

Interviewee: Peter J. Finley Sr.
Interviewer/Abstractor: Meghan Bassett
Date: April 6, 2013
Location: Pete's home in Sea Isle City, NJ
Running Time: 3:25:09
Recording Equipment: Macbook Pro using the software GarageBand 5.1

ABSTRACT

Peter J. Finley Sr. was born an only child to parents John J. Finley and Margaret Francis Dunn on September 20, 1931, in Philadelphia Pennsylvania. He grew up in the Fairmount section of Philadelphia. Peter attended St. Francis Xavier School for grade school, La Salle Prep School afterwards—located at 1240 North Broad Street at the time—and La Salle College, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology in 1953. Peter's connection to La Salle began early in his childhood; his father, John J. Finley, was in the College's graduating class of 1924. Peter earned a master's degree at the College of William and Mary in June of 1955, and shortly after joined the Marine Corps. In 1956, he was shipped to the Middle East with a battalion to patrol the Mediterranean. Peter married his wife Nancy in 1958 after two tours in the Middle East, and they settled down in Philadelphia, for a short time, to start a family; they would ultimately have five children. Peter worked as a clinical psychologist for the Vineland Training School, as superintendent for the John Helmbold Education Center, he earned his doctorate through Temple University in 1973, and all the while he remained in the U.S. Marine Reserve. He was then called to active duty to work as a psychologist for the Marines, developing screening tests for personnel of American embassies around the world. As a Colonel, he received the highest possible military clearance. He retired in 1998 and now lives with this wife in Sea Isle City, New Jersey.

LOG

- 00:02 Introductions: interviewer's name, interviewee's name, date, location of interview, purpose of interview, and asking of permission to conduct interview.
- 00:27 Born on September 20, 1931, in Germantown hospital "which is now part of the La Salle campus." Explains that his birth in a hospital was rare for his time; most still used midwives for at-home births. Though his parents lived in the Fairmount section of Philadelphia, his mother's parents were in Germantown, and when his mother had medical complications with the birth, she was taken to this hospital for the delivery. He describes Germantown hospital as a local, neighborhood hospital back then, which was typical of most hospitals.
- 02:30 Discusses remaining in the Fairmount section [2219 Myrtle Street] of Philadelphia "until I left to go away to graduate school, which was in 1954." At his time of departure, he had graduated from La Salle College¹ and was accepted in the master's program at the College of William and Mary.² This was the first time he left home, and he explains that he would never *really* return.
- 03:54 Shares that he has, at different times with all of his children and grandchildren, returned to that home on Myrtle Street as well as his mother's Germantown home on Garfield Street (Germantown), where she was raised. He explains that her house has since burned down and, "the neighborhood has deteriorated terribly." Explains that in the fall of 1953 he left and he never went back home because he went to serve in the Marines.
- 04:49 Describes Fairmount area of his youth as a good, tough neighborhood in which to be raised. He relates that now it constitutes what he refers to as "the crime belt of Philadelphia," but it was not always this way. He describes it as being ethnically diverse, and there were definite living boundaries around the Germans, Italians, Irish, Polish, etc. He describes the neighborhood as very interactive, and ethnic slurs against each other were not seen as offensive, rather it was "the way you were and that was it." Blacks, too, lived in this area and he

¹ A private, Roman-Catholic institution, founded in 1863 and located at 20th and Olney Streets in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

² Pete attended graduate school at RPI, the Richmond Professional Institute, which was established in 1917, but in 1939 was renamed the Richmond Professional Institute of the College of William and Mary. This union was dissolved in 1962, and RPI became an independent university before becoming part of what is now Virginia Commonwealth University [Richmond, VA] in 1968.

does not remember any kind of discrimination—any more than doled out to the aforementioned ethnicities—until the war [World War II].

- 06:46 Elaborates on what he meant by describing the neighborhood as a “tough neighborhood.” He does not mean this in terms of crime, but in terms of being independently sufficient out in the streets. Reflects that maybe back then they learned to be more self-sufficient than kids do today. He remembers riding the streetcars and being out into the wee hours of the morning, and never having to worry about safety issues. They were “tough times, but different—less violence.”
- 08:08 Pete explains that tough for him meant that he learned life skills on his own, without fearing those around him. He remembers his sixteen-year-old job with the Post Office, where he delivered papers to rougher sections of town without any fear. Says it was a good job for students on holiday breaks—one could work as many hours as they wanted. (No child labor laws³ yet, says Pete).
- 09:37 He explains the many changes he has seen in the Fairmount section of Philadelphia. “It went to pot” during a recession, and then with “regentrification” of the neighborhood it became a “posh” section of the city again. He relates that the area remains solid now through neighborhood effort. Specifically, he mentions the lasting presence of St. Francis Xavier⁴, the Catholic elementary school where Pete attended.
- 11:05 Pete revisits the idea of toughness and its shaping him as a boy. He reflects on his learning to play sports. He talks of his father instilling in him a desire to learn sports, but says, “the practice came on the streets.” Here he reflects on sports as being an integral part of his learning how to challenge himself, and to compete so as to not stand “on the side lines.”
- 11:38 He explains certain games he and his friends would play as a kid: wire-ball, wall-ball, marbles, and pirate’s chase. They would race, play hide-and-seek, red-rover, and they “never wanted for games to play.”
- 14:00 As they outgrew these games, he says that they were then able to move on to playing basketball or touch-football with “the big guys.”

³ Actually, in 1938, President Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced a federal statute, the Fair Labor Standards Act that addressed child labor issues. Many working children and their parents may not have felt these reforms, or even known of them, at the time Pete is reflecting upon, however [not that his position with the Post Office was an oppressive one].

⁴ A parish primary school of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, located at 24th and Wallace Streets. It’s program ranges from Pre-K to 8th grade.

- 14:24 Discusses his being an only child and relates that there were a plethora of young kids in his neighborhood, and that they all knew each other from street to street, so someone was always around. He mentions his family's being very close, and that they would visit Aunts and Uncles often. He mentions that his Uncle Ed⁵ owned an automobile, but most people would take public transportation, and he himself would roller skate or rode his bike.
- 16:10 Pete remembers, as a twelve or thirteen-year-old, receiving a quarter from his parents and roller-skating from Fairmount into Center City. With that quarter he could see a movie, buy a hamburger and hot chocolate from White Tower Hamburger,⁶ and then take what he had left to the Army and Navy store to buy a military patch [he has a collection that he started in his youth]. He reflects on life as being "a little simpler, but a little more organized, and very definitive."
- 17:03 He returns to the idea of what being an only child meant for him, and he relates the advantage of closeness that he shared with his mother and father. He recounts their taking him to La Salle College to watch football games when he was a boy. "I kind of grew up at La Salle." Also, he explains that he spent much time with his cousins. He remembers being ten when WWII started, and having cousins affected by fighting in the war, and also the correspondence they kept up during the war through letters and souvenirs.
- 18:35 He discusses the McCummins members of his family, who lived in Nottingham, Pennsylvania. He and his mother and father could visit them because Uncle Ed had a vehicle. Uncle Ed was from the next section of Fairmount called Brewerytown."⁷ Pete reflects on the changes that area has seen.
- 19:30 Reflects on his being an only child and the advantages it provided him. He was very close with his parents, and through their support he received "an extraordinary education." He attended St. Francis Xavier for elementary school. For secondary school he attended La Salle College prep school,⁸ and later La Salle College.⁹ Both of these higher

⁵ Edward Dunn

⁶ A competitor of White Castle Hamburgers, the small shop was located at Broad and Race Streets [which is now the southeast corner of the Pennsylvania Convention Center].

⁷ Roughly enclosed by 30th Street, Girard Avenue, 32nd Street, and Glenwood Avenue. The area is located in the North Philadelphia, and, running along the Schuylkill River, received its name because of the many breweries that lined its banks in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

⁸ This was the third location that the school moved to, and was located at 1240 N. Broad Street.

education opportunities, the prep school and college, most of his friends could not afford. “My parents pooled whatever money they had into my education.” Pete’s mother was a telephone operator before she married, but never worked thereafter. Her name is Margaret Francis Dunn (maiden name).

- 21:20 His father, John Joseph Finley Jr., was also an only child. He explains that he his mother and father lived in the Fairmount section on Bucknell Street when John met Pete’s mother. Pete’s paternal grandfather, John J. Finley Sr., was a motorman on a trolley car for the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Corporation.¹⁰ Pete cannot recall is paternal grandmother. John J. Finley Sr. was born in 1876 (roughly), Pete’s father in 1905, and his mother in 1900. His grandfather owned the house in which Pete lived with his parents as a young boy, and he lived with them until he passed.
- 22:58 He did not impact Pete greatly. He remembers him as “a man of his time—very autocratic and very domineering.” Family relationships were not his forte, Pete recalls, especially with Pete’s mother whom he treated as more of a “maid servant.” Pete’s relationship with him was distant because he “simply was not there a lot.” He worked and then stayed in his part of the house. Reflecting on it now, Pete believes his grandfather may have had some kind of early dementia or Alzheimer’s that he couldn’t have understood as a young child. And so he feels differently about him now than he did as a child.
- 24:32 He cannot remember his maternal grandmother. His maternal grandfather, John Joseph Dunn, was a Philadelphia police captain. He was very controversial in the police force. “He wanted everything by the book,” and he was often in the newspapers critiquing the police force.
- 26:09 Pete remembers his father and his uncle, Edward Dunn (mother’s brother)—also a Philadelphia police officer—discussing a man named Smedley Butler¹¹ who was an “authoritarian, almost dictatorial type of person who was the head of the Philadelphia police department.” And this man and his grandfather “were at it all the time.” Pete shared that

⁹ The college moved to 20th and Olney Streets in Philadelphia in 1930, but retained the building at 1240 N. Broad Street as an annex for high school students for some time, and this is why Pete attended high school at its 1240 location.

¹⁰ Pete means the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company. This was established in 1902 with the merging of several independent transportation companies. It would, in 1940, become the Philadelphia Transit Company [PTC], and eventually be incorporated into what is now the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority [SEPTA].

¹¹ He was a Major General in the United States Marine Corps. When he died he was the most decorated general to date in the history of the Corps.

when he joined marines and was going through his first officer's candidate school, he had to take courses on the history of the Marine Corps, and the name Smedley Butler was taught. As it turned out, when Butler retired from the Corps, he moved to Philadelphia and became the director of the police force. [Phone rings in background]

- 27:55 Pete recalls taking trips to Atlantic City as a youth, and this was at the "height of the Steel Pier age."¹² Pete's father was working for the Philadelphia Transit Company¹³ and received two weeks vacation every summer. Pete believes that his grandfather influenced his father to work for the PTC, but "he didn't want him to drive a trolley car." However, Pete shares that his dad did drive a trolley car and a bus during the WWII because he was too old to be drafted, but fit enough to work. He was in the insurance and claims adjusting department of the PTC, "but he was pulled out to drive [during the war]."
- 29:07 He reflects on the fact that even though the war was being fought, that people still took their vacations. And he remembers Atlantic City's hotels housing "hundreds of people...it was called the playground of the world." He also shares that during the war these hotels were "converted into hospitals for the troops," and relatives would visit their loved ones who were housed in these makeshift hotel-hospitals.¹⁴ The wounded, Pete remembers, were solely American soldiers.
- 30:42 His family would visit there one week a year and stay in the "Lexington Hotel on New York Avenue—it's no longer there it's a big casino now." The other week of his father's vacation, his family would visit his mother's sister's, Mary McCummins (Mame), family in Nottingham, Pennsylvania. She and her husband had six sons, and were very poor. Pete remembers these country trips as "incredible." [Pete and the narrator laugh about a story he related to her the evening before, but it is not elaborated upon here].
- 32:08 His Uncle Ed and his wife Elsa (Dunn) had no children and treated Pete much as their own. Pete spent a lot of time with them and regards Ed as one of his heroes. Because Ed had a car and worked shift-work, he had the time and ability to take Pete places he wouldn't

¹² Atlantic City's 1,000 foot-long amusement pier. During the time Pete reflects on the pier, it was referred to as the "Showplace of the Nation," and its entertainment acts were famous.

¹³ Referred to here by its acronym, PTC. The Philadelphia Transit Company eventually became SEPTA, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority.

¹⁴ Perhaps find an example of one of these.

have gone otherwise. Ed was in the First World War; he fought in France.

- 33:14 Pete shares that Ed and Elsa Dunn would pick up Pete and his mother and father, and they would all drive down to Atlantic City. He remembers Atlantic City being different than today. “People of all cuts of life went there. It wasn’t just gamblers...people went to walk the boardwalk, and they went to go bathing—it was thought to be curative...” He remembers the boardwalk being full of “all kinds of boutiques.” Pete says his father and Uncle Ed were practical jokers, and he shares a particularly funny story about the Planter’s Peanut guy on the boardwalk (beginning at 34:49).
- 37:30 Pete tells another funny story about him, his father and mother, and his Uncle Ed and Aunt Elsa at Kent’s Restaurant in Atlantic City. He mentions that this particular trip they all took the excursion train¹⁵ down to the shore. It took passengers “from North Philadelphia station or Broad Street station in Philadelphia to Atlantic City...cost a buck.” He tells his restaurant story.
- 40:12 Mentions going to the Chicago World’s Fair in 1934 which, for Pete’s family, was “like going to Antarctica.” He was only three so he does not remember it, though. Pete’s father would take him every weekend to explore nearly “every place in Philadelphia.”
- 41:25 States that Uncle Ed’s “beat” (patrol) was Vine Street [not yet the Vine Street Expressway]. “It was all old factories and old warehouses and dilapidated buildings.” Ed took Pete with him into Chinatown and “what they used to call the Tenderloin Section of Philadelphia.” He says that many homeless veterans of WWI and WWII lived in these old buildings, and that his Uncle would try and make sure that these men had provisions. “He was like a social worker rather than a police officer, and he would take me with him.” Pete shares some insight he received from his Uncle Ed during these trips.
- 43:51 When asked to reflect on whether or not these trips with his Uncle may have influenced his later career path in psychology, Pete begins to talk about his experience at La Salle College. He started in their pre-dental program, and was doing so poorly in his first two years that a meeting was convened to determine whether or not he should continue with his education. Interventions like this were not uncommon. The faculty members present were Brother Vincent

¹⁵ The Atlantic City Line (ACL) is operated by New Jersey Transit and runs from Philadelphia to Atlantic City. Atlantic City’s popularity in the 20th century owed much to this inexpensive transportation, which enabled city-dwellers to reach the destination.

Grimes,¹⁶ Brother Christopher,¹⁷ and Brother Francis John.¹⁸ Pete recaptures the meeting and the following week that he was given to contemplate his response to the Brothers. He was given a book on psychology to read by Brother Vincent during this week. It is noteworthy to mention that during this story, Pete remembers his summer stays in Stone Harbor, New Jersey, where he worked for the nuns at the convent the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin Mary.

- 47:58 Pete explains the location of the Brother's house "in those days." (Which is actually the same building they live in now, in College Hall). He also explains that the bookstore, now, was once the high school, and that there was a gymnasium in this building where both the high school and college students played. He explains that La Salle's location at 1240 Broad Street was "an annex." It was once both a college and a high school, but they moved to its present Olney location in 1930. "They kept 1240, and if you lived south of Broad Street you went to 1240 for your freshman year in high school." The students then moved to the "main campus" [Olney location] to complete their sophomore, junior and senior years of high school.
- 49:45 Pete completed his freshman year of high school at La Salle's 1240 North Broad Street campus from 1945-1946. He then went to the Olney campus in September of 1946 to complete his last three years of high school and then four years of college. "That's why I really feel like I grew up at La Salle." The academic intervention (referred to in index 43:51) occurred at the end of Pete's sophomore year in college, in the summer of 1951. The book given to Pete by Brother Vincent Grimes was called *Careers in Psychology*, and Pete remembers thinking "This is it. This is what I've been looking for." He switches his major to psychology in the summer of '51, and "at that time there were four psychology majors in the entire college—I was one of them." Pete turned his academic career around, and by the time he graduated in 1953, he was accepted into three graduate schools.
- 52:10 When asked to reflect on what subject most students were majoring in at that time, Pete answers, "Business was the big field." He also relays that La Salle's biology program "may have been one of the best

¹⁶ (b.1913-1981) F. Vincent Grimes. Founder and first chair of the Psychology Department, and founder of the Counseling Center at La Salle University. For more information see: http://www.lasalle.edu/provost/memorial_wall/Column3.htm#2

¹⁷ (b. 1908-1991) F. Christopher Businsky taught biology at La Salle College during this time. Seems to have been the College's first Dean, as he was first named the "active dean" and then later, the position was made official. For more information see: http://www.lasalle.edu/provost/memorial_wall/Column4.htm

¹⁸ (b. 1902-1994) Brother Francis J. McCormick taught economics during this time. For more information see: http://www.lasalle.edu/provost/memorial_wall/Column5.htm#8

ones in the country...their reputation was flawless.” Pete reflects on his decision to first try his collegiate hand at Dentistry. When someone went to the a college prep school, like he had, “it was assumed that you were going to be some kind of a professional.” He remembers being given an aptitude test there by a guidance counselor who was a novel figure in schools in those days, he says, and dentistry was suggested, so he just went with it.

54:14 Pete credits Brother Vincent Grimes’ with essentially saving his life “literally and figuratively.” He relates that the Brothers’ presence was very prominent at La Salle, and that they were “very few lay-teachers.” Pete offers a story to help explain why Brother Vincent may have taken an interest in his academic well-being. It involves a close friend who had just split with a girlfriend and was having a very tough time—so much so that he was becoming suicidal. In summation, Pete quit the baseball team and joined the crew team, in which his friend was a member, so that he could help him through the tough time. Pete believes that maybe Brother Vincent may have recognized in him certain abilities of “a kind of person who should go into something like psychology.”

58:43 Brother Vincent Grimes also helped Pete decide between accepting offers to play baseball professionally after college, he was a first baseman, or to continue on to graduate school. He remembers his baseball coach, Frank Hoerst,¹⁹ helping him too. The St. Louis Cardinals and the Chicago White Sox recruited Pete in 1953, but he explains that the many classes through which a recruited athlete had to work through to make it to the pros made the option a daunting one. Ultimately, he decides that he wants to pursue a master’s degree.

1:01:47 Interviewer asks him to clarify the difference between La Salle’s location at 1240 North Broad Street and its location on Olney Avenue. (See index 47:58). At the Olney location, the high school and college shared most of the facilities. He says that there were “maybe four hundred students, at the most, in high school and not too many more in college.” Pete remembers that many of “the guys” in college were benefitting from the G.I. Bill²⁰ and were simultaneously working and attending school.

¹⁹ A La Salle alum and star basketball player, Hoerst played for the Philadelphia Phillies before returning to La Salle to coach their baseball. He coached Pete. Further information: http://www.baseball-reference.com/bullpen/Lefty_Hoerst

²⁰ The Serviceman’s Readjustment Act of 1944 that aided veterans of the Second World War. The aid extended to schooling, and veterans could receive cash payments toward tuition and other school fees so they could earn an education.

- 1:03:23 La Salle did not yet own the property across 20th street—where the tennis courts, library, Hayman center, etc. now exist—it was still the property of the Wister family.²¹ This reflection triggers a memory for Pete concerning the caretaker of the Wister estate circa 1900. The name of the caretaker at that time was Edward Dunn, and Dunn is Pete’s mother’s maiden name. He shares that he and his cousin Sarah Bassett [whom he refers to here by her nickname, Sally] disagree on whether this man, Edward Dunn, was his mother’s grandfather or great uncle.
- 1:05:04 Elaborating on the connection between the Wister estate and Pete’s mother’s family, he shares that his mother had memories of going with her family to “the estate of a very wealthy family” that lived near La Salle as a child. Pete states that there is a book written by a Jim Butler²² on the history of these grounds [Pete’s wife Nancy is talking on the phone in the background throughout this segment], and Pete took a tour of the property that was led by Butler. He asked the author about this issue, and when Pete gives his mother’s maiden name [Dunn], Butler replies, “How about Ed Dunn?” Butler then shares with Pete an article that was published in the Germantown Crier²³ concerning the Wister family in which Ed Dunn’s name is mentioned. He also shared with Pete that Dunn lived in what is now the Japanese Tea Room.
- 1:09:15 Reflecting on his family’s history at La Salle, Pete says, “It’s almost ironic,” how his father, with no “prior connection to La Salle,” ends up meeting his future wife, Margaret Dunn, “who had nothing to do with La Salle”—except for this relative, Edward Dunn—and both became prominent figures at the school. For example, Pete says that during his high school years, his father was president of the Father’s Club and his mother was president of the Mother’s Club. Pete says that these clubs aimed to get parents volunteering at fundraisers, chaperoned events, etc.
- 1:10:41 States that every Saturday night, dances were held by La Salle High School in its auditorium, which is now the university chapel in College Hall. Pete loves to dance; his mother taught him how to, and he shares that his favorite dance was the jitterbug. He remembers being in the Marines and winning many a dance contest in various locations. He says that he loved going out and dancing on the weekends as a young

²¹ The Wister’s were a wealthy family who owned the grounds that La Salle eventually bought and turned into their campus at 20th and Olney Streets.

²² James Butler, Ph.D, teaches in La Salle’s English department. The book Pete is referring to is entitled *Charles Willson Peale’s “Belfield”: A History of a National Historic Landmark*.

²³ The journal of the Germantown Historical Society. Its circulation began in 1949.

man, and that is mainly why his grades suffered so much in high school and college. He also shares that he would be afraid to attend a dance today because of threats like gang violence. Pete says that at the La Salle dances, two Brothers would stand guard against this kind of thing, and he shares a story about one such incident.

1:15:23 He is asked to tell a story about a specific, controversial basketball game between La Salle and Villanova. Pete then reminisces about “Big Five Basketball.”²⁴ He states that there was much prejudice amongst the rivaling schools [i.e. “Penn would never play La Salle or Villanova or St. Joe’s because they were Catholic schools.”]. He reflects that the rivalry and intensity here, among these five, is unlike any other in the country. [Pete pauses to check on his wife, and we take a brief break]

1:17:33 Pete begins the story about the La Salle vs. Villanova game, which he dates in the late 1930s, early 1940s. He says the game was played in Philadelphia’s Convention Hall, as was frequent for Big Five games because it was an impartial setting. He remembers there being a huge game-clock set on a stage, and some Villanova students allegedly tampered with the clock to allow their team time to score toward the end of the game. Pete was young at this time, but he remembers his father being in the middle of the mayhem that broke out after the game. He shares another funny anecdote about a La Salle vs. St. Joe’s football game where some La Salle students carried a coffin onto the field on top of which was written, “Here lies St. Joe’s football team.” Pete’s father was also in the middle of the ensuing mayhem.

1:22:48 Pete is asked to talk about his having run for, and winning, the office of President of Student Council in 1952. He says he was the vice-president of his freshman class, he was part of the drama club, and so he was comfortable and funny when speaking in front of people—he was well liked by the student body. He also says that the other people running for office were interested in engaging social, far-reaching politics of their time, and he focused on issues that were particular to La Salle as a “traditional, conservative, Catholic” institution. Reflecting on this now he says, “probably the other group was right.” Pete states that many of his peers were not interested in being involved in social issues and just wanted to focus on their school.

²⁴ The Philadelphia Big Five is comprised of the basketball teams from La Salle University, University of Pennsylvania, Villanova University, Temple University and Saint Joseph’s University. The association between these institutions is not formal, and they are not part of the same conference. Rather, it was formed in 1955 to bring attention to Philadelphian basketball talent.

- 1:28:14 Pete tells a story about the conservative atmosphere of La Salle. During the presidential election of 1952,²⁵ the college newspaper held a mini-ballot of its own and asked students to vote. The votes came back in favor of Eisenhower, the Republican candidate, and when the newspaper published this, Pete remembers people's outrage. They were worried that they were not receiving La Salle's traditional, democratic education. Pete says that he as student council president was directly involved in mediating how to handle the punishment for the students involved without their being expelled. He says that these were the kinds of things that student council was worried about during his time.
- 1:33:47 Pete reflects on the social issues that were affecting his generation. "People were concerned with poverty, and the end of the war—the Second World War was hardly out of our minds and we were just ending the Korean War. And how were we getting into these conflicts with countries that most of us didn't know existed? What about all the veterans coming back from the war?" He reflects on the widespread feeling that "the greatest generation" had saved the world, and that the Americans had, in fact, won the war. How were they going to be cared for and honored? He says that night-time, adult classes started around this time to allow working individuals, often veterans on the G.I. Bill to go to school, too.
- 1:35:48 He remembers the student body getting involved in campus-wide issues like raising costs due to expanding programs. A "no lunch strike day" was organized to protest an increase in cafeteria food. The cafeteria was in Benilde Hall, which is now the Administration Center. Everyone, on that day, brought their lunch, and the cafeteria was stuck with all of the food they did not sell. The prices dropped again again, says Pete. He recalls the College, community spirit amongst the student-body was smaller, and "much more in touch."
- 1:38:13 Pete reflects on why his father, John J. Finley [graduated La Salle in 1924], was called "Mr. La Salle." He was a very involved man, and was a big presence during sporting events. Pete remembers him being able to "incite that fan—the La Salle fans—ten thousands of them like he was a magician...he was just a known person among the student body." Also, his father [and mother] dedicated a lot of their time and ideas to La Salle College. Pete says that an alumnus named Frank Blatcher²⁶ [he believes Blatcher he may have been serving as the

²⁵ Presidential candidates were Eisenhower (Democrat) and Stevenson (Republican).

²⁶ He was graduated in 1956, and played on the men's basketball team. His contributions to the team in '54 and '55 occasioned his induction into the La Salle University Hall of Athletes on February 9, 2013.

Alumni Association's president during the College's centennial celebration in 1963] urged Pete to nominate his father for a memorial award,²⁷ which he did. Talks of the Blue and Gold Ball, a social event at La Salle, that his father played a hand in organizing. [Pete becomes emotional when speaking of his father].

- 1:42:45 The Alumni Association, Pete believes, can trace its roots back to the La Salle Father's and Mother's Clubs [both of which his parents participated in greatly (also mentioned in index 1:09:15)]. He says that the alumni office in those days was working on "establishing what we would call today the network of La Salle people," and he mentions Tom Hickey [class of '48] as being in charge. Pete shares that his own contribution to the association was hindered by his going away to school and going into the Marine reserves, but he helped recruit students and fundraise whenever he could, and much later he served on the association's board of directors.
- 1:47:51 Pete remembers there being "twenty members on the board of directors." They met once a month and "dealt with issues that were central to La Salle's existence." He remembers the controversy around President Bill Clinton's speaking at the university—he came in 1999—and the association was consulted over this. Pete believes the association to be run better now because "it's more representative of the student body and the graduates." There is more rotation among its seat-holders, and so more alumni can participate. He also comments on their increased amount of participation in student affairs today.
- 1:52:17 States that at La Salle "the emphasis is not on sports, the emphasis is on getting an education," and athletes are still expected to achieve high academic standards.
- 1:54:34 After narrator shares her experience concerning the atmosphere of care and devotion that is created by La Salle's faculty, Pete calls this the "La Sallian tradition." He attributes this to the Christian Brother's presence, the legacy of Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle,²⁸ and also to its teaching staff being teaching-focused, rather than research-focused.

²⁷ Hyperlink leads to a page titled "Milestones of La Salle's Alumni Association." Scroll to the date "1963": <http://explorersconnect.lasalle.edu/s/1206/index-nortcol.aspx?sid=1206&gid=1&pgid=567>. This award becomes the John J. Finley Award, which is given for outstanding service to the alumni association or to the university. Pete was a recipient in 2010.

²⁸ The patron saint of teachers. He was a devoted teacher and priest, and founded the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

- 1:57:05 Pete graduated in 1953 with a degree in psychology and then pursues a master's degree in psychology at the College of William and Mary. The graduate/professional school of that College was located in Richmond, Virginia.²⁹ Pete tells a funny story about his confusion concerning which campus he was actually attending, and how he did not realize this until he arrived in Virginia.
- 2:00:00 Pete lived in a home that was rented out to college students by a widower [her husband lost everything in the Great Depression and committed suicide]. He describes it as a "glorious antebellum home." He found this residence with the help of the Bishop of the Diocese of Richmond, whose office was next door to her home. Pete reflects on the humility of the woman whose house this was, and the lessons he gained from her behavior.
- 2:02:48 His curriculum in graduate school was "very difficult," and he compares it to the expectations of today's master's curriculums. He interned at what was called a reform school [like today's juvenile detention centers]. Being in the South, he says most of the students were black or poor. He wrote his thesis on the vocational interests of the students there. "[Answering machine in background] They had interests that exceeded the interest level [overlapping voices] of kids who were not reform school graduates—who were in regular high schools."
- 2:04:33 [Answering machine in background]
As he was finishing school and thought he was headed for a future in clinical psychology, the Korean War was ending and he felt badly for not having served his country [he received two deferments, one while in La Salle College, and the other while attending graduate school]. Pete decided to check into the armed forces' need for psychologists. The Marine Corps' recruitment officer to whom he spoke said that because of Pete's education he who would be best fit to begin his service at the Officer Candidate School³⁰ at the base in Quantico, Virginia.
- 2:07:22 Pete enlists in the Marines, finishes graduate school at William and Mary College in June of 1955, and returns to Philadelphia to work for the summer as "one of the first psychologists in the counseling center at La Salle—they offered me a full-time job." He says that Brother

²⁹ This establishment, the Richmond Professional Institute (RPI), was not affiliated with the College of William and Mary until 1939.

³⁰ OCS is the pre-commissioning course that enlisted men took to become officers. Pete's credentials made him a good candidate.

Vincent Grimes [founder of the psychology department], Jack Rooney and Tom McCarthy [psychology staff members then] were responsible for jump-starting the counseling services at La Salle.

- 2:08:33 In September of 1955 he enters the Marines, in December he is commissioned to second lieutenant. All the while, Pete was under the impression he would be a psychologist in the Marines, and his officers found this idea hilarious. He [laughing] remembers them joking amongst themselves about this idea of his—that he would “fall for such a story like that.” He remains at Quantico, Virginia, for another six months to finish the Basic Officer Leaders Course.³¹
- 2:10:48 Pete returns to Philadelphia for what was expected to be a fifteen-day leave [permission to be away for a specified amount of time] before being assigned to a unit on Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune. During that time he receives a telegram asking him to surrender his leave to join a battalion that was heading for the Middle East to patrol the Mediterranean. Pete heads to Camp Lejeune and remembers being there for a month before his battalion was shipped out.
- 2:11:53 Lives on a ship in the Mediterranean for seventh months. His battalion “rescued the United Nations’ truce team from the Gaza strip during the Arab-Israeli war of 1956.” He discusses a “forty-eight hour truce” that was arranged so that his squadron could rescue refugee Americans who were taken to Cairo. His battalion traversed the desert and brought them to Alexandria where they boarded ships, sailed to Crete, and were flown back to the U.S. His squadron was then “pulled to go participate in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.”³² He reflects on the Eisenhower administration changing their decision to assist the Hungarians as a result “they were massacred.” In January of 1957 he returns to Camp Lejeune.
- 2:15:17 In February of 1957, while home on leave, he meets his future wife, Nancy on a blind date that was arranged by friends. Pete remembers driving from Camp Lejeune on Friday nights to Philadelphia, about a twelve-hour drive, to date Nancy on the weekends. He shares that the Marines were always kept on patrol in the Mediterranean and that “trouble was brewing.” Pete had just been promoted to First Lieutenant and they needed experienced officers, so he was transferred to the battalion that was preparing to go patrol the

³¹ BOLC encompasses the entire training a person receives to become a commissioned officer. It is comprised of two phases BOLC A and BOLC B. The first phase is the OCS that Pete began with, and the second phase trains them to perform wartime-duties as commissioned officers.

³² Referred to, also, as the Uprising of 1956. It was a revolt of the people against the Soviet style government of the People’s Republic of Hungary, but ultimately failed.

Mediterranean. From January/February of 1957 until April of 1958 he was stationed at Lejeune with this battalion. He would go back and forth to see Nancy, and he proposed to her before he left for duty.

- 2:19:47 They were able to marry in November of 1958, but they did not see each other until he came back home in October of that year. He explains what weddings were like back then. He says that Nancy had made all of the preparations, but he did not get home from the Middle East until the day of his wedding, so she had to reschedule everything for a month later.
- 2:22:16 On his second tour in the Mediterranean his battalion was shipped to Lebanon. He says they “landed and took over the country and seized the airport.” Pete, at this time, was an executive officer and was “second in command of an infantry rifle company.” There for about seven weeks, his troops were “responsible for guarding the president’s palace, the British, French and American embassies, and guarding the port area” of Beirut, Lebanon’s largest city. Then they moved into the mountains and patrolled the Beqaa Valley. They stayed in the Mediterranean for another several weeks and then came home in October. He was released from active duty in December 1958.
- 2:24:10 He and his wife spent their first month together living in the married couple’s quarters at Camp Lejeune. He describes the community there. They then came back to Glenolden, Pennsylvania, to live with Nancy’s parents and it was difficult for Pete to find work because he had no experience as a psychologist yet. He began substitute teaching in Philadelphia, and Nancy was pregnant with their first child.
- 2:26:37 Finds work as a clinical psychologist at the The Training School at Vineland,³³ “which at the time was the most famous school in the world for the education of mentally retarded children.” He remembers his commute—riding the ferry across the Delaware River and into New Jersey. Eventually, they decided to move to Vineland and to have Nancy’s parents move in with them.
- 2:28:23 Pete wanted to pursue a doctorate “because even in those days—in the late Fifties—you couldn’t do anything without a doctorate in psychology.” He describes the troubles he had with getting accepted into a program. He stays at the Training School for seven years, and then went to work in the public school system as a psychologist. “The laws of the land were changing now with respect to the education of

³³ Now called the Vineland Training School, it is a non-profit establishment whose staff work with the developmentally disabled to educate them in hopes that they will eventually live independently.

handicapped children, and schools were being required to hire school psychologists and child study teams.”

- 2:30:28 Pete remained in the Marine Reserves and drilled with reserve units in Pennsylvania. He says this was a way to keep up his rank, to keep serving his country, and it also provided extra income. He accepted an offer to go into a private practice with a psychologist in Vineland, which he did, but he disliked it. He then taught in the school of Nursing at Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center,³⁴ and by that time Nancy had three more children. Pete’s father passed, and his mother came to live with them in Vineland. [Nancy’s parents still lived with them].
- 2:33:45 He is accepted into a doctoral program at the University of Ottawa³⁵ in Canada, and they were planning to move to Canada for the four years it would take him to finish. Pete spent two summers in this program, but he eventually withdrew because of the distance and he and Nancy’s parents’ declining health.
- 2:34:56 Pete was working at Oakcrest High school³⁶ when he was accepted into Temple University’s doctoral program. Soon after, he left Oakcrest and took a part-time position as the staff clinical psychologist and director of the preschool program at the John Helmbold Education Center in Corbin City, New Jersey. It was a school for deaf and hard-of-hearing children. He explains its unique programs for its time. Pete completes his doctorate in 1973, and is offered the position of superintendent at Helmbold. He remains there for seventeen years.
- 2:38:14 Pete reflects on not serving in the Vietnam War, but he was still in the Reserves.³⁷ He explains his doctorate that he earned through Temple University. He started in 1967, and he says his dissertation was called “the dimensions of cognitive style on school performance.” He explored how self-concept, reflection impulsivity, and cognitive style affected school performance in fifth-grade, poor children from rural schools.
- 2:42:54 He shares that “Psychology has lost some of its impact in the big picture in schools today. Psychiatry is more prominent.” Increasingly, more and more people are misdiagnosed with disorders “because they [the industries] get more money for it.” He says that

³⁴ Located in Camden, New Jersey.

³⁵ A public research University in Ontario, Canada.

³⁶ Located in Mays Landing, New Jersey.

³⁷ Marine Corps Reserve units were not recalled during the conflict.

psychologists specialized in properly diagnosing disabilities, and he reflects on the work that he and his staff at the John Helmbold Education Center accomplished during his years as superintendent. He credits his “good training” in how to put together an exemplary faculty to the things he learned in the Marine Corps.

- 2:47:12 Talks of the community at the John Helmbold Education Center as being very unique. “It was not unlike La Salle. A lot of what I had learned and saw had La Salle I tried to incorporate into that school district, and it worked.” By this time, he is a major in the Reserves, he has five children, and he mentions that he had taught at Rutgers, part-time, as an assistant professor for ten years. Also, he had been an internship supervisor at both Rutgers and Temple during this part of his life.
- 2:48:16 “In the meantime, I get sent to a school in the Reserves on how to load ships—an embarkation school.” Pete’s instructor had the students fill out a paper that asked of them their credentials as Marines and also what they did in civilian life. Pete’s being a psychologist and school administrator caught the instructor’s eye, and put Pete in touch with a General Davis in Washington. Pete went there to meet him, and the general was “appalled” that Pete was sent to an embarkation school and says they could use his expertise at the recruit depot center on Parris Island.³⁸
- 2:50:36 Pete was sent to Parris Island to “evaluate the Marine recruit training program for why so many people were not making it through that program during the war when they needed troops.” He would be put on temporary active duty to complete assignments like this one, and he traveled “all over the world” to lend his expertise in the development or reconfiguring of Marine programs. In 1986 he had to retire from the Marine Corps, and he explains that this is because of the ranking system in place.
- 2:53:27 Pete retires the Marine Corps in 1986, and he remembers them having a parade for him at the Marine barracks at Washington. A commanding officer there was interested in how Pete was assigned to such jobs like Parris Island. He asked Pete if he would like to lead a stress management class for “the officers and staff NCOs³⁹ who are assigned here at he barracks who march in the Friday evening parades.” Pete does this in October of 1986, and he is invited to do this again later that winter.

³⁸ Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island (MCRD PI) is a military installation used for training enlisted Marines.

³⁹ Non-commissioned officers.

- 2:55:03 Discusses an incident at the American embassy in Moscow involving a Marine who “got hooked up with the KGB” and was providing them with classified information concerning personnel at the embassy, and eventually he was discovered and was taken into custody. Pete, now retired, was asked to go to Moscow to interview the defector, and to also help set up a program for “screening, selecting, training and assigning the Marines who guard the embassies throughout the world.” He explains this story of “espionage” in detail to show how badly the Marines needed a program like the one he was asked to help design.
- 2:59:13 He never went to Russia, but through telephone discussions with the Marine in custody, Pete decided that he should be put on the suicide watch while preparations were being made for his return to the United States. Starting with this incident, his involvement in assignments concerning the Marines who guarded American embassies and the President of the United States lasted for another twelve years. “That’s how I got to Camp David,⁴⁰ that’s how I got to HMX-1.”⁴¹ He discusses the clearance he received that enabled him to be in the presence of the President. When he began this work in 1987, he was the only man particularly focusing on designing screening programs for potential Marine guards.
- 3:01:36 Pete shares that “the benefit of psychology was never recognized by the armed forces.” Back then, should a Marine suggest he needed psychological evaluation it would have ended his career. Pete—having been a Marine who had seen combat, having been promoted in rank, who was given high recommendations for this position—was “able to get really great cooperation from all these commanders who were all the same rank as me [colonel].” He discusses being sent to many different embassies to screen personnel and he calls these experiences “a whole different world.”
- 3:06:39 Though rewarding, he remembers this work as “very stressful.” Pete shares a story of a discussion he had with, at that time, Senator Joe Biden from Delaware, to convey the degree of confidentiality associated with his job. He discusses the strain of having to be away from his family, but offers that his children benefitted from the job,

⁴⁰ Camp David is formally known as the Naval Support Facility Thurmont, and is the President’s country retreat located in Catoctin Mountain Park in Maryland. Many a foreign leader has been hosted at this retreat.

⁴¹ Marine Helicopter Squadron One has the responsibility of the helicopter transport of the President, Vice President, members of the cabinet, and VIPS. It also tests developing flight systems for Marine Corps helicopters.

too [i.e. Pete had the income to support them all, they attended special events with him, etc.].

- 3:11:10 Reflects on the rewarding aspects of the job, and also his own contributions to the Marine Corps as a result of his screening programs. Explains that what he had was a “sole source contract” with the government to go out and set up programs, and eventually, lawyers took issue with this. Pete handled the issue by putting in a bid as a “civilian contractor” and winning the contract anyway,” but he shares that he was started to tire of the work. He discusses how he advised the Marine Corps to transition him out of his position and to usher others in.
- 3:15:58 Retires from the Marine Corps in 1998, he is no longer teaching, his children are grown, so he and his wife decided to move to Sea Isle City, New Jersey, 2003. This same year, Nancy was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease,⁴² and they had the house they moved into remodeled with her disorder and, also, both their ages in mind [handicap accessibilities]. He talks of Nancy’s disease, its progression, and explains a little about it.
- 3:17:54 Pete reflects on things, [becomes emotional] but says that he is “overjoyed” with it all. He remembers again how he was almost expelled from La Salle, and “if it wasn’t for the Brothers, I probably would have [been].” He reflects on his emotional reaction toward things in this stage of his life.
- 3:20:58 The two talk about the interview, its form and content.
- 3:24:42 Formal thank-you’s are offered, and the interview ends at 3:25:09.

⁴² This disease slowly damages the central nervous system. Sufferers progressively lose their movement and speech skills.