bill asks a question, cannot understand it)

Perry: No, I just knew that he had been sick and I don't recall seeing his father or seeing Jon during that time.

Bill: Did he ever talk to his friends about his father's sickness to you?

Perry: Probably, but nothing that that I recall.

Bill: How about when he came back to Keene, were back to Keene then, after VMI?

Perry: No, I wasn't in Keene at that point, ah, when he spent the year working at Farrah's and whatnot-- I wasn't living in Keene at that time.

Bill: So you wouldn't know him again until you came back to Keene or ?

Perry: I have no doubt that I probably saw him once or twice when I would be in town, we might see each other, but. I don't remember anything in particular about that.

Bill: Yeah. So then you picked up again in '63-'64?

Perry: Ah, yeah, I can remember being together at times during that period. I don't know whether I became more socially conscious after I got married or whatever but ah, when I came to Keene I usually made a point of calling Connie and going down to visit her whether Jon happened to be home or not.

Bill: Was she happy that Jon was at ETS and all that or--?

Perry: I think she was very proud of him. At least that was my impression and extremely proud of what he was doing and --his having done fairly well at least that's my impression, I haven't seen his report cards-- whatnot, but my impression was that he was doing fairly well and ah, I don't think that she had any particular profession in mind for him. You know, he was always going to be a fireman as far as she was concerned, or always going to be the doctor or whatever, I don't-- that doesn't--ah

Bill: So how many times did you see him? While he was at ETS?

Perry: Oh, there were probably a half a dozen times maybe, at the most, and those would have been times when I was home or, whatever, ah, we'd exchange Christmascards, or something like that but we didn't stay in close contact it was just--  
 Bill: Anything stick out?

Perry: That one night I remember that we spent down at his house, ah, when we down, ah, it seems as though we'd been there for dinner, Judy and I had been there with Jon for dinner and I I even think his mother had gone out with her bridge friends or something and it was just the three of us. I can remember being there, at first on the side porch for dinner or whatever and then into that front living room. Ah, and, just sitting and talking. But--the recollection of specifics there is gone.

Bill: He didn't talk to you about Emily or family problems?

Perry: No. Ah, I was always aware of it but I know that, um, it hurt Jon, the idea that she was so sick, and I'd never discussed it with any member of the family as to the extent of problems or just whatever, I knew it and left it alone and I know it was a thing that bothered Jon in the back of his mind and concerned him, very deeply.

Bill: Did you see him in 65 at all, or--?

Perry: Ah, I don't remember whether I actually saw him in 65 or not. I know that on his last trip down in 65 early summer of 65 that he went out through New York State on his way down -- he had worked at Willard State Hospital out there in New York for some period of time, prior to that and he was going out and was going to stop and visit some of the people he had known there and we were living in Syracuse at the time, and he stopped on the Thruway and gave a call; I didn't happen to be home. He just called to say hi and was gonna stop by for a drink or whatever, if we happened to be there. I wasn't there, and I guess we'd had plans, or something and I know he and Judy just had a quick chat. At that point, but--

Bill: So, he never discussed going down to the south or--?

Perry: No, I never-- I don't recall ever having any discussions with him concerning his activities in Alabama.

Bill: Ah, other places he worked? Or--Willard, Providence--, Cambridge?

Perry: Honestly, I--- None of that just comes back to me, yeah-- I'm sure that we had to have discussed it but it doesn't come back to me specifically.

Bill: OK-- why don't we take a break and then we can talk about maybe what we ought to do.

(Here we go to the sync takes; the actual interview is over).

Perry: Bradlee's, last year.

Larry: What's that, those chairs?

Perry: These chairs.

Bill: Pretty good, actually. Only about twenty bucks, if I remember right.

Perry: Well, we got these and the two chaises, we got the



mats this year. We couldn't find any mats, and the mats finally went on sale this year so --

Bill: ---that Marilyn always wanted, you know, the ones that swing back?

I can't find any cushion for it, cause (????)

Perry: Yeah. Ya gotta find a handy seamstress.

Bill: Yeah, I guess that's we have to do. Kind of hard sitting there.

Perry: My mother redid the old gliders and all that stuff for us.

Bill: Did you get them upholstered, or--?

Perry: No. Just making mats and cushions and taking either the foam or matting or whatever, covering it.

Bill: I wish I could find somebody to do that. Well, let's start the tape, Larry.

Perry: have you done this aghain again with Caroline?

Bill: Caroline really doesn't want to get on film too much.

Perry: No, I know she's--

Bill: She's shy about it. So she said that she'd just do it with the group. Maybe we'll ask her again.

Perry: Even if you didn't actually film her, if she would sit audio, and you use it for background and pictures--

Larry: That's not a bad idea.

Perry: If she'd be willing to do that, she might be able to talk over what you put up as copies of high school pictures, and all of that kind of thing.

Bill: Right, yeah, just voice-over.

Perry: Just voice-over kind of thing.

Larry: Well, I'm all set, tape's rolling, so I'm just going to um--

Perry (Coughs)

BILL: OK, Robert, just for the tape, tell me about--I was asking you about the imagination of Jonathan, as you remember it?

Perry: I remember him having a good imagination, um--nothing really in particular but I remember his being somewhat fascinated with Medieval times and king Arthur and the round table kinds of issues, and --ah, can just imagine, for instance, had there been a dungeons and dragons at that particular time he probably would have been class champion at it. Kind of thing, that I can see his imagination being in that category.

Bill: Part of this was the things you did under the cellar, too. Not the cellar, but

Perry: The crawl space. Yeah. To some extent, um--I'm trying to remember all the paraphenalia, whatnot. that we used to have down underneath there. Ah, I remember we had constructed an altar of sorts down there and I think that was my first introduction to incense. And having to open the window just because when we ran the incense in that tightly enclosed space we were all gonna suffocate.

Bill: So he actually had an altar?

Perry: Yeah, a couple of boards with some kind of a drop cloth that we put over it and--various little items that

went on it, ah, probably a cross and whatever else, I don't actually --I can remember where it was and against which wall, I don't remember the items.

Perry: Was he the priest?

Perry: He was the leader, to the extent that the ceremonial side went on, because he was the only one that had any kind of knowledge of what was supposed to happen, at any such thing, and had the imagination to right any script or whatever there was to any of it. And that was, you know--we made sure it was always a part of when we went in there, but it went from there to kind of downgraded to you know, the girls of the class would be discussed and few other more boyish items --

Larry: The Sacred and the Profane--

Perry: Yes.

Bill: And you were telling me about his --how close he was to dad. Why that was.

Perry: Ah, my impression (kbeep) was that he had a very good relationship with his father, that he certainly respected him for the man that he was, not only his military record and the time that he'd spent in the service, but his medical profession and the time that that meant that his father necessarily had to take away from family but the the service that he was performing ah, and the good that he was doing in his chosen field. Ah, he had a very high regard for his father. Very deep love there, I think.

Larry: Perfect timing. Just after "deep love" we, the tank ran out.

Bill: OK, perfect.

Larry: Must have been about forty seconds wouldn't you say Bill?

Bill: See, that was painless, right, Bob?

(End of interview)