

**Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center**

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
FLORENCE PARKER
Corps WAVES, Navy, Korean War
2007

OH
1132

**OH
1132**

Parker, Florence, Oral History Interview, 2007.

Approximate length: 39 minutes.

Contact WVM Research Center for access to original recording.

Abstract:

In this oral history interview, Florence Parker, discusses her service in the Navy corps WAVES. Parker enlisted in the Navy to join the Nurse Corps, but, after enlisting was told that there were no openings in the Nurse Corps and was sent to Boot Camp. After graduation, she was assigned to Hospital Corpsman School at Bainbridge, Maryland. On graduation, Parker was rated as a Pharmacist Mate, 3rd Class. Following Hospital Corpsman School she was assigned to Bethesda Naval Hospital, Bethesda, Maryland. In May, 1954, Parker married, became pregnant and was discharged, having her baby in January, 1955.

Biographical Sketch:

Parker enlisted in the Navy in 1953, with the intention of going into the Nurse Corps. She was discharged in 1955.

Archivist's Note:

Transcriptions are a reflection of the original oral history recording. Due to human and machine fallibility transcripts often contain small errors. Transcripts may not have been transcribed from the original recording medium. It is strongly suggested that researchers engage with the oral history recording as well as the transcript.

Interviewed by John Weingandt, 2007.

Transcribed by Audio Transcription Center, 2016.

Reviewed by Robert Brito, 2017.

Abstract written by Robert Brito, 2017.

Interview Transcript:

[Beginning of Parker.OH1132]

- Weingandt: Today is Tuesday the 16th of October, 2007. We are here to interview Florence Parker, and the interviewer is John Weingandt. Just get started here, Florence. Were you born and raised here in Wisconsin?
- Parker: No. I was born in [Graystone], New Jersey. No, I was born in Pennsylvania, raised in New Jersey, to be truthful.
- Weingandt: Okay, how did you come about joining the Navy and becoming a nurse?
- Parker: Well, I wanted to—
- Weingandt: Were you a nurse in peacetime?
- Parker: I wanted to be a nurse, and my grades were not high to get into the school. I had to go back to school to get up the grades. So as soon as you put me under pressure, my grades will stay the same. So, I said, “Well, there’s the nurse corps is open in the Navy, so I’m going to go do that.” And the family said, “Fine.” I had to go home and get my consent form. I went in, and as soon as I raised my hand and said, “I do.” He said, “Well, I’m sorry,” he says, “You’ll be going to boot camp. The nurse corps isn’t accepting right now.”
- Weingandt: So you were welcomed to the Navy, but not to the nurse corps.
- Parker: Right.
- Weingandt: Well, tell me what happened then.
- Parker: Well, I went to boot camp. Had a ball. [laughs] I joined the, what the heck, now I got a blank, drill team.
- Weingandt: The what?
- Parker: The drill team.
- Weingandt: Oh, the drill team. Okay.
- Parker: Spent my whole boot camp in drill team, as well as schools and you know, buy my smokes so the smoking lamp would lit. You know we had cigarettes and blah, blah, blah. Played pool, you know, and then when it come to work week, I practiced drill team. The drill team practice. I didn’t go to work week. But I wish you could have seen how we kept our hems up, in our seersucker outfits. Now, the seersucker outfits had to be washed, dried, and ironed. That’s why you see them standing out. No seersucker allowed, so your uniform had to be ironed stiff. Well, you know, you don’t have time to

practice on drill team, do your work, regular school work and all, your homework and everything else and still wash, dry your clothes and still keep the hems up. Masking tape is the best thing for holding up hems you ever seen.

Weingandt: I think I learned something today.

Parker: Even through washings.

Weingandt: Really?

Parker: Oh, yeah. Beautiful. I was surprised how many did it. So we marched with the—on graduation we marched with the male drill team, but one of the best times is our chow hall closed down. Fourth regiment. We had to go up to the sixth regiment for chow. You know how regimented the times are. So, we had to go up there, grab our meal, in line of course. Sit down and fifteen minutes, and back in line again to march back down to go to classes and things. But every time we'd go up there's eyes left going up. The men work in the field, we were watching them as we were marching up and eyes right when we're going down, so— [coughs] Excuse me. So we, anyhow, I graduated, went home for—I think that's where these pictures were taken, we went home for our leave before going to a new duty. That's when I went to Bethesda.

Weingandt: And that was your dream, really, was it not?

Parker: Yes, yes. It was my dream to be a nurse and I promised my mother I would go into nursing for her because she couldn't do it.

Weingandt: How did you arrange to go from boot camp to nursing at Bethesda?

Parker: Well, they asked us, you know, you line—you pick out what you want to do, personnel, journeymen, all so, one girl ahead of me said she wanted to go in personnel. Good, you'd look good in a corps WAVE[S] [Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service]. I come up, he said, "What would you like to do?" I said, "I want to go to corps WAVE school." "You what?"

Weingandt: Corps WAVE?

Parker: Hospital corps school. And, because he had programmed himself everybody's going to go to corps school. So, yes, I did go to Bethesda, but Bainbridge Corps School first.

Weingandt: Bainbridge Corps School?

Parker: Yeah.

Weingandt: Okay. Now what is that? Is that a—

[00:05:00]

Parker: The hospital corps school.

Weingandt: Okay, so you now are—

Parker: Male and female together.

Weingandt: Studying to be a nurse?

Parker: No, studying to be a corps WAVE. A hospital corps WAVE. That's below the nurse. It's like a practical nurse, but you're trained to do IVs. You're trained to work in the field because that's during Korea. You're trained to work with—they didn't make any exceptions when you're male or female, you're trained to work in the field. Of course, when you get to your duty station as a female, I didn't work in a field, I didn't do IVs because they had RNs to do it. But on my discharge it says I could be a PA.

Weingandt: PA?

Parker: Practica—yeah.

Weingandt: Meaning what?

Parker: Physician's assistant. I lacked a half hour OB to be that, and if I had any brains, I would have requested on my extra time to work in labor and delivery, but at nineteen years old, you're not interested in that, in doing things. Especially if you're naive as I was. So, I worked on ward 126A women, actually, more officers' wives and things medical. That's when they had found Hodgkin's disease, didn't know how to cure it, but they had a name for it, and it kills many different ways. So I watched. We had one twelve-year-old on the floor. She had leukemia, and I had to watch her die. It was kind of rough. The first time I actually seen and had to pack a patient after death, I walked almost to DC and back because I closed my eyes, and all I could see was her. I was on nights, so when I got back, I was exhausted enough to go to sleep. But yeah—and we got that little boyfriend there, not him. And he said that he couldn't marry me because his folks thought too much of me. That's one of the boyfriends I met. This one here in Bethesda, he told me he couldn't marry me because I had already been married and the marriage annulled, the Catholic church wouldn't accept it. Right about that time, I found I was expecting. So I wrote and told Ron, my husband.

Weingandt: Current husband?

Parker: Current husband, only husband actually. I didn't want any involvement because of what had happened before, and what happened, I was expecting at all. He said he did a worse thing, he almost told a girl he loved her. So he told me we were going to get married. We did. I said no up until we got to the minister—found the minister.

Weingandt: This was what year?

Parker: Nineteen fifty-four, November 20.

Weingandt: Got it.

Parker: But back to Bethesda, we had the chow hall, then I went to the right to my ward to work, but when I got pregnant, I walked to my ward, went to the bathroom, lost my breakfast, come back to the kitchen, make a peanut butter sandwich and ate that and worked all day. No problem. But we did, we had fun. My girlfriend and I, we snuck up to the eighteenth floor. Well you know the eighteenth floor is where the president stays. It's a big suite, and where Mr. McNamara took a dive. That was in the '40s, I believe.

Weingandt: Forrestal?

Parker: Yeah, Forrestal, I'm sorry. Yeah. He took a dive.

Weingandt: From the eighteenth floor?

Parker: Sixteenth or eighteenth, I'm not sure. I don't know whether he stayed in the Presidential suite or whether he was down below, but yeah took a dive. We had a, you know, that's a long ways down.

Weingandt: That would do the job.

Parker: Yeah, then we got out real fast before we got caught. [laughs] But I went back to the nuclear center on the compound just to deliver a message, a sealed envelope. The building was pure white inside. Nothing. No sit down or anything else, just an empty building area. They come out, took it, left, said "Bye," I walked back to the barracks, but when he was there, he come up to visit and he met my brother then. We went to a bar. I was eighteen, I think, it's in Washington, DC. You can go into the bar and have a drink. I'm not sure if it was DC or still in Maryland, I think it was DC, but anyhow, we went in, at the time I liked beer. Schlitz? Yeah. Schlitz.

[00:10:32]

Weingandt. Schlitz was popular back in the '50s, yeah.

Parker: And I went to, every time I'd go to the bathroom, they'd fill my cup up. He'd get me drunk, so I took—it was still cold, so I took and dropped Ron into a snow drift. Well, they were teasing me. So we finally, I said good night to my brother, and he went back to barrack to Bethesda to calm down, and I told him, now the first night, he went with my buddy Ronnie, he went, Ron went with Ron, Ron Dumas, and he went to—he slipped him into Ron Dumas slipped him into the ward for the night. Had to get up early the next morning because, couldn't have the doctor come in and see this new patient, you know, hungover as—he went down to have breakfast, he should have gone upstairs, but went to tell and he says, "Would you like to have two eggs sunny side up?" [laughs] You know what he said, don't you?

Weingandt: No.

Parker: You have a hangover and you looking at two eggs sunny side up, right. No. Well, I'm still sleeping. No, that was Saturday morning, Sunday morning. He had them get me out

of bed at ten. He says, “I had to get up, you get up.” They played “Reveille” over the loudspeaker, he was sleeping just after it. [laughs]

Weingandt: Just what you want to hear.

Parker: I didn’t have it. He did.

Weingandt: Oh, okay.

Parker: He pulled the speaker off the wall. [laughs]

Weingandt: Oh, I got it.

Parker: Oh, but, now Ronnie Dumas was a good friend. We spent as much time as we could. He had a girl and in Minnesota. Michigan or Minnesota? Minnesota. Ronnie was in I mean, the gal was in Minnesota. Anyhow, he had troubles with his girl. He was Catholic. He got excommunicated for some reason or the other, I guess he didn’t go to confession enough or something. And his girlfriend’s mother said, “That’s it. You can’t see her anymore.” So I said, “You need to go back and apologize to the priest, so you can get back in church, and you can get a hold of your girl and you can marry her.” So he did. So we like this, you know, two buddies. time with him [??]. He did not like my boyfriend at all. He complained when I was with him and I told him, I said, “I’m engaged.” He said, “We’re only going to the movies and ten cents on base. Big big spenders.” I loved that. Ten cents on base. But I didn’t lose my ID card until I went to Philly after the ship’s collision. When I got discharged, they didn’t take my ID card. I still had it, so I asked the guy at the gate, I said, “What do I do with this? I’ve been discharged.” He grabbed it and scolded me. “You don’t have it anymore.” He says. But I mean, like I said, when you’re young, you don’t offer to hand things—if they don’t ask for, you don’t offer.

Weingandt: That’s right.

Parker: You learn in the service too, what they don’t ask for, you don’t give. So we—

Weingandt: Tell me about some of the things you were doing at Bethesda.

Parker: All right. I was taking care of officers wives. Captain Ki—Admiral King’s daughter was there.

Weingandt: Admiral King is who?

Parker: He was an admiral in the Navy. But, yeah, he was an admiral.

Weingandt: There was an Admiral King in the Second World War. Is this the same one? okay.

Parker: Yes, yes.

Weingandt: Okay, I understand.

Parker: And she had taken a walk through a poison ivy patch. In those days we didn't use so much calamine as we used moist steam. We put moist clothes over the legs or whatever body part, it was her legs, and then put heat lamp on it, and that's how they treated poison ivy. I guess after that, I think we did put the calamine on, but we did that way. Why? I'll never know. Today, they don't do that.

[00:15:23]

Weingandt: I've never heard of it.

Parker: No, and then for bed sores, I had one lady, oh she was the nicest person, she had one about like that I'll never forget. And what they do is put the heat lamp, now I did run across that over in Lemira [??], so it wasn't that long ago, they still used it. They put a heat lamp on it to dry it out. Today, they debride it and let it heal from inside out. Those days, they dried it out. And then we had this other lady, she had to have—now I didn't do this as I said the RNs did—they had to drain her lungs, Hodgkin's. She drowned in her own fluid. They couldn't drain anymore. Then we had this other lady -- I'm going to bawl -- we put her in, she found out she had Hodgkin's disease, and she kept saying, "I'm going to die. I'm going to die." So we finally put her in with this other lady who wouldn't put up with any guff, and when—we couldn't say anything. So when she said that, we'd bite our tongues. Well when we put her in there, the lady turned around, looked at her, and said, "If you're going to die, go ahead and die so I can go to sleep."

Weingandt: [laughs] Good for her.

Parker: We went to the nurses station and we broke down. [laughs] But she had this—she'd had hip surgery okay, replacement.

Weingandt: The lady with the Hodgkin's?

Parker: Yes. And one end would dry up and the other end would seep green. They saved it for me, whether I was on A.M.s, P.M.s, or nights, they saved it for me to change the dressing. I'd get one side closed up, the other would open. I'd get that side closed, then this one would open up. That was my first job at the evening. Of course, you had the bed pans, and you had to clean them. They had a machine in there that after you dumped and flushed the bedpan, you put it in there and close it up, it steams it and sterilizes it. So there was no one person that kept the same bedpan like they do today. Plus it was metal.

Weingandt: Yeah, I remember them.

Parker: We had to clean that room real good. Keep that clean. Make up—if there was any special diet or anything, make it there in the kitchen, and keep that clean, so we were kept rather busy, going. We had, I think, about twenty-six, twenty-eight patients there.

Weingandt: That was my next question, how many people did you have? Patients?

Parker: Just about twenty-eight, and there were two of us corps WAVES and the nurse.

Weingandt: These were primarily officers wives?

Parker: Primarily. It was fun telling them they had to leave so their wives could go to sleep. It's one of the best ways. But this one gentleman left, really didn't want to go, so he gave her a kiss and said, "I'll see you tomorrow." Got in his car and half way home she passed away, and we had to call the house and leave a message, take her out of the room and put her in one of the doctors' offices. Well, it had to be done. And she may have been in a prime room, but when people are awake, you don't want them to see this. So it was the other girl's turn to pack. Those days, we packed.

Weingandt: In ice?

Parker: No. The vagina and they wrapped up with cotton, that's why I didn't sleep when the other woman died. We used a whole package of cotton on the rectum alone. And then got held for the morgue because it seeped through. No, you do not, I'm sorry, but you do not sleep when you see that. Today, they don't do things like that. My god, but anyhow, these were our duties. A.M.s, P.M.s, they did finally start, it was more like a civilian job. I mean, you didn't have to—well, you do salute, of course, on the compound, but we had wraparound uniforms, blue. If I had been brainy, I could have done the same thing one other girl did. She let her wraparound out a little bit each time, took thirty days leave, went home, had her baby, come back, put the uniform back where it was and made an allotment for her mother to take care of the baby while she was in. They couldn't do a thing. She was not pregnant when she come back. Poor woman. I'll tell you, I didn't think of that. But you know the—that's the way things went, I mean. And I was talking to Carolyn and she said, I forget her last name, she's probably [faded out; inaudible] and she said she wanted to talk, you know, just the person I want to talk to, because she thinks it's wrong to discharge us because of pregnancy. We were not in the battlefield. We had nothing would be in harm. We should not have had to be discharged. So she's going through the state to find out how she could get us our back pay, for the—it's only four years. The pay wasn't that much back then, as you know. And, but still, it would be a help, so it's up to her. And especially since I had problems delivering my child. And I said to her, she said, "How did you get pregnant?" "US Navy." Boot camp, we were told, "If you have to go with someone, make sure it's a service man because at least we know he's clean." That's what we were told. We were issued. GI issue, so my baby was GI issued. You see the picture of her. She's now a grandmother.

[00:22:02]

Weingandt: Oh, my.

Parker: Yeah, she's a grandmother of ten.

Weingandt: Fifty-two or '54?

Parker: Fifty-five, she was born. January 6, '55.

Weingandt: So the Navy regulation, I assume the Army too, was that if you as a WAVE nurse—

Parker: Or as a whack.

Weingandt: Or whack, if you conceive a child and bear the child, you are discharged.

Parker: You are discharged when you're three months pregnant. As soon as they find out you're pregnant.

Weingandt: So pregnant WAVES couldn't happen. So what happened to you?

Parker: I went home. I wrote to Ron, my husband, and told him what happened. I seen my boyfriend, because I honestly thought it was his, and he wanted the baby. I said, "You go to hell." Those days, I did not mince words, I don't swear like I used to. And I said, "You'll never know the sex of this child." Years later, I saw my girlfriend, her two younger children and my three were at the base, not in Bethesda, but in Greenbanks, and I was undergoing psychiatric help. They said they didn't do it, and the doctor ordered me in, and the psychologist—either psychiatrist or psychologist, I think it was psychologist care. I was heading for a nervous breakdown.

Weingandt: Because of your discharge or—

Parker: Because of everything that happened.

Weingandt: Okay, so you bury this child. The Navy wanted to boot you out. Okay.

Parker: I was an emotional twelve-year-old when I got pregnant, let's put it that way. And I was, had three children going on four before I—that's when the psychiatrist—psychologist helped me. I woke an I get a nine kids. Our kids always got free ice cream, because this is the way they sat at the table, and these children are no more than—well, they weren't in school yet—so the highest was about four. Well, I was carrying or holding little Bruce's hand and Diana's hand and she was holding the others. We walked in there, he sat, she looked at me says, "You're white, what happened?" "I'll tell you later." We went through the line where the kids were sitting, first and everything, and I said, "That guy is the guy I was telling you about." He never showed up again. He was brought just for that reason. I still believe that, and he was gone.

Weingandt: Help me with this. What—

[00:25:00]

Parker: I was under psychiatric—I was heading for a nervous breakdown. They tried to get me back to normal, and he was part of my problem.

Weingandt: He, being the father of your child?

Parker: We thought he was. Yes. We found out later that my daughter and Ron are father and daughter. They both have the same blood. AB positive, but at this time—

Weingandt: But at this time, you're still in the Navy?

Parker: No, now I was out of the Navy.

Weingandt: Was the child born?

Parker: Diana was born January 6, 1955.

Weingandt: All right. You are out of the Navy.

Parker: Yes, I was out of the Navy. You would ask that question.

Weingandt: I'm just trying to help here.

Parker: Let's not do it.

Weingandt: Get a chronology here of what's going on. You're out of the Navy, you're suffering post Navy stress.

Parker: Yes, post distress disorder, yeah. Let's see—

Weingandt: Looking up here, your discharge papers?

Parker: Yes, I am.

Weingandt: The date on the bottom?

Parker: From 1/'50, not that's employment. No, it isn't on the bottom. This is money and hospital corps class A school I went to. I came out third class, by the way. US Navy Hospital, NNMC, Bethesda, Maryland. National defense medal. Let's see, 4/'53 to May '54. That's what it is. May of '54 is when I got my discharge and went home.

Weingandt: Okay, so you went home in '54, May of '54.

Parker: Up here. It shows you.

Weingandt: And we'll—are you going to leave this here with us?

Parker: Uh—

Weingandt: Okay, a copy of it.

Parker: Right. I don't give this up. I'm sorry, but I don't give that up.

Weingandt: That's okay. That's your privilege.

Parker: You know, this is my class information. But it's—This was wrong. I found out recently with my eye surgery, by the way, I am blind in my one eye, from green eyes, not hazel. I

asked about it, “What do you mean hazel? They’re green.”

Weingandt: I don’t know the difference. I have hazel eyes, I’m told.

Parker: Well, my—you see my mother and I both had that orange ring around our eye. See that orange ring there?

Weingandt: Um-hm.

Parker: Well, we always said it was hazel eyes. Actually, what my mother’s doctor said, you have orange eyes, but bunch of—

Weingandt: That would be something new.

Parker: Yeah. So, no that’s yours.

Weingandt: Okay, we’ll keep that stuff together, till we go upstairs. You were undergoing psychiatric care then after you’re out of the Navy in ’54.

Parker: Yes, yes. I, as I said, left Bethesda. We used to go home when I was still stationed at Bethesda. My brother would charge me 20 dollars to go home and visit our mother. Ten dollars for gas and 10 dollars for a date.

Weingandt: [laughs] What? For a date?

Parker: Yeah, for a date. His date. So one night we were at a club, okay, we all, all services came together, and we were dancing and he said, “Nick, got any money?” I said, “No, I don’t. Here’s 20.” We get ready to go, he says, “Nicky, you know what happened to 20 dollars? I seem to have lost it somewhere. I don’t know where, we went all over the place.” He said, “Okay, I got 20 dollars back in.” [laughs] And these things we used to do, then we—then we lost him. But my brother and I were always close. And we would run into him, we thought it was wonderful. So I made about two or three trips home to visit Mom before he got transferred.

Weingandt: That would be New Jersey? Home?

Parker: Yeah. Yep. Hunter, New Jersey, by the way. Down below Trenton. Cape May, Courthouse—Cape May County. Cape May County. I say that because—

Weingandt: General idea of where you mean.

Parker: That’s where it was. We lived in Cape—all over Cape May County. My old—my youngest son was born at Burdette Tomlin Memorial Hospital, Cape May Courthouse—Cape May Courthouse, Cape May County, New Jersey. [laughs]

[00:30:12]

Weingandt: Now the ’53, ’54, help me with this. The Korean War was—

Parker: Closing down

Weingandt: Closing down then, were you getting—

Parker: I got a service defense medal, that's the only one I got. National defense medal.

Weingandt: Were you receiving patients from the Korean Conflict?

Parker: Bethesda was, but I was not in that wing. I was in a wing where all the women were.

Weingandt: As patients?

Parker: As patients. The one, as I started to say before, I know I ramble, I'm sorry. The ward next door, I was 126A, 126 no 127 was next and 128, they were the annexes, that's why they were A. And she was a coma patient that we had. They had started—They didn't have enough special duty WAVES, so we were assigned duty days, and she had to be fed through a tube. Well, some of the girls didn't bother to clean out the glasses or the tubes, you know, you clean out the tube by pushing water through it. You've got to clean out the syringe that you put the fluid in. And he would come in, and he'd raise hell. Well, I can't blame him. She's been in a coma for ten years. He'd massage her. He'd put oil on her, all the way h—[break in recording] Working?

Weingandt: We're in business. Okay. Remember where we were, Florence?

Parker: Yeah, well I was working with this, we spent eight hours, you know—

Weingandt: Talking about the patients.

Parker: No, I think our watch was every four hours, when you went on nights you didn't have a watch, but on days you did. So anyhow, all of a sudden, we heard some noises on 127—28. A lady had been in a coma for ten years and woke up.

Weingandt: Wow.

Parker: That's what the noise was. She woke up, and she wanted to know where the heck she was and started screaming because she didn't know where she was. But anyway, this lady here, she'd also been in a coma for ten years, but I swear, a lot of times, she was faking. Wherever you went in that room, her eyes followed you, and whenever anybody was in that room, the eyes followed them. Now, I'm sorry, but I've never known a person in a coma that can do that. I never have, but she never moved. She never moved, but her eyes followed everybody, and I think she was kind of paying her husband back. Whatever it was, you know. We had some nice conversations while we were taking care—You don't sit mute, you know, you ask what he's doing and health and—

We just enjoyed ourselves in barracks and at night I come in. This lady was there, we had gone to the bar, gotten a taxi, "Do you mind if we drop this one off, this fare off first before we come back in Virginia." "Fine, as long as we don't have to pay for Virginia

back to base.” “No, no. It’s a free ride.” “Okay.” They dropped him off, started back, cabby hands us a fifth of whiskey “If I’m caught in a cab with it, it was a gift, if I’m caught in a cab with it, I’m going to lose my license.” He went back to his base.

Weingandt: The cab driver?

Parker: Uh-huh. He said, “I’ll be out when you finish that.” “Finish what?” You know, I mean, what? “The rest of the bottle.” So the watch came up after he got back to base, he dropped me off, and then he went over to the male barracks, and she come up around I guess, she said around two, “What are you doing in the chair?”

Weingandt: She being who?

Parker: The watch girl, women’s barracks watch girl. I said, “Well,” I slept in the top bunk at the time, “Tried to get up there, my ass is too heavy and wouldn’t let me, so I decided I was going to sleep here.” She gave me a boost in the bed. Did not have a hangover when I woke up.

Weingandt: I was going to ask if there was any alcohol—

[00:35:08]

Parker: He had the alcohol. He had the hangover. I didn’t have any hangover.

Weingandt: I see, but you couldn’t get into your bunk?

Parker: I couldn’t get in my bunk. No. It was too hard to get up there. Wouldn’t get up there. Push. [laughs] That’s what they had to come up at ten o’clock, wake me up. He got tired of waiting for me, he had to leave before too long, you know. It was fun. Yes, when I left home, I went a little wild. I’m sorry, but that’s what happens when you leave home, and I paid for it. Wouldn’t trade him for the world, but that’s beside the point. So, yep, went home, got married, as I said, I kept telling him no. Went up to live with my cousin in Philly, in Camden. Met him, that was fun that night too. And we talked, went to the movie to see *Gone with the Wind*, have yet today to see that movie in full length without interruption. And he kept telling me “Marry me,” and I kept saying “No.” I started to cry. The lady behind said, “Now, look what you did. You got your wife crying. Quit arguing with her.”

Weingandt: Quit what?

Parker: Arguing with her. [laughs] So he took me home. Well, mother and dad, my sister, my couple aunts, I said no. So he set the date, talked to the pastor, and couldn’t get married in church, we had to get married in the pastor’s home.

Weingandt: [sneezes] Excuse me.

Parker: Bless you. Now five more times, and you catch up with us.

Weingandt: [laughs] I'm done.

Parker: [laughs] You're lucky. But anyhow, we stood in front of the minister. Mom and Dad sat over here on the sofa. He and I stood in front of the minister. He looked at my mother, when he asked me. I said, "I do." That's how we got married. Fifty-three years ago this November.

Weingandt: I was just going to ask, how long have you been married?

Parker: Fifty-three years this November.

Weingandt: And we've got the poor guy waiting upstairs.

Parker: That's all right, what the heck.

Weingandt: [laughs]

Parker: I told you, fifty—he leaves me four hours at home by myself, which I'm pleased with. But he takes care of the seniors from church. Visits them, takes them the bulletin, talks with them. If they're in the hospital he'll take time out to visit there, so, yeah, I didn't have that long with Bethesda. I was I guess there from boot camp.

Weingandt: Well, '53 till '54.

Parker: Yeah, '53 boot camp, '53 corps school, I think around December '54 Bethesda, then until June the following year, maybe June.

Weingandt: Of '55?

Parker: Of '54. '53 and '54. Fifty-four, I went to Bethesda, and then was discharged. I think I had about six months in Bethesda.

Weingandt: Okay, good enough.

Parker: So—

[End of Parker.OH1132] [End of interview]