Paul W. Beach, Jr. '67
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Vietnam Project
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Transcribed by Karen Navarro

BLIEK: Good afternoon. This is Bryan [M.] Bliek ['18], and I'm on campus at Dartmouth College in Rauner Special Collections Library. The narrator I'm speaking to today is Mr. Paul Beach, a member of the Class of 1967, who is with me in person in the Ticknor room. The date is Wednesday, April 19th, 2017. The time is 2:00. Welcome back to campus, Paul.

BEACH: Thank you very much.

BLIEK: So let's get started with your early life. So, I had the opportunity to pull the 1967 yearbook out of Rauner, and I saw that you graduated from Hatboro-Horsham High School [Horsham, PA]—

BEACH: Horsham.

BLIEK: Okay. So, is that you're from originally?

BEACH: No, originally from Philadelphia [PA], from the Frankford section of Philadelphia, where I lived till I was eleven. Moved to Hatboro [PA], which is a suburb, in that year, '57, at a time when many people were moving to the suburbs from the cities. It was a step up for my parents.

BLIEK: In what sense was it—

BEACH: Well, so Frankford section is, or at that time was a blue-collar, working class neighborhood, and Hatboro was a lower middle-class suburb, so, and with grass and things that we didn't have up until that point.

BLIEK: Okay. So let me backtrack a little bit and ask you about your parents. So, who are your parents?

BEACH: Okay. So, my parents were both from that same neighborhood. They both grew up there. Each of them was the first in their extended families to graduate high school. And my father had worked as a steamfitter and my mother

was a secretary. And, actually relevant to what we're going to talk about, one of the things, my father worked in the 1930s in the Philadelphia Navy Yard. And when World War II started, he wanted to join the military in some form, probably the Navy, but because of his having a skill in a military-related facility, they wouldn't let him go. So, that for him, as I was growing up I was aware that it was always a sort of sore point for him that he hadn't done what men are supposed to do during World War II. So, as we go on, you know, that played a role in my development issues.

Other things to say about my mother came from a very strict Methodist family where things like card playing, dancing, alcohol, all were very forbidden. And that sort of extended into my childhood. My father was a little less like that, but he went along with my mother who had been very steeped in that kind of upbringing.

BLIEK: So what kind of personality did you have growing up, and did that fit in with your parents' personalities?

BEACH: Yeah, we were—I mean, I always, growing up I felt very comfortable with my family. And I was kind of a bright kid, did well in school, and they were proud of me. I have an older sister, three years older than me, and we were like the, you know, a fairly comfortable, I guess you could say, family. We got along. I wasn't aware of any tension in the family.

BLIEK: So, you first grew up in Philadelphia, correct?

BEACH: Right. Yes.

BLIEK: So, how was that for you?

BEACH: Well, I mean, just to relate it to what I was just saying, the funny thing, I was very comfortable in the neighborhood. One of the things I always tell people about the neighborhood was, you know, especially by today's standards, all the kids were out on the street all the time. Starting at age four or five, you could be out on the street with your friends, and the parents didn't have to know where you were every minute. And we played a lot of street imitation baseball games of like stick ball and something we called handball, which is where you just, you had the bases and you threw a pinky ball up and hit it with your fist and ran

the bases and so forth. So, summers were like that out on the street.

And so, what I started to say is when my parents told me we were moving, I was distraught, you know, leaving my friends and that. And my sister, who had more of the sense of grass and how it was going to be so much better, was very happy. And it turned out, when we moved, I adjusted very quickly, and she had a much harder time adjusting, so it was kind of ironic, given the expectations. So, I guess that's…

BLIEK: What were some of the big differences you noticed moving from Philadelphia into Hatboro? You mentioned you now had grass and…

BEACH: Right. Well, so, back to the baseball analogy, I mean, there was Little League organized instead of us doing it on the street and just organizing ourselves. There was an organization already there with adults monitoring it. So that's one. What else? Was school different? School, so I went into the seventh grade the year we moved there. So, the school that I went to in Philadelphia was huge. There were I think 950 kids in the school. And in the junior high school that I entered, in my class there were only 150 or something like that. So it was smaller, considerably smaller.

People were a little more well off. Though, a funny thing, at some point I could, at Dartmouth [College], I sort of came to recognize class for the first time. I hadn't—I was very un-class aware, but when I looked back, I could see, you know, there were the old families. Hatboro was an old town, dated back to colonial times, but there was enough space there, that sort of modern—new housing for people leaving the city was built. So there were the old families of Hatboro, there were the people who came from other parts of working class Philadelphia, and then also there were a fair number of people who were moving down from coal country, Pennsylvania coal country, to the area. So, there was that mix. But, personally I didn't see it. In retrospect, I can see it. And I guess on some level I was aware, but it didn't really impact me.

BLIEK: Earlier you mentioned that moving to Hatboro was sort of a step up for your parents.

BEACH: Right.

BLIEK: Was Hatboro near the water or did your parents change occupation after they moved there?

BEACH: Okay. So when my father no longer had work—by that time he was no longer working at the Navy yard. He worked for the Link-Belt Company, which makes large construction equipment. And my mother worked in the city, and for the first seven or eight years that we were in Hatboro she still commuted daily to her job in the— downtown Philadelphia. So, your question was, did they—no, there was no—yeah, the jobs were changed, but they had changed before. And he worked in Philadelphia for Link-Belt originally, but they had another plant not too far from our new house, and partly, I think he'd already started working at that place, which had something to do with the move.

Related to that, when we were still in Philadelphia, my parents used to occasionally as the Sunday entertainment go look at houses, and sometimes my sister and I would go along. But I was always told that this was just entertainment, [laughter] and that came into my sense of betrayal—I felt betrayed when they told me we were moving, because I think, in retrospect, they were looking already with some intent, and somehow the way I heard what they told me was, "We're not moving. We're just doing this for interest."

BLIEK: Another thing you mentioned was that Hatboro had a Little League organization.

BEACH: Right.

BLIEK: Was that something you were involved in?

BEACH: Yeah. Yeah.

BLIEK: And were there any other sorts of clubs or anything you participated in?

BEACH: Let's see, initially… Well, in school, in seventh, eighth grade, I was on the 100-pound football team, and actually played basketball in junior high. Basically, that's it.

BLIEK: Okay. So, let's move it up to high school, then. So, what was your high school experience like?

BEACH: So, I liked high school. I think, you know, I felt comfortable. I was in the pretend student governments and all that kind of thing that sort of (quote) “leaders” got involved in, and enjoyed my—I think I enjoyed my classes maybe partly because I felt like I could do it, and was comfortable with a lot of friends. And the sports thing sort of came to something of a close, which I still attribute, I skipped a grade when I was in Philadelphia, and I was late into the growth curve even for my age. So I was a year behind and late, and so, I was too small, and was very frustrated by not being able to play football anymore, I mean, make the team, that is to say.

And a little, cute anecdote also… So, when other boys were much taller than I was, I was like 5’1” in eighth or ninth grade, and it was a time there was a popular song out called “Tall Paul.” [laughter] So, I got called “Small Paul,” and was desperate to, you know, didn’t know if I was ever going to grow. And then, somewhere I guess in the tenth grade, I grew almost like a foot in a year, and I was hugely relieved to see that I was not going to stay 5’1” forever and always be “Small Paul.” But, a couple guys knew that I was sensitive about it, so they played the “Small Paul” game on me. [laughter] Yeah, so go ahead. High school, I’ll let you pose a question rather than go free.

BLIEK: Okay. You mentioned earlier you had been a good student. So, by the time you got into high school, were you sort of narrowing down what your interests were?

BEACH: Yeah.

BLIEK: Or were you interested in everything?

BEACH: Well, so my main interest was, it was a time of just post-Sputnik, and sciences were the thing of the day. And science was sort of my first interest, and then math became my even more interest. The other thing that I would observe, though, from that period with regard to studies was, we had a really good French teacher. And I wanted to take German, because German was the language of science. But, they didn’t have German. They only offered French or Spanish. And there was a teacher came in who was just out of—no, he’d taught at one other school system recently, but he was very young, very energetic, and very into the new method of teaching languages, in particular French, obviously, because I was… He went on actually after about four years at

Hatboro-Horsham High School, he ended up becoming a—he got a PhD and taught at LaSalle College [LaSalle University, Philadelphia, PA]. But, at that point he was a high school teacher.

And, a funny story related to that: so, he came in, and he was very temperamental, and a character, and different for that system. Like for example, there would be pep rallies before football games, and he was like "I can't believe this obsession with sports and being part of a team" and all that. But anyway, and he was also full of vim and vigor about the new methods of teaching languages, which is instead of, in those days it was still you learned it from the book, you learned how to conjugate the verbs in the book. And so, the first day he came in, he said—he came in and he held up a pencil and he said, *"Qu'est-ce que c'est*?" and somehow was able to let us know certain things, and then maybe ten minutes in he said something like, "Okay, I'm now going to speak English for the only time in the next ten days, and so, this is what I want you to know about what we're gonna do, and how we're gonna do it. And I'm gonna make gestures and you're gonna respond to the words that go with the gestures," and so forth.

So, then, maybe two weeks in, he says, "All right, *prenions pièce de papier*," and we're going to have a quiz. And he's dictating, and he says, "Okay, *qu'est-ce que c'est*?" and "write down what I say." Well, I wrote, "K-E-S-S" [laughter] In other words, I did purely phonetically. And I, because my last name is Beach, I'm in the front right where he can see my paper, [laughter] and he blows up. And somehow what I had missed is somewhere along the way he had told us to look in the book. But I didn't know that, so I was still purely on the phonetics. Well, anyway, so it was a very, it was kind of an embarrassing event. But, he and I became very close. I had him for three years of French, and the teaching was good enough that when I came here, I didn't have to—I "pro'ed out" was the term of French, or of the language requirement, and really enjoyed French. And then, it had implications later, as we go on.

BLIEK: Yeah, great. I wanted to go back to something you had mentioned earlier. So when you were talking at the beginning of the interview about your dad, and the idea of, you know, things that men are supposed to do, that you said

that contributed to some issues growing up. Could you explain that a little bit?

BEACH: Not so much growing up. What I said is like later in this discussion, we'll come back to that naturally.

BLIEK: All right, then we'll come back to that later. So, what year did you graduate?

BEACH: High school? '63.

BLIEK: And when you were approaching graduation, did you have an idea of what you wanted to do after high school?

BEACH: After college, you mean, or after—

BLIEK: After high school?

BEACH: What I wanted to do? Well, I mean, I fairly early on knew I wanted to go to Dartmouth. So, I'll talk about how Dartmouth, or why Dartmouth. So the first thing that happened was probably in when I was maybe either in ninth or tenth grade, there used to be a [CBS] TV show on Sundays called "The Sunday Sports Spectacular." And it was a long show, like three hours or so. And I don't remember—and I watched it regularly, but I don't remember other shows, but they did this Dartmouth Winter Carnival one February, you know, during Carnival, either it would have been '59 or '60, I think. Maybe '61. But anyway, it was mostly the skiing and the ice hockey or whatever else there was. But, they did a piece on life at Dartmouth, and it sort of, all the snow—I liked snow—and they sort of emphasized the outdoorsiness and sort of a male comradery kind of thing and all. It appealed. So, I got interested. I didn't at that point make a decision.

And then, in either probably my junior year, or the year before that, John [G.] Kemeny, who put Dartmouth on the map as a math mecca for math students, and math was my main interest at that point. And then, going back to my recollections of the TV show, I just, you know, it solidified that that's where I wanted to go. So, I wanted, from junior year on I was sure that that's where I wanted to, you know, everything else was second. And, what did I want to do? I mean, I saw myself eventually becoming a professor of mathematics, I guess.

BLIEK: Sure. And so, you wanted to go Dartmouth. So obviously, you wanted to go to college after high school.

BEACH: Oh, yeah, it was always a given that I would go to college. And just another observation is we—as I mentioned that my parents were the only ones from each of their fairly large families to graduate high school, my sister and I were the only of our many cousins who went to college. So, even though it was in our—we were clear from, you know, my first grade, I think, that college was in our future, it wasn't in our peer group's future, or family peer group's, I mean. High school peer group, certainly it was. But so, yeah, going to college was always on the agenda.

BLIEK: Sure. So, what was Dartmouth like when you entered as a freshman? Did you have to do any of the pre-matriculation stuff like trips, anything like that?

BEACH: I did go on the trip. I'll go back to high school for one thing before we leave it. Politically—so, as we go on, I mean, obviously this is about the Vietnam [War] experience, so, I had no politics, no sense of, as I said, I didn't have a sense of class and I didn't have a sense of the world, the political world. But, and I remember my senior year was the first—fall of my senior year was the Cuban Missile Crisis, and we had a course called "Problems of Democracy," which was sort of a statewide requirement. All the high schools had to have it, and senior year. And we had a very old blustery teacher who would tell us—we had to write a 150-word article every week on a subject that was given—so, he was (oh, I don't know how to describe it), he was a conservative in both, politically conservative, but stylistically very conservative as well. So, he required—one week we had, the subject was "Should we invade Cuba and take it over?" And he would always tell us what the correct answer that what we were supposed to write the 150 words to develop [laughter]. And the answer was "yes." And, given how I evolved, this is a way of my showing where I was at that point is I wrote *Yeah, we should invade*, and I just did it because that was my understanding of, you know, that's what everybody—the correct answer was.

So, but as the year went on, a couple of things happened. One, I began to question, just on the level of *How do I know that the U.S. is right, when I am sure that in Russia people*

are being told that America's the evil? And it wasn't like I thought the Russians were right and we were wrong; it was just that I said it was more of a question of *How do I know?* And so, that happened. And then, another thing is, so my parents were not well off, and Dartmouth was a relatively expensive place. And they knew that I wanted to go there, and they were sort of prepared to sacrifice for me to go there, but they also wanted me to do everything—and the original plan was that I was going to go into Navy ROTC, which paid your way. And, as the year went on, it came to me that I didn't want to accept the kind of military discipline, and I mean discipline from the point of view of disciplining my thinking, not my actions. And, so at a certain point I told them, "Look, I'm not gonna do it," thinking that might be the end of my Dartmouth… But they said, "All right." They were not happy at all, but they said they were still ready to support me, something for which I'm very appreciative. And numerous times along the way, they were very supportive. We'll come to that some more as we go on, too. So that, then your question was, arriving at Dartmouth.

BLIEK: Let me just ask you a few follow-up questions on what you just said. So, let's talk about the Cold War more generally. So you mentioned the Cuban Missile Crisis specifically. Did you have a broader understanding of the Cold War at that point? Or was that sort of like a specific event that you remember?

BEACH: Oh, no, it was constantly, it was something you couldn't avoid. It was, you know, "we and them." And probably my first political memories were the Hungarian uprising in '56, and, all along things from the Cold War were in my consciousness, yeah. But, did I have strong opinions on them? No. I basically accepted until—as I said, I started to have some questions in my senior year of high school—I basically accepted the consensus, the national consensus, which was pretty much unquestioned in those days, yeah, obviously in much contrast to today.

BLIEK: Could you explain a little bit what your understanding of the national consensus was?

BEACH: Yeah. That the Russian—that Communism was trying to take over the world, and if we didn't stand up to the Russians, we'd be… I mean, I remember a couple radio ads that would say, one said something, "If you're not ready to

do x, y and z, teach your kids to speak Russian because they'll need it." And things like that. So that was my sense is that *there are two major powers in the world, and they're in great conflict, and we're good and they're evil.* So, that was my sort of understanding of the Cold War. If you have other questions, I could build on that.

BLIEK: That's perfectly suitable. I wanted to ask you also, like once you started that process of questioning whether or not the national consensus was, you know, more or less right, did that questioning process, was that just something you developed on your own or were there some people who were influencing you to start to think that way?

BEACH: It was on my own. I really didn't have anybody to discuss it with. Yeah, it was just on my own.

BLIEK: Okay. And for Naval ROTC, so you didn't want to have your thinking corralled?

BEACH: Right.

BLIEK: How did you come to the conclusion that that would happen, exactly?

BEACH: Well, I guess in some sense it was in line with the questioning that we just discussed, is if I were to go into the Navy, I would be under the orders of the people whose motivations or understanding I wasn't sure I would agree with, and I didn't want, in a life and death situation, to be in that situation of having to take orders that I might not agree with. And I already sensed that that might happen.

BLIEK: Okay. So yeah, let's…

BEACH: Well, so one last thing before we leave high school. So, Dartmouth, would I get in or not? I was very anxious about that. And one of the things, and I understand it's still done, is an interview was scheduled for me with alumni who lived nearby. So there was a relatively more intellectual and well off community not too far from Hatboro. Hatboro, a lot of people went to college, but like the Ivy League was not the kind of place that kids from my high school went. And this town was a more upscale town. And, so I went to the interview…

Oh, so I have to drop back for a second. Just before I went to the interview, or maybe a month or so before, I had a paper to write, probably for the same course that I mentioned before, only a longer paper. No, it was for history class. One or the other, I'm not sure. But, and the topic I was writing on was the Japanese invasion of China in the '30s. And I wasn't finding good enough resources at the local level. I went to the local library, the school library and the local library, and didn't feel like I… So, one Sunday I went and my parents drove me into center city Philadelphia to the main public library, and to do the research. And in the process, somehow I discovered the microfilm room, which had on microfilm the newspaper articles from the actual time that it was happening. So, I got into reading those articles as it happened, you know, what the *New York Times* was saying day by day as the Japanese were invading China. And the whole process of being able to read newspaper articles from, at that point, 30 years earlier, captured me to some extent. So, I did some more reading about other things and so forth.

So, I go to the interview, and *the interview is going nowhere,* is my feeling. I'm still, you know, doing the platitudes that I've learned about America and Communism and blah, blah, whatever. Or, you know, why do I want to go to Dartmouth? Because I want to be… And, you know, I sensed from the two alumni that they were bored. They were just talking to another parrot or whatever. And somehow the issue came up of this paper, and I talked about the microfilm room, and my passion for just exploring that came out, and that interested them. And I sensed that, so I worked with it, and it may be that—I don't know how important what the alumni report to the Admissions Office is, but if it is important, if it was important, that might have been the difference between whether I got in or not. So, I was feeling awful during the beginning of the interview, and by the time I left, I felt relieved. So, okay, now we're up to Dartmouth. Do you have another…

BLIEK: Sure, just one more follow-up. So, what's the class—were the class distinctions ever a hesitation point before coming to Dartmouth?

BEACH: The social class?

BLIEK: Yes.

BEACH: No. Again, I was still of the, sort of had in my mind the myth of "America's a classless society" was still how I understood things. I didn't have a sense that— it was meritocracy; it didn't have anything to do with class. That's in my mind. I'll jump one summer ahead, before we come to Dartmouth, is for some reason during the summer between my freshman and sophomore years here, I had to go to the western suburbs of Philadelphia on some kind of errand, and I stopped in a, there was a chain of snack food kind of place called the Hot Shops, and I stopped at one in Bryn Mawr [PA] or Haverford [PA] or somewhere like that. And I feel like my jaw just dropped. I said, *Oh, this is where Dartmouth people live*, because, you know, as people wearing the clothes that I had seen at Dartmouth, but not in the rest of my life and so forth. So, I did become aware of class once I got to Dartmouth, but I wasn't aware of it on the way.

BLIEK: Okay.

BEACH: So, we're arriving at Dartmouth…

BLIEK: We're arriving at Dartmouth. So, you entered in '63, correct?

BEACH: Yes.

BLIEK: But before that, you did some of the pre-matriculation things?

BEACH: Oh, you mean the hike? Actually, one quick and very quick last thing before… So, I had started by the end of high school to become aware of the civil rights movement. And that was a major influence. So, and the March on Washington was in August, right before I started here, and wanted to go, but it didn't work out. So I was already that, at least that politically minded on that score only. Well, anyway, so the trip, I'm not sure if there are other kinds of trips, but what in those days what I recall is it was a four-day hike right before matriculation. And while we were on that hike, or exactly when we got back from the hike, the news came out of the bombing of the church in Birmingham, Alabama, where four girls from the age of 11 to 14 were killed, and that was a very big… You know, it hit me.

And right the month, either September or October of my freshman year, George Wallace, the Governor of Alabama,

was invited here to speak. And so, the Dartmouth Christian Union [DCU] organized a picket, and I participated in that. And that was a very, stayed—like, my recollection could be right or wrong—I'm actually going to look in the D from that period to see, what was it? There were only like 30 or so of us that picketed, and we wore coats and ties, and it was all very correct. And, but in any case, the DCU people who had organized it, I discovered was where relation to the civil rights movement was based on campus at that point. So, that became fairly quickly my physical and emotional home. It was in College Hall, which I think now has a different name, but it's the one on the corner of Main and Wheelock. It's where there's a snack bar and all of that stuff was. Collier, maybe it is? Is there a Collier?

BLIEK: Collis [Center for Student Involvement].

BEACH: That used to be called College Hall. And the DCU was on the second floor of that building, and so that's where I grew a lot.

BLIEK: Great. I will definitely ask you more about that. But, can you first explain where your initial interest in the civil rights movement came out of?

BEACH: Well, best as I can put myself back in the thinking of that day, it just didn't seem fair. It just seemed too unfair that people were segregated and denied the equal access, and so it was just fairness. So, I can develop that a little bit more. Fairness was a big point that my parents instilled in my sister and me growing up. Everything had to be fair, you know. Every kid had to get the same amount of candy or whatever. You know, for all levels, fairness was just something that was emphasized. So, it seemed very unfair, and that's basically where my interest came from.

BLIEK: And as for the DCU, can you explain what that acronym is?

BEACH: It's the Dartmouth Christian Union. So, one of the things we can talk some more about later is the guy, the pastor who was the (quote) "chaplain" of the DCU was somebody who was into Liberation Theology before the words were at least current. I don't know if the words were out at all, but he was clearly in that vein. He had actually been—since we're doing this for an archive, his name was [Rev.] George Kalbfleish, and he had during the 1930s, he had actually done some

work in Germany. He was German by ethnicity. I mean, he grew up in the U.S., but I think he had, the German ties were still relatively fresh, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was a German pastor who was famous for resisting the Nazis in the '30s… When George was a student at Union Theological Seminary [New York City, NY], he met Bonhoeffer and went to Germany and briefly worked with Bonhoeffer. I don't think it was a deep—it was a short-term kind of thing, but it was something that he was very proud of, and we knew about it.

George was a character. Everybody in DCU loved him, but also thought he was weird in a lot of ways. I don't know if it's appropriate—well, I'll say it, I'm pretty sure—most people, and I've passed this by other people, he was probably gay, and he—but, you know, you couldn't be out about that at that point, and he came on like he was—we all think that he came on to us in different ways that might have gone somewhere if we were prepared to. But he was also very temperamental, and he would always—you came into the office and he'd say, "Oh, you! I have no time for you! No time," and then spend like 20 minutes, you know, "What's going on in your life?" But he always started by saying, "I just have no time." [laughter] So anyway, he was a character.

BLIEK: So, about the DCU, so what was this—

BEACH: Ah, so that was another… So, even though—what I wanted to say—even though it was the Dartmouth Christian Union, it was not about Christianity. Although there were a few people, I mean, there were a couple of different wings of people who participated in it, some of whom were very into the Christianity piece, and the others who were into its social justice movement piece.

BLIEK: And which camp were you in?

BEACH: I was definitely in just the social justice movement piece. I had in high school—so I think I mentioned that my family upbringing was Methodist and fairly strict, but in high school I started going to a Unitarian church on my own, because I couldn't buy the ideology of more straight line Christianity. So, yeah, for me it was definitely not about the Christian part. It was about the social justice part.

BLIEK: And what was the size of the DCU?

BEACH: Well, people who participated? There were probably—in the social justice wing, they used to have Sunday night discussions, and typically 10 to 15 people would be there. But, it was not always the same 10 to 15 people. And so, I would say there might have been as many as 50 people who were somehow associated with the social justice wing of the DCU.

BLIEK: And were there other, were there potentially other avenues on campus where other socially justice—

BEACH: Not that I was aware of.

BLIEK: Okay. So this was, then, sort of the main hub for social justice?

BEACH: Yeah. At that point, yeah. And the four years I was at Dartmouth, things changed a whole lot. And we will go there, but, yeah…

BLIEK: So this is just ’63?

BEACH: ’63.

BLIEK: Okay. So, in ’63, so what sort of activism did that social justice orientation manifest in? So you mentioned you had dinner discussions, and you also showed up at the Wallace picket.

BEACH: Right. Well, so, basically the most important part of what we did was related to the Southern anti-segregation movement. And we did support, two things: raised money and tried to educate the rest of the Dartmouth community on what was going on. We would try to learn about it, and then we would, for example, write a leaflet explaining whatever the more recent events were happening in Alabama or Mississippi or something, and then go to all the dorms and slip it under people’s doors so that they would read it. That was probably the most of what we did that year. I’m trying to think. We also, I think toward the end of that year we formed a subgroup called the “Negro Application Encouragement,” which was to try to encourage African-Americans to apply to Dartmouth. But, my class had three African-Americans out of 800 students, and so the absence of people of color was very obvious, and so that was another thing that we did try to…

BLIEK: And were you able to consult with the African-American students while you were launching this initiative?

BEACH: So, interestingly, not really. Yes and no. Let me rephrase that. There was a guy in the Class of ’65 who was African-American and he was a leader within this, the whole, all of what we were doing, but my class, none of the… One of the three African-Americans later became involved, but not at that point. But, Richard Joseph, who was from the Class of ’65, was very active, yeah. But, you know, I think each of the other classes were similar numbers. The ’64, ’65 and ’66 classes all had about the same two or three that we had. And we were somewhat successful, by the way, because the next year it was 14, and the year after that it was even double that, I think, so that was—I don’t know that we were the reason that that happened, but in any case, that was a turning point at Dartmouth for students from that community.

BLIEK: Yeah, and were you sort of pursuing this independently, or did you have administration and faculty also moving in that direction?

BEACH: More independently, yeah. In retrospect, it seems like we should have been—but, I think the college was also working on the same issue on its own, because they had something called the “A Better Chance” program, and they were doing something similar; basically, it was recruiting African-American students to go to prep schools, and with a plan that they would come to Dartmouth after prep school. But they were doing their thing and we were doing ours, and it was like separate.

BLIEK: So it sounds like one of the big issues on campus was the George—at least in ’62—the George Wallace visit. What were some of the other political goings, things happening on campus at that time?

BEACH: Bonfires. And not to say—I mean, I was totally into the football team and intramural sports, but I don’t recall a whole lot of political stuff at all that I really recall. Parenthetically, another, since we’re doing this somewhat chronologically and in terms of my development, the college sent a—we were given a book to read, to have read by the time we came at the beginning of the freshman year, and it was called *The Great Ascent[: The Struggle for Economic*

Development in our Time, and it was by a political economist, internationalist political economist [Robert L. Heilbroner] about—I mean, this is the period when decolonization was occurring, and a lot of the previous colonies in Africa and Asia were just newly independent, and it was about the economic obstacles to them becoming viable nations and so forth. And I remember it impacted me reading that book, and that was part of what I brought to coming. It doesn't have a specific—it doesn't lead to anything specific, but it was… And maybe there were discussions of that when we got here. I don't recall, you know, formal discussions sort of, assigned discussions. But otherwise, politically or otherwise, you know, it was just college life, *Rah! Rah!*

BLIEK: And so, for you, what were some aspects of that? So were you still as a freshman committed to becoming a professor of math afterwards?

BEACH: "Committed" is not the right word, but that was still my probable target, yeah. Yes.

BLIEK: Okay. When I took a look at your yearbook profile, I believe I also saw SDS under your name, so…

BEACH: Yes. That comes later.

BLIEK: Later, okay.

BEACH: And we can go chronologically, because it's still a year or two away. So, during that freshman year, the end of freshman year, that summer was, you may be aware of, the Mississippi Freedom Summer, and it was a project where college students from all over the country went to Mississippi and did a couple of different things: voter registration and what were called Freedom Schools, to give kids who were in poor schools exposure to bigger ideas and so forth. And, well, a couple things. We did a lot of fundraising for that, and I wanted to go, and because I needed to have summer jobs, because, again, my parents were sacrificing to get me here, they said, "No, you're not going. You're gonna get a summer job and you're gonna help pay for your education." So, perfectly legitimate from their point of view. And so I didn't go, but I really had wanted to go.

So then, sophomore year I was getting more of the same, and getting more involved with the (quote) “civil rights movement” as I went along. And in February of 1965, there was a conference at what were then the four colleges, I guess—they’re the five colleges now—in western Massachusetts: Smith, Holyoke—

BLIEK: The women’s colleges?

BEACH: Well, Smith, Holyoke, Amherst, and the University of Massachusetts.

BLIEK: Oh, okay.

BEACH: Now, I understand they call it the five colleges, because Hampshire, but Hampshire College [Amherst, MA] didn’t exist at that point. So, there was a conference there that was called, and with the theme, “What good is it to be able to sit at the lunch counter if you can’t afford the price of a hamburger?” So it was about the economics, the poverty, and how race and poverty were interrelated. And it was a weekend long conference. And it was very—I mean, at the beginning, the keynote speakers were supposed to be Malcolm X and Michael Harrington. And Michael Harrington was like the leading figure in the U.S. Socialist Party, and he had just written a book which had become a bestseller called *The Other America*, which was all about poverty in America. And the two of them were supposed to—and Malcolm X, you know, was up until that point not doing anything with white people in general, but he was moving in a new direction, and this would have been a step in that. But, they were both from New York, and there was fog in New York, and they were supposed to come by plane and the fog—the flight was cancelled, so they never actually came. And, parenthetically, two weeks later, Malcolm X was assassinated.

But, other people at the conference… the person who impressed me the most was Tom Hayden, who was the key founder of SDS nationally, which the SDS had been founded about two or three years earlier. And he was—we won’t go into him. But, and there were other speakers who were very impressive. I was being exposed to things that I’d never been exposed to, and they were political, and there was a definite Socialist theme to a lot of what, not what everybody, but to a number—and I had just read Michael Harrington’s book about the other America, and then there was another

book that was popular at the time by a German psychoanalyst, Eric Fromm, who wrote about capitalism's effect on people's psyche and the ability to cooperate and so forth. So I was being exposed for the first time to the word "Socialism."

And somewhat humorously, on the way back—so, [Hwy] 91 hadn't been built yet, so the route between here and there was Route 5 in Vermont—and it was the Sunday coming back, and it was a very grey wintry day, and coming up Route 5 and Vermont was very grey. And I'm saying to myself O*h my God, I'm a Socialist*. [laughter] And I didn't like—because the consensus was Socialism was part of the evil that we were talking about before. But, *I can't avoid it. It makes sense*. So, it's like, and I didn't want to think that, but it made sense. So, anyway, I thought the other part of grey that I was thinking is that Eastern Europe was (quote) "Socialist," and how it was always presented as "life is grey" and so forth.

Anyway, but the other important thing that happened at that conference was—this is now February of '65—is the war in Vietnam is starting to heat up (since this is what we're here for, the Vietnam Project). For the first time I'm hearing people say, "The war is wrong." And, at that point my reaction was *I don't know whether it is right or wrong, but I don't think it's good for the civil rights movement to be joining with the anti-war movement, because the anti-war movement is so unpopular that it could do damage to the civil rights movement*. Which, as you probably know, later on, like when Martin Luther King[, Jr.] came out against the war, he was criticized on just exactly those grounds. And at that point, that was my reaction. I don't know if *Is it right or is it wrong?* But I know the people that I'm coming to respect think it's wrong, but I'm nervous about what I think is more important.

So, then in April of '65, the U.S. invaded the Dominican Republic, because a slightly—I don't know of anybody to reiterate what happened—there had been a dictator for 20 years, I think, named [Rafael] Trujillo; he was assassinated, and there were elections, and a left of center, not very left, but a left of center president was elected. The army overthrew him very soon, undoubtedly with U.S. support, and that would be in '62 or so, and then there was a movement for him to return. And as that movement for him

to return was picking up steam, the U.S. said, "No, we can't allow this to happen. No more Castros in the Caribbean," and blah, blah. And so the Marines were sent in and he was denied the chance to return. That I could understand. I didn't understand what was going on in Vietnam, but that struck me as wrong. Again, it was unfair. So, when I saw that the U.S. did that, and I was starting to read liberal and left sources, I said, "Hmm, let me learn a little bit more about Vietnam." So I started reading about Vietnam, and fairly soon, came to the opinion that it also was wrong. So, that's the beginning of my getting involved in Vietnam and SDS—but no, still not SDS, although I was on SDS' mailing list, but there was no SDS here. Go ahead, you have questions.

BLIEK: Let me ask you a little bit about your thoughts on what was going on in the Dominican. So, what exactly about U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic seemed unfair to you?

BEACH: Well, so Juan Bosch, who was the president who had been couped out and was trying to get back in, to me it seemed he shouldn't have been taken out in the first place, and then, if there was a movement to bring him back, that seemed reasonable. And why is it in the U.S.' interest to say, "No, you can't do that"? And, from everything I read, he was not, you know, he was not (quote) "a Communist," which was still, in my mind, *Communists are bad*, but he wasn't a Communist, and why should the U.S. be sending in Marines and killing people to keep him from getting back in power? So, that's why it seemed unfair.

BLIEK: And then you mentioned that logic sort of transferred over to the way you thought about Vietnam as well.

BEACH: Well, it didn't immediately. What it did is it opened me up to saying *I gotta learn more about Vietnam*. So when I read—the main source that I read about Vietnam was a book called *The United States in Vietnam*, by [George McTurnan] Kahin and [John W.] Lewis, two Cornell professors, and then went over the history of from the French on up to probably that same year, and, I mean, things like the fact that [President Dwight D.] Eisenhower had said that… Well, the division of Vietnam into North and South Vietnam was supposed to be a temporary thing. There were supposed to be elections in—so, '54 the French were defeated. In the peace conference, the agreement was there would be North Vietnam controlled

by Communist forces and/or liberation forces or whatever, and the South would be controlled by sort of the old guard people who had collaborated with the French. And in 1956, there were supposed to be elections. And Eisenhower was quoted as saying, “If we had allowed the elections to occur, 80% of people would have voted for Ho Chi Minh. And the U.S. decided, “We can’t allow that to happen,” and that, again, seemed very unfair. So, that’s sort of my “in” to being against the war. So, any questions going back or should we go forward?

BLIEK: Let’s go forward. You mentioned you had been on the SDS mailing list, and that’s where we left off.

BEACH: Right. And still, there’s no—so this is now the spring of my sophomore year.

BLIEK: Spring of ’65.

BEACH: Spring of ’65, right. Okay, so summer comes, I go back to Philadelphia, in touch with anti-war—and still on mailing lists and so forth getting… So, there was a demonstration in Philadelphia at Independence Hall against the war. One of the big issues in the anti-war movement at that point was do you demand negotiations or do you demand just immediate withdrawal? I was still in the moderate camp, and this demonstration was on the more moderate side saying “we have to negotiate about what’s going on and try to end the war through negotiations.” And, so I went to this demonstration. I bring it up—this was my first anti-war demonstration.

When I came back, I had a friend from high school who lived a few doors down, and her father was a lieutenant commander in the Navy, and her brother was a friend also. I was at that house. Her father found out that I had been at this demonstration that day, and he told me that he had in the garage a rope if I wanted to hang myself, that, you know, he’d be happy to provide the rope so that I could hang myself. And, speaking of, I mean, also at the demonstration itself there were lots of insults hurled. It was very clear that this was not considered acceptable behavior to be demonstrating against the war. So, I mean, I’m now on the defensive.

By the way, going back, so, it wasn't the first hostility in my political… At Dartmouth, when we would take these leaflets to the—there were many people would come out and yell obscenities at us and, you know, why are we involved in what's going on Mississippi? We have no business. And so, you know, the sense that one needed to be a little bit defensive about these kind of activities was already present.

BLIEK: Was the overall campus climate more politically conservative than where you were at the time?

BEACH: Oh, absolutely. Though, you know, obviously there were lots of people who would agree. The civil rights movement was not as unpopular, say, as the anti-war movement became, but there was a lot of hostility to it. I wouldn't say that that was the—there wasn't a consensus of hostility, but there was a lot of hostility. Actually, another story I would tell from my freshman year. So the freshman year, the first big Civil Rights Act [of 1964] was passed outlawing discrimination in public accommodations and so forth. So, one of the things we did was we went—so that law was under consideration, and Norris Cotton was one of the senators from New Hampshire, and the Civil Rights Act before it became law was controversial and it was not clear whether it would pass or not. And one of the senators from New Hampshire, Norris Cotton, was considered a potential—he could go either way, and so his vote was considered important. So, what we did was we went into surrounding towns and knocked on doors and asked people to sign a petition to Norris Cotton saying, "Please vote for the Civil Rights Act."

And, one anecdote that I like to tell from that was, I think it was in Lebanon, but anyway, it was in a not well off house, and I knocked on the door, and a woman answered, and she asked me what was I there for. I explained that we were looking for these signatures. So that man calls from upstairs and he says, "Doris," or whoever, "what's going on?" She calls up to him, she says, "It's one of them college boys. He's here because he wants us to sign a petition saying that them niggers should have the same rights as we do." So I'm thinking *Oh, God,* you know, *I'm not gonna do well here*. She says, "Yeah, I agree with that. I'll sign." [laughter] And then she calls him and tells him to come down and sign, too. So it was just kind of an interesting experience.

Anyway, so, back to summer of ’65. So, I came back. The war is becoming much more of the hot issue, but the civil rights thing is still—and the DCU political action commission… Actually, another little piece. So my sophomore year, there was a commission. DCU had commissions, and the political action commission was where the social justice stuff was. And I was supposed to be the new chair of that commission in my sophomore year. And George Kalbfleish, much to everybody’s surprise, somehow it came out that if you were Jewish or if you weren’t Christian by background—you didn’t have to be a Christian, but I said, “I’m not a Christian. I’m a Unitarian.” And he said it was okay for me to be the chairman of the political action commission, but there was a Jewish guy who was also considered, and he said, “He can’t be because he doesn’t have the background,” and I thought that was absurd. And, so I didn’t accept the position. Anyway, that’s neither here nor there.

But we come back in the fall of ’65 and the war’s heating up. And now I’m a little fuzzy, between ’65 and ’66, of the draft. So, there was the draft and there were student deferments. The student deferment, you got classified what was called 2-S while you were in college, and they couldn’t draft you until you changed your status to 1-A. And at that time, because things were heating up and more people were being drafted, and they needed more people, they instituted a policy where you had to take a test, and if you didn’t score high enough on the test, you could be reclassified. And then, later on it was there was a number system. They drew birthdates out of a bowl and, according to your birthdate you got a number, and if they needed to dip into the student pool, you could be taken if you were 365 if they needed that many, or, you know, if they needed to go up to 280, etc.

Well, so when the student deferment in I think it was the fall of ’65, and the test was happening, I said, “I’m not gonna take the test, ‘cause I don’t think that’s fair.” And I returned—I told my draft board I didn’t want my 2-S deferment anymore, because I didn’t think it was fair that students were exempt and other people had to go. And, they didn’t reclassify me, even though I said, “I don’t accept the 2-S classification.” And, well, this is interesting, this year I’m a little fuzzy…

Also, then there was the DCU, a lot of us in the political action commission of the DCU were now getting into SDS,

and then there were other people who had never been involved in DCU who independently were getting interested in SDS, and so we came together and formed an SDS chapter. So that was the beginning of SDS, and I'm pretty sure that would have been the fall of '65.

BLIEK: Can I ask you a question about the draft? So, I think I came across in my research that that had been sort of controversial, the testing procedure.

BEACH: Yes, yes.

BLIEK: And, from what I understand, there was sort of a faculty—there were at least some people on the faculty who circulated petitions against that—

BEACH: There were, yes.

BLIEK: —because it was based on, I believe it was class rank, and then also your academic standing.

BEACH: Yeah, that may be. In any case, yeah, go ahead.

BLIEK: So, was the opposition to the draft sort of a more mainstream thing on campus, or was it still confined to sort of the social justice camp?

BEACH: Opposition to the?

BLIEK: To the draft procedures.

BEACH: Procedures. Oh, that was just integrated into the whole—I mean, so, as the social justice, as the civil rights movement, anti-poverty movement, anti-war movement began to—you know, the phrases were like "same struggle, same fight," you know. It's all commished together, and so I think, among those of us who were concerned, who were still a very small minority, the procedures of the draft just fit into everything else that was unfair.

BLIEK: Can you tell me a little more about the draft board? So, what kind of procedure, like who's on the draft board? And what was the structure of that? Was it run through Dartmouth, run through someone else?

BEACH: No. So, your draft board was, so the law was, and actually still is—I don't know if you know it, but all American males when they turn 18 have to register for the draft.

BLIEK: Yeah, Selective Service.

BEACH: Right. And that hasn't changed. But, in those days it mattered, and now it's just, at least for the moment, you know, a formality that they haven't done away with. So, you registered for the draft where you were when you turned 18, or what was your official residence. So, for example, my draft board was based in the Hatboro area. It was actually in the town called Jenkintown [PA], which is actually also the same town where I had the interview. But, so, if I'm dealing with the draft board, that's who I deal with, Jenkintown, the draft board in Jenkintown. And there was a general in the Army, name of Lewis Hershey, who was a very controversial figure because he was an old style rednecky kind of guy who would make statements that were like waving the red flag at the bull. But, so he was the head of the Selective Service System, but it was run locally by people, I guess, who'd just volunteered and were found to be acceptable to be the draft board.

BLIEK: So, we left off when you were talking about how the SDS coalition was sort of coming together. Were you mostly focused on building a student coalition, or did you also try to pull in faculty and other administrators?

BEACH: I don't recall trying to bring in faculty, but there were, you know, in the meantime we had identified—we identified faculty to that, and they identified us. So, there was cooperation between some faculty, a small number of faculty, and us.

BLIEK: And do you remember who some of those people were?

BEACH: Yeah. David… Well, so the one I remember most is the one that I was close to, and his name was Paul Leary. He was a government, he might have only been an instructor. He was young and recently—he only stayed at Dartmouth for two or three years. And David—I'll look that up and get back to you—but he was very strong involved, and he was a sociology professor. But I didn't personally know him that well, but I remember everywhere you would, you know, every meeting he would be there. And, then the next year,

the name that you might well be familiar with is Jonathan Mirsky, but in ’65 he was still at Penn, but he came in the fall of ’66. He was a Chinese professor.

BLIEK: Yep.

BEACH: And he was clearly the faculty person who, by the time he got here, was most identified with the anti-war movement.

BLIEK: So, what did it take to form a new student organization on campus? Did you have to go through the college to become recognized as an SDS chapter?

BEACH: I have a feeling we didn’t. And just now I was looking at my yearbook, my class’s yearbook, and at the student organizations, and there’s no SDS.

BLIEK: SDS is missing, right?

BEACH: So, I suspect we never got recognition, but I don’t actually remember. I could be wrong about that. Maybe we did. But, it wasn’t recognized at—

BLIEK: So, although not recognized, you were still a student group on campus?

BEACH: Yeah, and it was a real thing, meaning everybody knew that we were there. And, as I said, the anti-war movement, the anti-war position was still unpopular by the fall of ’65.

BLIEK: So, once you formed—once SDS was formed, what sort of activities or discussions were you all having?

BEACH: It was really still more of the same, and coordinating with… Well, and another thing was that now that what was called at the time the Afro-American Society had been formed, because we’re now into my junior year, and we have two classes with a lot more African-Americans, and the consciousness was becoming much more—they were more militant than their predecessors, and the national movement was reflected in that. So we worked together on a number of issues that related more specifically to the African-American community, but many of them got involved in the anti-war movement as well. And we would be relating to demonstrations in places like Boston [MA] or Washington

[D.C.] and trying to educate the Dartmouth community about the issues.

BLIEK: So, you were part of this sort of camp on campus. Did you ever run into problems with other groups on campus, particularly ROTC perhaps?

BEACH: Not ROTC at that point, but the Dartmouth Conservative Society. I mean, we criticized each other. Like I remember writing a number of letters to the Dean, and [William] Bill Lind ['69], who was the head of the Dartmouth Conservative Society, we would meet on campus and have angry discussions. And it was not a collegial disagreement; it was angry—I mean, nothing physical, but it was angry denunciation, mutual denunciations, I guess would be the… So, yeah, there was that.

BLIEK: And do you remember anything about the size and sort of the composition of who was comprising the Dartmouth conservatives?

BEACH: Theirs was smaller. Probably week to week or month to month the anti-war sentiment was growing, and the conservative—I think the Conservative Society, I can only remember like five or six people, but I knew, for example, from my freshman year, I remember two of my classmates, one of whom I met on the hike, and another that I don't remember where I met, but they were people I considered friends, but they were conservative, and they were very hot—we disagreed a lot and we would discuss, but it was still on a friendly basis. But they weren't part of the Dartmouth Conservative Society, but they were clearly in the opposite camp. Well, my freshman year roommate actually, he was a little less clearly identified as conservative, but he was pretty conservative, and we butted heads intellectually about it. He left after the first year, so that didn't go any further. There was a point that I was interested in making here for the moment. I might come back to it. So, yeah. Where shall we go next?

BLIEK: So, SDS has been formed. It's the fall of 1965.

BEACH: Well, okay, so a second, and now on a personal level, another thing that's going on in my life is I originally had planned to go to France in the fall of '65. We're in my junior

year now. And that's when there was—that was the only time—there was a setup where you could do a term abroad.

And, oh, in the summers—I didn't mention in the summer of '65 and '66… In the summer of '65, I worked in the daytime, but every night I was doing tutoring in north Philadelphia, which was a poor African-American section of Philadelphia. And I had developed a notion that I wanted to do a—I was interested in that community in a lot of ways, and I also was interested in—so, there was a psychology course that I took there was a paper by a child development psychologist on how values develop. Because values is part of what this is all about. And he wrote a lot about how values develop. So I developed the idea of doing this, but at that point there was something called the Senior Fellowship, where in your senior year, you could do an independent study, and you didn't have to take classes. So, by this fall of my junior year, or maybe by the end of my sophomore year, I was on that track. And in order to get accepted to do a Senior Fellowship, I had to take courses that would lead me to do that. So I gave up going to France so that I could take those courses and apply for the Senior Fellowship.

So that whole area of the tutoring… And also, by the way, the DCU, we did tutoring at Hartford High [School] in White River Junction [VT]. So I was doing tutoring at both, in Philadelphia when I was there, and here.

So, I guess the next thing that I'm remembering that became an issue was the vigil, which you may— do you know about the vigil? So, somewhere along the line, we started a project, and I don't know even if it was SDS or other people. There were, like the local Quakers were doing some anti-war stuff as well. And, so the vigil was on Wednesdays from noon to 1:00. People who were against the war would stand on the part of the Green [the Dartmouth Green] that goes straight across in the middle of the Green.

BLIEK: And what time frame are we right now?

BEACH: That's what I'm not completely sure. Somewhere around this time, maybe fall of '65 or winter of '66. And I'll jump forward, and then we can come back for other things. So, that vigil would usually get anywhere from 10 to 40 people who would just stand for an hour with, maybe there was one sign saying

"Peace" or something, I don't remember what, and then leave. And then, people would yell things at us and so forth.

So, and just, and also this is back to my personal development. Another book that I read that became very important was a book called *The Free World Colossus*[*: A Critique of American Foreign Policy in the Cold War*], by David Horowitz was the author who now, interestingly enough, has—I mean, he was, I guess, brought up in a left wing family. Do you know the term, "red diaper babies"? So, the people who—and we had a number of them were part of our group, but it meant that you grew up in a family that maybe your parents were in the Communist Party in the '30s and '40s or whatever. So, the tradition of the family was left wing. And so, a lot of the people in all this stuff that we're talking about came from that tradition, and then there were those like me that came just out of new cloth. But, the term, "Red diaper baby," was a very commonly—everybody knew what that meant.

So, anyway, David Horowitz I suspect was a "red diaper baby." Well, he was a little older. He's from probably a generation, half a generation older than we were. But he wrote a book called *The Free World Colossu*s in which he talked about how the U.S. had overthrown the government of Iran in '53, the government of Guatemala in '54, and killed [Prime Minister Patrice] Lumumba in the [Democratic Republic of the] Congo in '61, and how U.S. policy was consistent in overthrowing what it viewed to be threats to its domination. So that moved me off from it just being just Vietnam, but to a much broader sense that there was something seriously wrong with U.S. foreign policy.

And, so we also had symposia; that was another thing that we would do, and teach-ins. Those were the kinds of activities that were going on at that point. So, now, the vigil, the reason I brought up the vigil and said I'll go forward and then come back, is in my senior year, the vigil became something that became a target or a focal point of people knew that that was a focus of the anti-war movement.

And now I'm going to drop back one more time before I go further with it. In addition to Dartmouth Conservative Society, there was an alumni group called "Lest the Old Traditions Fail," and they were very supportive of the conservative side and very hostile to us, to the possibility of the school going

co-ed, to, you know, anything that wasn't the old style of… So, they wrote to the daily *Dartmouth* [*The Dartmouth*], and seriously not just criticized us, but trashed us. So, the notion was for a long time that the anti-war movement is still unpopular, but little by little that's changing.

And, so in my senior year, the spring of my senior year, '67, and unfortunately it happened at a time that I was in Washington for something else, but what I'll call the right wing forces, figuring that they had the majority of people on their side, said, "We're gonna do a counter-vigil, and we're gonna stand on the other side of the pathway across the Green." And they publicized it for two or three weeks later, something like that. And, anyway, the day came and, you know, hundreds and hundreds of people came out on both sides, and it went all the way across the Green and snaked at an angle down to Main and Wheelock, and then back. But the anti-war side was hugely more attended than the pro-war side. And it was the first time that a lot of people realized that there was a lot on campus, that there were a lot of people who had their doubts and were against what was going on in the war. But, that's a year later, but I just bring it up because the vigil started as something very small.

Okay, so, I don't remember any other major things from… In the fall of '66, one of the things we developed was a group of people, we formed something called the "We Won't Go" union, pledging each other to not be drafted, not accept being drafted, and said, you know, some of us would go to prison, some would go to Canada, some would look for… Anyway, it was a mutual pledge that we won't go into the Army.

BLIEK: And how many students approximately?

BEACH: In that? Forty maybe. It wasn't huge, but it was… So I did get the Senior Fellowship. So I was off-campus a lot my senior year, and to be honest, I wasn't prepared to do the research that… And, for two things: I didn't have a good—I had sought out a faculty advisor, because I wanted to do it, but it wasn't somebody who had a specific interest in it or who was able to really help me with it; and I was becoming obsessed with the political climate. And what I did, I went to Philadelphia and I worked with some of the—and did some research, set up some (quote) "experiments," but basically wasted my year, from an academic point of view. And I hate

to say it, but that's the reality. I just wasn't—neither was I ready for it enough, nor was I—my focus was elsewhere.

So, I mean, okay, so then a big event came, similar to what I was talking about with the vigil. In April of '67, there was a demonstration. And again, in the anti-war movement nationally, and that reflected here as well, was the big debate was negotiations versus withdrawal. And withdrawal was getting stronger and stronger. And there were demonstrations, national demonstrations, sort of every six months or so that I would go to, and each time they were bigger. April 15th of 1967, a big march was scheduled for New York. And it was the first moment that it was clear that the anti-war sentiment had developed a major mainstream component. So that demonstration they estimated had like 400,000 people, and it was you went from Central Park to the UN. And I was toward the back of the demonstration. Well, Friday night when we got there—it was a Saturday demonstration—Friday night when we got there, people all over New York, and the streets were just full of people who were going, and there was high energy. And on the march route, people in the office buildings were waving, and clear support instead of what we were used to as the hurling of insults and so forth.

And Martin Luther King actually gave—his famous speech against the war was like two weeks, a week before—no, it was April 4th at the Riverside Church in New York. And I don't know if you've seen the speech, but it's very powerful, and brought together the—he talked about how a society that was based on militarism and taking away the rights of people in Vietnam and in the U.S., and using poor people in the U.S. to do this was near moral death. And it was a very powerful speech, and for which, as we were talking earlier, he was roundly criticized by even a lot of people in the civil rights movement because he was taking a—but, by this point it was not as unpopular, obviously, as it would have been earlier. Anyway, and he spoke at the end of the march.

But, by the time—I was toward the back of the march—and by the time we got there, they were taking the—there were so many people that they were taking the platform down, and all the speakers had long gone. And it was huge, and everybody felt very energized by realizing that a lot of people had come to recognize that the war was wrong. So, then, so that's my senior year.

When I graduated, we had something here called “Vietnam Summer,” and it was a national program which we formed our own chapter or whatever of, and it was trying to go out and again, like the petition for the Civil Rights Act, into the community, knock on doors, and say, “We’d like to talk to you about Vietnam.”

BLIEK: And you said this was after you graduated?

BEACH: Right. I stayed on here. And there were 20 or 30 of us—oh, that may be too high—10 to 20. But, you know, somebody would find a church that would be willing to gather an audience to let us talk about the war, talk about the history, and why we should be against it. And another big thing that was—because there are a lot of summer camps in the area, and some of them are sort of (quote) “progressive,” they would invite us to come talk to the kids. So it was a very positive summer.

BLIEK: Yeah, so at this point, were you no longer trying to become a math professor by the time you graduated?

BEACH: Oh, yeah, by this time, it was… Well, and with all this stuff, I mean, now I’m capital “T”, capital “R”, “The Revolution,” you know? It’s like, we thought we were working toward changing the system in a radical kind of way, and that was our goal. Not just me; there were lots of us that thought the same, the people in the SDS, you know, it was about changing society from the… And, so I really at that point had no—at the point I graduated, my only plan was to keep figuring out how to work for The Revolution and, you know, day by day just adapt to whatever the needs that I saw.

So, the summer ended, and then there was going to be a big demonstration at the Pentagon in October. So now, I graduated, and within a couple days after graduation I get in the mail my 1-A status. And I think, even though I had waved the flag and said, “I’m not cooperating,” I think they just ignored me, but as soon as I graduated, they reclassified me, and sent me an order to report. So, I think I was supposed to report in the fall. That’s funny, I don’t remember that now exactly when it was.

But, so whenever it was, it was either the summer or fall, and I went and handed out leaflets saying why I wasn’t—in other

words, so I had to go to Jenkintown, get on a bus to take me to Philadelphia with a bunch of other guys who were, we were to be inducted that day. And I knew I wasn't going, but, you know, I wanted to disrupt as much as I could, so I had leaflets saying why I wasn't going, and explaining that I thought the war was wrong and that I wasn't going to go, not being that disruptive. Because I got there, and I was handing the leaflets out on the sidewalk outside the induction center, and they saw me doing it; you know, somebody showed them the leaflet that I was handing out. So, when I went to go in where I was going to refuse inside, they said, "Get out of here. You can't come in the building."

So, side story related to it… So I had a friend in the Class of '65 who was from New York, and he—I was still a big baseball fan and he was, too. He was from New York, and he was a Yankee fan. I mistold this story once and said he was a Mets fan, but he was a Yankee fan, and I was a Phillies fan. And so, the night that I was supposed to be going to North Carolina to begin basic training was, there was a twi-night doubleheader scheduled between the Phillies and the Mets. So, he comes into town on the night before, saying, "We're going to see the Phillies and the Mets tomorrow." Oh, no, I'm sorry. I'm conflating the story. I'll come back to that story. That story exists, but it's another time.

So, no, I just get kicked out, and that's the end of that. I know that at some point, you know, I'm going to get told what the consequences of my refusal are. So I come back to here, and we did the Vietnam Summer project, and we were really all building up to this October demonstration against—at the Pentagon, which by this point we're thinking, "There's gonna be violence." You know, and people might even be killed, because the tensions had gotten that high. And during September and the beginning of October, I and another guy from my class who's in the same situation as I was, just trying to figure out, waiting for this demonstration and figuring out what comes next, we did odd jobs, you know, repairing roofs at people's homes, anyway, looking for odd jobs to do.

So, then, October 16th there was a Boston demonstration and people burning their draft cards and committing to the ongoing resistance. And then October 21st was Saturday; that was the day of the demonstration. Went to the

demonstration, and there were hundreds of arrests. It was the first time I was arrested. And spent the night. And they were mean, I mean, by the standards—and it was federal marshals who were the ones that, in civilian clothes, who did the… But they were hitting people with night sticks in the head, and there were injuries, and there were a lot of arrests. But, we spent a night in a D.C. area holding, a big—they didn't have, it wasn't cells; it was just a big room; there were several hundred people there. Norman Mailer was there and Noam Chomsky and Allen Ginsburg, and then all the rest of us.

BLIEK: So, officially on what grounds were they holding you for? Were you not supposed to be protesting where you were?

BEACH: Yeah, it was like there was a line that you weren't allowed to cross at the Pentagon, I don't remember exactly, but we were clearly—we knew we were breaking the law, or breaking the rules, and were subjecting ourselves to arrest. And that had been clear from the organizing of this demonstration from the last two months or so, it was going to be a confrontation, not just a demonstration.

BLIEK: And was this the big, like 100,000 person march on the Pentagon?

BEACH: Yes.

BLIEK: Okay. Before we go on, I just wanted to ask you about, were you keeping your parents in the loop of what you were doing?

BEACH: Okay, yeah. Yes. And going back to what I had said about my father and being sensitive to his not having gone in World War II, I was worried that, you know, my—because I was actually the chair or whatever of the "We Won't Go" committee. I don't know whether we called it a "chair," but whatever. I was the official lead organizer. And yes, and I told them that I wasn't going to go. And I was very concerned that they would be very upset.

So, I gave my father the book, the Kahin and Lewis book, *The United States in Vietnam*. He read it, and he got angry, and said, "You're right." And they were always very supportive of me from then on. I mean, my mother was supportive of me just because I'm her son, and maternal,

uncritical—I mean, that's a little bit of an overstatement, but whatever I did, she would have been supportive of me. He was more, you know, "You better be right, and then I'll support you."

BLIEK: Yeah.

BEACH: But he immediately agreed that I was right. And so, fortunately for me, because a lot of my friends were undergoing major conflicts with their parents and families, but I always had the support of mine, so that was a real blessing.

BLIEK: So, let me continue from where we left off. So, you've been arrested, in the holding pen after the Washington march.

BEACH: So now, it's like what comes next? So, one of the things—and I have to stop and think… Oh, okay, so now there's I guess a month where I came back up here, just hung out for a month or so, and figuring out *What am I gonna do next?*

BLIEK: Yeah, wasn't Stokely Carmichael up at campus around this time, like fall of 1967?

BEACH: No, earlier. And I would guess it was somewhere in '66. And, actually, I was proud to be one of the two white people who were invited to have dinner with him. But he got here late, so the dinner didn't happen. But I had been invited to participate in that. And then, another, actually it's not so much the Stokely Carmichael story, but amazing bookends of my Dartmouth career is, in the spring of '67, they invite George Wallace back again.

BLIEK: Yeah, and this was the very rowdy one, right?

BEACH: Yes. And so, I mean, his car almost got completely overturned, blah, blah, blah. I mean, I wasn't directly involved in that. I was at the protest, again, but unlike the protests of 20 or 30 people wearing coats and ties, this was like, you know, a near riot. And literally they were rocking his car. I don't think it ever got close to actually being tipped, but it was significantly rocked. I saw it. So it was an interesting reflection on how much things had changed between the fall of '63 and the spring of '67. Yeah. So, back to what came next. So, I went back to Philadelphia—well, my sister got

married in November, so then I went, and then went back to Philadelphia.

BLIEK: Of ’67? November ’67?

BEACH: Yeah, November ’67. So I’m graduated, I’m waiting to hear that I’m going to get arrested or whatever for refusing the draft. So, one friend of… Actually, so I think it’d be useful to mention some names of other people. So, I worked very closely with John [G.] Spritzler [‘68], is a name that if you’re—he was like for ’66 through ’68, he was a Class of ’68, he was like the leading known—he was the lightning rod SDS person. And then, a guy—actually, when you came in, if you saw I was with another—his name is Don Pease [‘66]. You may have to—apparently, there’s a Don Pease on the faculty now.

BLIEK: There’s a Professor Don Pease, but this Don Pease, I believe, has done an interview for the DVP.

BEACH: Yes, he has, correct.

BLIEK: And I believe he went to Canada, right?

BEACH: Yes, he went to Canada. He and his wife have done the interview.

BLIEK: Okay.

BEACH: So, he’s from the Class of ’66, but he left in his sophomore year—his junior year, to join [AmeriCorps] VISTA, which was at the time called the Domestic Peace Corps federal program, and he worked with the farmworkers at the time that Cesar Chavez was organizing farmworkers in California. And when he came back, he was one of my closest—and we’re still close friends—co-workers. And I’m bringing that up right now because there was a classmate of mine named Paul Stetzer [‘67], who was also from Philadelphia, who all the time we were here, we were sort of in the same circles, but we never really got to know each other closely, and he and Don Pease, who we called “Skip”—they were good friends, and I was good friends with Skip, but we still hadn’t gotten to be close friends together. But he was from Philadelphia, and I knew that he had gone back to Philadelphia by that time. So, when I went back to Philadelphia, I ended up we shared an apartment, and I got

jobs as a taxi driver and as a substitute teacher, just doing, again, odd jobs. So we're now into the winter of '68.

And, so I also got involved in trying to organize SDS—there were SDS chapters at Swarthmore [College, Swarthmore, PA] and Haverford [College, Haverford, PA] and Penn [University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA] and Temple [University, Philadelphia, PA], and, you know, all the Philadelphia area colleges, and I took on the role of being something of a liaison between them, you know, and bringing in speakers. One of the speakers that I brought in became infamous. So, she was from Hanover, I believe. Her name is Cathy Wilkerson.

Oh, and by the way, so to go back, this Vietnam Summer, we stayed at the Friends Meeting House, which at that point was on Rope Ferry Road up above Occum Pond.

BLIEK: And Friends, is that referring to Quakers?

BEACH: Quakers, yeah. That's what they call themselves. Officially, they're the Religious Society of Friends. And their houses of worship are called meeting houses. So, they let us all stay there during that summer while we were doing our Vietnam Summer program. Anyway, Cathy Wilkerson's mother—I don't know, this is probably—well, it's in the public record—her mother was a member of that meeting house. And Cathy Wilkerson was a Swarthmore—graduated from Swarthmore in '64 or '65, and became active in the Weatherman Movement.

BLIEK: Is it the Weather Underground?

BEACH: Weather Underground. Originally it was called the Weatherman Movement, and it came from the line in the Dylan song, "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows." That's how they got their name. So, at that point in national SDS there are now growing factions: one saying organizing the white working class to try to bring them into alliance with, you know, get jobs in factories and work with them; others are saying, you know, more immediate radical, even vandalism and the like. Cathy Wilkerson, anyway, I bring her up because she was one of the speakers that I brought to the different campuses. And she was trying to convince me, "Don't let them arrest you. Join the Weather Underground." And I brought her up

because ultimately she was—I don't know if you know this story—but, she and a couple other members of the Weather Underground were building a bomb in Greenwich Village [New York City, NY], and the bomb blew up and destroyed the house, and then a number of people were killed. And that's why I say "infamous." And then, she and the other—they went underground, and weren't caught until 10 or 15 years later, but I digress.

So, that's what I was doing in the winter of—and I hung out a lot at Swarthmore during that time. Got involved with a woman there. But I was there about half time, and I got a part-time job with a psychology professor there to support myself, in addition to the taxi driving. I mean, everything was patch a dollar here and a dollar there. So, now we're up to the spring of '68.

BLIEK: Can I pause you just a second to ask more about Cathy Wilkerson? So you said she tried to bring you into the Weather Underground fold. It doesn't sound like that happened? Or am I—

BEACH: No, it did not happen.

BLIEK: And why was that?

BEACH: It just didn't seem like the right approach to me. I was more inclined to the organizing workers. You know, it was a pipe dream as it turns out, but that was something that at the time seemed more like what I thought was the right way to go. Anything more?

BLIEK: No, I just wanted to ask you a bit about that.

BEACH: Sure, sure. I wasn't—a lot of my friends were hostile to the Weather—I mean, at that point we stilled called it the Weatherman Movement. I wasn't hostile, but it just didn't seem like the way to go.

BLIEK: And initially, did you know that they were going down that route to building a bomb?

BEACH: No. No, what she was saying is "Don't"—at that point, what she was saying was, "Don't turn yourself over to the system. Fight it and don't allow yourself to be a (quote) 'a martyr'"—

you could say a martyr or whatever, and by just going to prison.

BLIEK: And, so what was your reaction, then, when you found out that actually they had gone towards sort of a violent, down the violent route?

BEACH: Well, I mean, to be honest, I still sympathized, because I mean, we were all in a fever all the time. I mean, that's important to, in all this—it was fever pitch like obsession, because of how awful the war was. I mean, I don't want to—and we're talking about the war and we're talking about me, but, to this day, I mean, that war is an enormous crime in my mind. And, you know, people were being killed in large numbers for absolutely no good reason, except, you know, to maintain the domination of—now I'm opinionating, editorializing, but… Everybody was trying to figure what was the best way to stop it. And some people felt like, you know, "bringing the war home," as the term was used, was the way to do it. And while I didn't think that was correct, I understood the impulse.

BLIEK: So I want to ask you about that as well. One of the things you mentioned in that brief bio that you submitted was that your thinking about the war went from wrong to very wrong, and then criminal. So I was wondering if you could explain that process a little bit, because I think we've been getting at that over the course of our conversation. So, I wanted to ask: were there like specific turning points? Or was it sort of the culmination of a bunch of different things over the years?

BEACH: I think it's—it was incremental. And as I said, like first I read *The [United States] in Vietnam*. Then I read *The Free World Colossus*, and read the daily newspaper and read the leftist stuff that I was subscribing to. And, just becoming aware of the tactics that were being used of telling people, "You can't live on your land. You have to go live in basically concentration camps so that we can destroy the land to kill off the enemy." And those struck me as criminal. That struck me as a very—and I'm now not remembering when My Lai happened, but you know the My Lai story.

BLIEK: Yes.

BEACH: And the word was filtering out from people who returned that they were doing stuff that they were ashamed of. And so,

that's, little by little all that was coming into focus, and that's when it became a fever, you know, to *This just has to stop*.

BLIEK: So, when you were organizing still as the liaison for the Philadelphia chapters of SDS, were you also trying to connect them with some of the returning veterans who were bringing these sort of stories back from Vietnam?

BEACH: I wish to say I… No. It wasn't that easy. I mean, obviously, that's not an excuse, but meaning, you know, how do you find those people? And they're not—they're messed up, too, and some of the returning vets are still hostile to the anti-war movement, even though they're hostile to their own experience as well. So, while in retrospect, that would have been an excellent thing to do, it just wasn't—it didn't feel like an option.

BLIEK: Okay.

BEACH: So then comes the summer of '68, and John Spritzler, the aforementioned John Spritzler and I stayed in touch. He's now graduating from Dartmouth, and we're in this "organize the working class" faction. So, we decided to—I came back up here for the summer, with the idea that we would both get jobs in local factories and try to see where we could go with that. So I got a job at—and I don't know, there's a restaurant now in White River [Junction] called the Tip Top [Café], and it's called that because it used to be a bread factory. Tip Top was the name of the bread, the Tip Top bread factory. And so I got a job there, and he got a job; I'm not sure enough, so I'm not gonna say where it was.

And then, somehow he—he also, by the way, he did one of these interviews. So, he ended up going to Brazil during that summer after—he left the job that he had, and so I was here sort of by myself working at the Tip Top waiting for him to come back and for us to keep figuring out what we do next. And, it just felt like it wasn't—you know, I didn't feel like I was going to make any difference in what I was doing at Tip Top, so I again decided to go back to Philadelphia. And then, in the summer, that was the summer of the Chicago Convention.

BLIEK: The Democratic Convention.

BEACH: Right, and the riots there, and Lyndon Johnson resigning—or saying he won't run again. And [Eugene] McCarthy. And I remember it was also the summer—I mean, that spring there was a huge occupation at Columbia [University, New York City, NY], where Columbia, the university, was going to take over, wanted to take over a park in Harlem to use it to build a, as I recall, a research center that would be doing, not necessarily military research, but related research. So, there was a huge—the SDS at Columbia occupied the buildings, and somewhere near a thousand students got arrested after weeks of, or a week—I don't remember exactly how long—but an extended period of time of holding the buildings, and classes basically being stopped. And, at the same time, Martin Luther King was being killed. And in France they shut down the whole society, basically, not just a campus. So it was fever everywhere.

BLIEK: Yeah, are you referring to the Algeria mobilization or something else?

BEACH: No, it wasn't. This was—so there was actually, in France and Germany there were parallel organizations to SDS. And in fact, the German one was actually called SDS, but it wasn't the same "SDS"; the letters didn't stand for the same thing. And in France, it started as a demonstration in the colleges that were the lower—not the elite colleges, but the colleges that people who were less—universities, I should say, not using the terminology we call—anyway, you know what I mean. The universities, the working class universities, they went out on strike. Then the more elite, the students in the more elite universities joined it. And then the working class joined it, and there was a general strike, and there people in the street all of the time. It was like weeks of, like Paris was shut down. And it was post-Algeria. Algeria had been a couple of years before that, and it would never reach that level. But, you know, France is a more volatile country.

And so, anyway, I'm back to, so… And then Bobby Kennedy was assassinated. And it was fever—I mean, the year '68… The other thing that happened earlier in '68 was the Tet Offensive. And the Tet Offensive for the first time made it clear that, you know, the U.S. was not clearly going to win this thing. And, so anyway, and then '68, the summer, late summer, is the Chicago Convention and the riots there, and so forth.

So, I'm back now in Philadelphia after a month or six weeks of working at the Tip Top bread factory and deciding that it's not going anywhere. Then, so the fall of '68, the organizing—and by the way, Paul Stetzer, who I mentioned earlier, who I am sharing an apartment with part of the time, and I—so, there's a consortium of the same colleges that I mentioned before, Drexel University [Philadelphia, PA], Temple, Penn. They're doing something almost exactly parallel to what happened at Columbia, and, which is to say they tried to claim by eminent domain a lot of housing of poor people in west Philadelphia, and they were using it to build something. The consortium was called the University City Science Center, which actually ultimately, they succeeded in building, although they were detoured by what I'm about to describe, and it exists today in a slightly different form maybe than it would have.

But, so, what became the focus of all these SDS groups in the Philadelphia area was *Don't let that happen and do something like what Columbia had done*. So, Paul and I were doing organizing with all the students and others who were working for that. And it ended up there was an occupation at Penn, but it was much smaller than the one that had happened at Columbia, and lasted two or three days, and I don't think there were any arrests. I don't remember how it ended, but… But it did—we ended up, and even Paul and I got to be part of the negotiations with the board, I mean, a student representative from each of the schools, and I don't know how we got to be involved, but we sat down with several members of the board of trustees of Penn, and some alterations in their plans occurred. During that same time, I got informed that an indictment has come down. I was indicted for refusing to be inducted. So, we're now in February of '69. So I'm indicted, but—

BLIEK: This was a while after you had refused, though, right?

BEACH: Yes, quite a bit after. Yes, it's now like 18 months after. The wheels take time to turn, exactly why I don't know. And all I am is indicted. I'm not even—I think I had to show up. And then, I think somehow they set a date of June for a trial. So then, this is also, this is the spring of Parkhurst.

BLIEK: The Parkhurst [Hall] Takeover [student takeover of Dartmouth College administration building on May 6, 1969]

BEACH: The Parkhurst takeover, right. So, John Spritzler, who was now back from Brazil, and stayed around and remained an organizer here, called me and told me that this Parkhurst thing is going to happen. And so, meanwhile, I'm now thinking… One of the things that's changed in the meantime is, there's become somewhat of an active resistance movement within the Army, you know, in different ways. Very strong rumors are happening that—well, let me start with, there's an American Servicemen's Union was formed, and it was for people to collectively refuse their orders. And there were definitely stories of what was called "fragging," and for the record, meaning lower level soldiers killing their superiors, and that that was actually going on. And that there was a serious resistance movement within soldiers, and in particular, soldiers in Vietnam.

So I started thinking that the courageous and more appropriate thing to do, instead of going to prison, is to accept induction, and go in and become an organizer. So, I had a lawyer once I was indicted, and somewhere along the line, I'm not sure, I don't think it happened right away, but I said, "Maybe I'll go in if you can arrange for them to accept that I've changed my mind and I'll go in." So, John calls me about Parkhurst, and I said, "Okay, I'll…" (pause) So, actually I came up to participate in the Parkhurst thing, and was one of the people arrested, and as you may know, everybody got 30 days—we were sentenced to 30 days. So, the actual reason, ostensible reason for the occupation was: demand to do away with ROTC.

BLIEK: Right.

BEACH: And, somehow I guess the word had gotten out beforehand that it was going to happen, so a court order came down saying, "You can't go occupy Parkhurst" or whatever. I don't know exactly, if they knew exactly what the plan—but they knew some civil disobedience was going to happen, and they got a court order saying "you can't do it." So the charge was violating a court order—contempt of court.

BLIEK: Yep.

BEACH: So, anyway, so we—and the Grafton County jail was not big enough to hold, I think there were 50 or 60 people arrested. I don't remember the exact numbers, but in that neighborhood. So, what they had to do--we originally all

were taken to Grafton County jail, and then—well, originally we were taken to an armory in Lebanon, and then, I don't remember the deal, but I don't think we were never out on recognizance or anything; it was from there to the Grafton County jail, and then to court. And then, once we were sentenced to 30 days, they didn't have the facility to hold everybody there, so we were disbursed to county jails throughout the state. So I was with about six or seven other people at the Merrimac County Jail. So I got to know the people from the Class of '71 and '72, freshmen and sophomores, and it was, you know, a good—it was good. I mean, it was jail, but, you know, we had each other, and we marched around all day. There were individual cells, but we were allowed out into a corridor, so we marched in circles, [laughter] talked about the war and talked about everything else.

BLIEK: Yeah, from what I understand, there was also some controversy over the fact that Dartmouth actually went through with allowing you guys to be sent off.

BEACH: Allowing?

BLIEK: That you guys, the people who had been taken out of Parkhurst, had been sent on to jail.

BEACH: That the college allowed that?

BLIEK: Yeah.

BEACH: I'm sure there was, but, you know, we were in jail, so I wasn't really aware of it. Another interesting piece, it's a legal technicality, but one of the things that happened in that was, New Hampshire and Vermont had made an agreement between their state police that in the event of civil disruptions, they would work together, and they could work together and leave their state. So, basically, what as I recall the story was that in order to prove to the judge that we were in the building if we were arrested, they had to prove that everybody who was arrested had been in the building. So what they did was the Vermont state troopers formed a gauntlet, and the New Hampshire state police came in and pulled us out one by one.

BLIEK: Yep.

BEACH: But, as it turned out, there were a couple people who got arrested who had been in the crowd outside, and, so in fact, as it turned out, though that wasn't known at the time of the trial, the basis of the evidence on which we were convicted was faulty, because not everybody in the building had been—again, this is a legal technicality, and nobody picked it up, so everybody—I think the people who did get sort of either pushed in or pushed themselves in, but weren't in the building, attested to that, and after two or three days, I think they were released. I don't know. The record would show that, but I don't remember. That's my recollection. Anyway, how did you pose that question? Because there was a thread that I was going to pull on.

BLIEK: Oh, I had mentioned the fact that there may have been some discussion on campus about the fact that Dartmouth had allowed for you to be sent to jail.

BEACH: Yeah, that's right. The thread that is not related to that, but that reminds me of what it was, is the judge who sentenced us was a Harvard grad, and Harvard had recently had some, you know, like the Penn thing and the Columbia thing, they had had something where there was an occupation of sorts, and the judge who sentenced us was overheard at a club—again, this is, of course, secondhand; I can't vouch that it's true—but he said he wishes that he could have gotten his hands on those Harvard students, and he'd have shown them. But they didn't get any time. So, our 30 days thing was sort of unprecedented. The Columbia people got two or three days, and so forth. So the 30 day thing was unprecedented.

Another nice story that came out of it is, I went to the—so, after we were released, there were college disciplinary hearings, so the one was a civil issue, and then the next was an academic issue, and then people were given various, not suspensions, but sanctions, and including, as you probably know, one student was expelled, you know, gone from Dartmouth forever. But, in any case, I went to the hearings for the intra-college disciplinary hearings, and at one point during the hearing, it was faculty and student judges, and they had to leave the room to confer. And they were taping the proceedings, and when they left the room, somebody in the room had a little tape recorder that had the [Bob] Dylan song, "The Times They Are A Changin'." They went up and, into the official recording, and all the officials are out of the

room, they played “The Times They Are A Changin’” [laughter] So when they played it back later in the middle of their official proceedings, they got “The Times They Are A Changin’” which I found that just very satisfying. [laughter]

Anyway, so then, my lawyer had to arrange for me to go for a second induction shortly after that. And I went, and again did a leaflet, and this time instead of in the leaflet, rather than talking about the moral reasons that the war was wrong, I was talking about how we have to organize, and blah, blah, blah. But I was debating *Am I gonna go in or am I not gonna go in?* And then, this is the story that I had told earlier and got it confused. My friend from New York came in the day before I was actually thinking about going, and said, “The Phillies and the Mets are playing a twi-night doubleheader tomorrow. We’re gonna go.” And I said, “Well, guess what? Tomorrow night I might be in North Carolina at Fort Bragg.

So, oh, and I didn’t tell you this. I didn’t mention this. When the indictment came down, you know, there were some papers, and the evidence on which I was indicted, since I didn’t actually—so, on a legal technicality, the lawyer was saying, since they didn’t let me go into the building, I never actually refused. So, really I didn’t violate the Selective Service law that way. So, this time I took him and another friend with me to see if they—oh, and they wrote that I said, “I understand that…” you know, [that] I read my rights away. They claim that I made the statement, “I refuse the process for induction. I understand that by doing this, I subject myself to five years in prison and a $10,000 fine.” But, you know, and blah, blah, blah. Which it never happened, but they did it so that they’d be covered legally. So this time I took my friends just to see if it happened again, if, you know, whatever I might use that as evidence. But this time, even though I was much more militant, they let me in and they let me process.

And the whole day I wasn’t sure what I was going to do. And when they finally said, you know, “Step over this line and you’ll become a soldier in the United States…” whatever it is, however they phrase it, but I just, I did an about face and walked out. So, very soon, right thereafter, I was brought in for my trial. And there was no trial; it was, you know, “If you don’t plead not guilty, there’s no reason for a trial.” And fortunately, there’s a legal possibility called “no contest,”

which usually the judge won't accept. But, for whatever reason, the judge accepted me pleading "no contest," so then you're considered convicted, but you never said you're guilty, because I didn't feel like I was guilty of anything; that's the reason I didn't want to say "guilty."

But, so, then there's a period, a pre-sentencing period. So it wasn't until August that I was sentenced. And I was at a wedding and I'd just met this young woman that I wanted to—a wedding of a friend of mine from high school, and I had just met a woman that I wanted—the next week I was going to have the chance to see her again. And I got home from the wedding, and my parents said, "Your sentencing date is like five days from now." So, I go and was sentenced to three-and-a-half years, and off to the Philadelphia Detention Center, where I spent a couple of weeks, and then to the Lewisburg Maximum Security Prison for a couple of weeks, and then transferred to a minimum security prison that's affiliated with Lewisburg, where I spent the next 20 months.

So, now that's, obviously, there's a lot of interesting stories in that whole thing. I mean, to begin with, the Philadelphia Detention Center is, as you might well expect, an absolute hellhole, and it was a very bad two weeks being there. I won't go into any details, but it was ugly. Except to say, one interesting story. So, I'm in a like an open dormitory kind of setting of about, like there are cages around a central point, and there are like eight such 40-man units. Well, I'm in a bed, and two beds away from me is like a 40-year-old, 40-something guy who's been in and out of the jail system for quite a while. He and I talked for a little bit. And in the bed behind me is like an 18-year-old who's part of a gang, and he's telling me all the time how he's going to rape me at night, you know, when the lights go down. And he stood over me and like ejaculated onto my bed while I'm on the bed, and I'm sure that he means—or at least I believe he means he's going to try it. So, somehow the what I will call for the moment the career criminal, 40-year-old, who has the respect of the 18-year-old, has learned why I'm there, and he digs it, like he thinks I'm a right on guy because of what—he tells the 18-year-old, "Back off." And he did. Which was a nice little story that I got defended by having had this conversation.

But anyway, so, while I was in what's called A & O, Admissions and Orientation I think it's called, at Lewisburg, in the last two weeks of August, the news comes that Ho Chi Minh died, which just, it was just a bad moment for me because I needed to share that with somebody and, you know, there was just nobody there. I mean, it's a minor point, but…

BLIEK: Were you the only sort of draft—

BEACH: At that point, yes. Once I get to the minimum security prison, there are quite a few others. So, the minimum security prison is called Allenwood [low security federal prison]. It's about ten miles away from Lewisburg [Maximum Security Prison], but, you know, there's constant back and forth. Anybody who misbehaves at Allenwood gets sent back to Lewisburg, and anybody who gets to Allenwood has to have been through Lewisburg first.

Anyway, at Allenwood, there are about 350 prisoners, and of those 350, 30 or so are draft resisters of a secular nature, and another 30 Jehovah's Witnesses who have also refused to cooperate with the system. And you can—there's conscientious objector status, but the Jehovah's Witnesses, for whatever reasons, don't go through the process. They could, but they don't. They don't recognize the authority of the State, so they say, "No, we're not gonna fight." But there are 30 who are more or less politically there, and for one reason or another object to the war or object to the Selective Service System or whatever.

So, when I first got there… The first wave of people who were sent for the draft were people who were sort of very moralistically opposed to the war—and it's a little complicated what I'm trying to say—but not sort of tuned into a movement to stop it or a movement. They're the broader movement that was ongoing at that point. And so, and they were estranged from the rest of the population. And so, who's the rest of the population is mostly people in on drug offenses, car theft, some who are like people who had long sentences, but are down to the last year or two so they could be moved out of max to minimum, and then white collar people who did embezzlement and things like that. So, that's the rest of the population. And, the draft resisters were still more or less considered weird.

But, over time, because the draft resisters are involved with a movement that is gaining recognition, let's say, in the broader society, I mean, everybody knows that there's a big anti-war movement, a big movement: Chicago has already happened, and the Black Panthers, you know; in some levels, there's a little bit of an association, etc. So there's a beginning of a thaw in that "draft resisters are just weird."

And one day when, probably in my second or third month, my job—the prison is a 5,000 acre facility where they, for example, grow feed for cattle which they raise, which the cattle are the meat for the prison, and there's a quarry, so there's rock crushing going on. And so my first job was to go to this rock crusher, and the crew is called "Construction 1," and everybody sort of gets put on that. It's sort of like the lowest level, and then with time you can put in to get on a different… So, that was my first job.

And then, well, so what happened was, on the site of the prison is guard housing, and when the first snow came, our job was to go to their driveways and shovel the snow. And I said, "Oh, you know, I'm not your personal servant. I refuse to do it." So, I was moved to a farm crew, the lowest level farm crew, but that crew is also…

Oh, I'm sorry, so I was telling about the construction crew first, because one day… so the facility's overcrowded, so my bed is out in a hallway which is supposed to just be a corridor, but there are, you know, 20 bunk beds. And the person [in] the other part of the bunk bed over the weekend was sick, and it was a very cold winter day. And Monday morning came, and if you were sick, what you're supposed to do is you're supposed to go up to the main building which is a couple hundred yards away and see the medical person and get designated as sick. But he was too sick, he was really sick, and he was too sick to do that, so he just stayed in bed. And we were on the same work crew. And the truck comes up to pick us up to take us out to the rock crusher, and the guard comes in to get us, and he says, "Where's Davis?" I said, "Well, he's sick. And he can't make it. And if you want to go look at him, he's green with…" And, so the guard just said, "Just get on the truck and let's go." And when I came back for lunch from the morning, he had been taken to the hole at Lewisburg for not showing up for his work assignment.

BLIEK: By “the hole,” do you mean solitary?

BEACH: Yeah. Which is officially called “administrative segregation.” But, so what we did, we convened the draft resisters and tried to come up with a strategy for responding to this. And I don’t remember exactly what we did, but we got in some trouble, but not a lot, but we made a gesture that people noticed. And then a couple months later, there was a… So, there was a draft resister at Lewisburg who was of the story, the part that I was talking about before, he was just a total non-cooperator. And he wouldn’t go to work ever. And so, they had him in the hole. And if you’re in the hole, once a week they have to let you go to a shower. So, he goes to his shower; he won’t go back to his cell; you know, it’s like “I’m not cooperating in any way.” So they had to drag him back to the cell every week. And it was well known that they hated him, and that the guards really found him a permanent thorn in their side and they didn’t want—they wanted to do something about it. Well, what happened next was, there was a riot in the prison in Lewisburg.

BLIEK: Around when?

BEACH: Around when or around what?

BLIEK: When. And also what, I suppose.

BEACH: I think January of ’70. And it was I don’t know what it was around, but it was led mostly by members of the Black Muslims, the Nation of Islam. And a guard was killed in the riot. And so, they had need for all of the hole space they could get. You know, there were a lot of people who had been involved in the riot were sent to the hole, and so, hole space was at a premium. And there had always been a rumor that they were going to send this guy, the draft resister, to the federal psychiatric prison, because, you know, they were going to call him mentally ill and use that. And not only is that prison considered a horrible, extra horrible place to be, but beyond that, your time stops. You don’t get credit for your time because now you’re there because you’re mentally ill, not because… And you can’t be released until that’s—

BLIEK: Fixed.

BEACH: Yeah. So, we were very worried for this guy. And so what we did was we, first we contacted people on the outside to publicize it. It got into the Philadelphia papers briefly. And we did a hunger strike, which about maybe 10 or 15 of us went without eating for a week. And at the end of the week, what we did was we asked all the other prisoners to miss the noon meal that day in solidarity. And two-thirds of them did. And so, it was another step in, now, you know, this is a movement and the draft resisters are, you know… The other thing, interestingly, a lot of what the feedback we got from other prisoners was, "It was nice that you looked out for Davis, but Davis isn't [sic] one of you, and it's really good that you're looking out for your own," meaning another draft resister, because the sort of prison population is very ethnically divided and people are very into protecting their own. And so, people really were into the fact that we were looking for our own. There were a lot of—I mean, there was a big Italian Mafioso contingent, and Latino, Puerto Rican contingent. Anyway, especially the Mafioso were "You did the right thing." [laughter] "You looked out for your own."

Anyway. So, then, after a little bit, I ended up on the cattle detail. That's a step up from the low level farm work. And I bring that up because, one, the work was—actually, I liked going to work every day. It was hard work. It was feeding. We had to load about ten tons of cattle feed and take it around on a truck to various fields where they were. And occasionally, when it was time to move them from one pasture to another, we actually even rode horses and played cowboys [laughter], you know, herding the cattle. But, in the meantime I also got some low level veterinary responsibilities, which ultimately became an important thing in my life, because my plan was still when I got out, was to work for The Revolution again.

But, The Revolution was—I mean, well, while we were in, it was getting hotter and hotter still. Kent State [University shooting] happened, and the demonstrations were—I don't know if you ever heard about this one, and actually this happened a little bit after I got out, but I couldn't go because I was parole. Returning from the demonstration, the people got on the New Jersey Turnpike; everybody just stopped their car, and they blocked the New Jersey Turnpike for like six hours, and everybody was partying in the—and obviously not everybody. Lots of people were unhappy. But the people who were coming back from the demonstration were having

parties on the highway, and other people were honking their horns. But in any case, things were still taking off. But there was still a sense that the movement—the war was winding down, or at least they had (quote) “Vietnamized” it.

And, so my plan when I got out was to work for The Revolution, but I was also starting to think, *What if there’s no clear role for me?* And the veterinary work made me think maybe, you know, if other things failed, I could go to veterinary school and become a vet. So, I came out, tried to find a new role.

BLIEK: So, when exactly did you—

BEACH: When did I come out?

BLIEK: Yeah.

BEACH: April of ’71. So, I tried unsuccessfully to find a new role politically. You know, back to driving a taxi and trying to find a role, but not. And then, I decided to start taking pre-veterinary courses. So, I did. And then, I hadn’t taken any biology or chemistry here, so I went to Penn and took the prerequisites for veterinary school, but in the meantime decided that there were things like free clinics that were relating to communities, and I sort of switched my focus from animals to humans, and ended up applying, a couple years later applying to medical school, after I completed the prerequisites. And that’s what I do today. I mean, there was peace there.

Oh, meanwhile, though, the job that I got while I was taking the prerequisites was back to an auto stamping plant in Philadelphia where a number of the people were—somebody that I had worked with closely in the pre-prison days had become the sort of the head of a pretty viable, or at least at the moment it seemed, working class organizing project in Philadelphia, and a number of people, members of that organization, worked in this auto stamping plant. So, I got a job there, and was marginally involved with what they were doing while I was taking the prerequisites. And then, so I went to medical school, went to Temple Medical School, and graduated in 1980. So, that’s the Vietnam piece of my…

BLIEK: Yeah, I wanted to ask a bit about, when you got out, why do you think it was difficult for you to find a role politically? Had The Revolution sort of moved on while you were inside?

BEACH: Well, it had taken different tacks. I mean, there was the Weather Underground and there was the organize the working class faction. It might have been more me than… The momentum was clearly less, but it wasn't dead. But, none of the tacks, none of the directions did I feel like I could see myself…

I mean, like for example, when I was working in the auto stamping plant, meaning, you know, we were stamping out hoods and fenders and sending them to another plant for assembly, I sort of felt like the organizing that—so, the people that I had been somewhat associated with were trying to organize people to be first, you know, more assertive for their own welfare as workers, and then sort of that they would see, and then meanwhile still talking about oppression within, because probably two-thirds of the workers were black, and connecting working—it was a kind of Marxist model of, you know, organizing… But I saw it as a little bit, I hate to use the word dishonest, but I guess, in that clearly, you know, if those workers had become more militant, the plant was already—it was like a 5,000 employee plant—was already bordering on obsolete. If the workers became more militant, all they would do is shut the plant down and everybody would be out of their jobs. So, I couldn't enthusiastically participate in the organizing, and ultimately, not because the workers became more militant, but maybe five or ten years after I left, they did shut the plant down, as they've done with many other sites. But, that's why—so that's why I didn't find a place for myself in organizing.

BLIEK: One other thing I wanted to ask you about about your prison experience was that, were there any sort of long-term implications for you after you spent all that time in prison? Like, did you ever encounter social or professional stigma as a result of having been in prison?

BEACH: Well, so interestingly, as far as medical school, for example, when I applied to medical school, you know, it was a time—now, by the time I got to apply for medical school, I'm 29, and at that time in particular, very few medical schools wanted anybody who was over 25. I mean, in fact, Jefferson Medical School in Philadelphia actually said that: "If you're

over 25, don't even…" I mean, legally they would never do that anymore, but at that time they did.

But, so I got two interviews. At one of them, at a school I just won't bother to name, but, I go for the interview, and granting the interview was done at one level and the interviewer was somebody else. He saw my record and he just spent the whole time telling me what a jerk I was, and why would I even, you know, how could I bother to apply to medical school? and blah, blah, blah. So, yeah, on that level, that was… But I go to the next one, and the interviewer thinks that it was great what I did. And so, it cut both ways.

BLIEK: Sure.

BEACH: And, with regard to actual penalties long term, the only thing, and this is trivial, but each state—I've gotten licensed in two different states, in New York and Pennsylvania, and each time, because there's this felony on my record, I have to, when I make the application, instead of just it being routine I have to get kicked into a review by a morals committee, and it takes months later. Each time it took me several months later than it would have to get my license.

BLIEK: So, having been a draft resister—

BEACH: It's a felony.

BLIEK: Felony, okay.

BEACH: So, yeah, I'm officially still a former convicted felon, but it doesn't have any, other than that little bit that I just said, those little incidents, the incident with the interview and the brief delay in my getting a license, it has not had any really significance. Just out of curiosity, did you know about the—before the interview—that I had been in prison?

BLIEK: I saw in your bio that you said you were in prison, but I didn't know more than that. The little blurb you said—

BEACH: Oh, did I say that in that?

BLIEK: —you did mention you'd been in prison, but other than that, I…

BEACH: I was just curious. I didn't remember saying that, and I was just curious… Okay. Anything else? Life after?

BLIEK: Yeah, sure.

BEACH: Well, I mean, I tell people medicine has not been a perfect match for me, but I've done things that I'm proud of with it. But, I've spent quite a few, well, over a 25 year period, I worked in Haiti, in rural Haiti, actually on the ground in Haiti about three years out of, but divided up in packages of a year once and six months another time, and working in rural areas where there basically is no doctor. And, rather than—my goal in this strategy was to train village health workers rather than be the doctor myself, although the pressures if you're there is, you know, people want you to be the doctor. So I did some of each of those things. Worked with the American Friends Service Committee, which is the Quakers, in a community development project which had a health component to it, where I was the only non-Haitian involved in that. But, so, and that's what I'm probably most proud of.

But most of my work has been in intercity clinics in Philadelphia, in the same neighborhood that I used to tutor in, and then in Brooklyn and the Bronx [NY]. I'm working in the Bronx now. The other time—I mean, I've been, you know, every year or two there are big demonstrations, and I got involved with the climate movement, and, oh, and during the '80s, got very involved in organizing around the Central America interventions, which were really in some ways the most successful political, successful in what sense? But, very good organizations that I felt very comfortable with the other people that I was working with and with the goal that we had. And there would be like within—I was in Philadelphia at that time, and we had the health workers against the interventions in Central America, and the lawyers committee and the teachers committee and… And I was very active in the health workers, and then I was the liaison to the citywide where all the different professional organizations, or coordinated the effort. So, that's another piece that I feel good about in my post-Vietnam experience.

BLIEK: Yeah. So, just to wrap things up, I think, I remember from your bio you said that one of the long lasting implications from your Dartmouth experience and your Vietnam experience was you had a continued commitment to social justice, and that's sort of the theme I'm seeing here. Is that

fair to say? Like in the ‘80s you went on to, like you say, being an activist with the Latin America policy, and now climate change.

BEACH: Yeah. Yeah, that’s the trajectory the whole thing put me on, and yeah, that’s still, in my life that’s the most important thing in my sense of who I am and why I’m here.

BLIEK: Sure. So, just one last question.

BEACH: Personal life. Go ahead.

BLIEK: Looking back on your activities, especially during the Vietnam War, is there any part of it that you regret?

BEACH: Hmm. Well, that I feel like I should have done otherwise? That’s one way of regretting. And no, nothing major. Things that I regret? I mean, one of the things I regret on a personal level is, I feel like—I don’t know how to say this, but having gone to Dartmouth, and then to prison, and been in pretty much very all-male environments for a very long period of my personal development, I think I became less comfortable knowing how to deal with the opposite sex, and never established a long-term relationship, which I regret. But, that’s not to say that I feel like, you know, if I went back, what would I do differently? I’m not sure. But there’s a regret of how it ended up working out. Not that I couldn’t have overcome that, but anyway, so there’s that. But there’s nothing that I feel like—I mean, I regret, for example, that I did the Senior Fellowship and didn’t go to France. Those are minor kinds of regrets, the first one maybe not so minor. But nothing that I feel like I shouldn’t, you know, I did the wrong thing.

BLIEK: Great. Well, this has been a great interview. And thank you so much for coming in and taking the time to do this.

BEACH: Thank you. You know, needless to say, I wanted to get—I liked getting the message out, and it’s been an important part of my life, and the more people, for whatever reason, want to look into how Dartmouth and people at Dartmouth dealt with Vietnam, I’m happy to say my piece.

[End of interview.]