

Interviewee: D'Entremont, Gene
Interviewer: Robin Sellers
Date of interview: June 14, 2006
Category: World War II
Status: Open
Tape location: Box #52

Sellers: Gene, are you aware that we're tape recording this interview?

D'Entremont: Absolutely.

Sellers: And we have your permission to do so?

D'Entremont: Absolutely.

Sellers: How about starting by telling me where you were born and where you grew up?

D'Entremont: I was born in Lynn, Massachusetts, June 3, 1930, and that's a significant date which we'll come back to us later. My dad was born in Danvers, Massachusetts, in 1904. My grandfather – my father's father – was born in Pubnico, Nova Scotia, in 1860, when Abraham Lincoln was president – which is kind of strange, because I knew my grandfather. He didn't die until 1945, when I was fifteen, and I saw him regularly for several years. And he was alive and born when Abraham Lincoln was president.

Sellers: That's amazing.

D'Entremont: It is kind of amazing. Then, I was raised in Lynnfield, Massachusetts, a small town just west of Lynn. At that time, Lynn had about 25,000 employees in three different GE plants, building war supplies and war equipment and all kinds of stuff, radar, for the Navy and the Air Force.

Sellers: So you were very much aware that there was a war on.

D'Entremont: Absolutely. Absolutely. Well, as a twelve year old, I got a full time job. There was nobody else to work. I was working in a restaurant and going to junior high school at the same time.

Sellers: So other than that, how did the war affect your life? Rationing?

D'Entremont: Rationing. My mother would send me to the store with the little disks things that were ration – coupons – and then the change for the coupons. Then I would haul the groceries, the sugar and the salt and the pork chops back on a little sled in the wintertime. That was very different. Then my dad had a sticker on the car that said "C" because he was a critical employee with GE. He was an electrical engineer. Actually, he tried to get in the Army and the Army wouldn't take him because GE wouldn't release him. So anyway, I got out of high school — I went to high school in Wakefield. Lynnfield did not have a high school at that time, but it does now. Graduated from high school on my birthday of '48. Then I was sick and tired of sitting in the classroom. Back then, as a high school student, you were not active. You were being taught, but you weren't participating. A lot of high schools today, you get involved more than — we weren't really in a position to talk and have a ready dialogue with the teachers. It

just was different back then for some reason. But anyway, I was sick and tired of sitting in a classroom, so I joined the Navy, despite my parents wishes.

Sellers: Okay, and this would have been what date?

D'Entremont: June 5, 1948. I went through boot camp in Great Lakes, Illinois, and I was sent to Aviation Fundamental School in Memphis and _____[??], Tennessee. Graduated from that, went to Lakehurst, New Jersey, to go to Aerographic School, which is meteorology. Graduated from that and was sent to Norfolk to get on USS *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, which was a big super-carrier of the time. Now we're in the beginning of 1950, and the *Roosevelt* came back from Guantanamo Bay and had a problem with its engines and was put into Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. For some reason, January of 1950, the Navy re-commissioned the USS *Bataan*, which was a World War II built – late in World War II – carrier built, cruiser hull. They sent us, me and another guy, from the *Roosevelt* up there to get into the new forming crew of this ship that had been in mothballs for four years. We did that in early or late April, I forget which; we took a shake down cruise. I was by then a 3rd class aerographer's mate, and I land the midwatch. And we were going to Guantanamo Bay, and seems like about three o'clock in the morning I plotted our ship's course and we were about 150 miles southwest of Guantanamo Bay, and steaming at about 30 knots. Called the officer of the deck. Lieutenant, said, "I know we're off course." He said, "You'll find that in the morning." Well, the next morning the captain had all hands muster on the flight deck and said, "We are going to North Island, San Diego," which was disconcerting to — half the crew was reservists with their cars parked on the dock in Philadelphia.

We went through the Panama Canal. I stood on the deck as we went through the Panama Canal. It was very interesting. And we got into North Island, which is a naval air station in San Diego. All of the regular sailors aboard and most of the reservists were anxious to go to Tijuana on liberty. Well, that never happened. The chaplain, who was a reserve captain, and the captain of the ship, which was a Navy four-striper, stood on the 07 deck and said, "We are going to have an all-hands working party." And they preceded to take off their shirts and start working. So the entire crew — my first thought was, "Where do I hide?" The whole crew started man-handling those big metal .50 caliber aircraft ammunition tins which weigh about 120 pounds. We worked day and night for two days.

Sellers: Did you know why you were there yet?

D'Entremont: No, but think of the date.

Sellers: Oh yeah, but I'm wondering if *you* were thinking of that, because it wasn't obvious at the time that that was what was going on.

D'Entremont: No, it wasn't. It was hidden from the general public, too. So on or about the first of May, we pulled out of San Diego. Nobody had got a cold beer since we left Philadelphia. And we went to Ford Island and discovered that we were going into the Seventh Fleet on a shakedown cruise out of Philadelphia, the Seventh Fleet being Japan and the Japanese Sea and so forth. We also discovered that there were three squadrons of Marine Corsairs – F4U5s, former reserve pilots coming out of El Toro in California and flying to Guam to meet us. They were mostly World War II veterans.

So when we got to Guam, they flew aboard, and all of the sudden on the 3rd of June, 1950, I was in the backseat of TBM flying over Korea. Significant date. We managed to support the 2nd Marine Division, which was by now on the ground, about the 20th of June, I guess. By the end of the year – close to the end of the year – we went around to the other side of

Korea to Hung Nam, and the Chosin Reservoir disaster had happened and the 2nd Marine Division had come out, fought their way out. And we converted our hangar bay to a big sickbay and brought aboard all the walking wounded Marines and took them to Guam. And then we went back and did some more flight operations. We had our planes off for about four or five weeks.

Later on, as the war started to smooth out a little bit, I got out of that situation, was sent back to the United States and then ended up in the Naval hospital in Bethesda. I got the date written down here someplace. Seventh of July of '52. I had a problem with spinal column pressure in flying in un-pressurized airplanes and I had suffered facial paralysis and all kinds of problems.

Sellers: From, like, a pinched nerve situation?

D'Entremont: Oh yeah. My spinal column pressure was below normal, but functioning perfect on the surface. But after two years of flying in un-pressurized cabins, it got to me. So anyway, I was in the hospital for — well, I got discharged on April 19th, 1953, with fifty percent disability.

Sellers: So you were in the hospital for a while?

D'Entremont: Yeah. Fortunately, the corpsman who was helping me through this — I was in the neurosurgical ward, they didn't know what to do with me. And most of the patients there were epileptics, which is an exciting world. Because, you know, you'd be playing bridge with them — Vroom! They're on the floor. You're looking for a tongue depressor.

Sellers: That could be scary.

D'Entremont: So the corpsman, named John MacArthur, had a girlfriend at Mary Washington College. Washington is about 55 miles from Fredericksburg. I had a car, which I couldn't drive at the time, but he didn't have a car, but he had a girlfriend. So he got me a date. So here I am, half put back together, and I go down there with him, and this pretty girl sitting under a tree with his girlfriend, and a year later we were married. Actually, it was only about six months later, because she showed up with me in Tallahassee, August of '53.

Sellers: Now, how did you happen to end up in Tallahassee?

D'Entremont: I was an airographer's mate in the Navy and Florida State was one of three major universities that taught meteorology as a major. Washington University in St. Louis, the University of Washington in Seattle, Clark Institute in Worcester, and Florida State.

Sellers: Okay, so that's what brought you here.

D'Entremont: Yeah, the climate attracted me, because the other place weren't too attractive to me — St. Louis, Seattle, and Massachusetts. So I came here to major in meteorology.

Sellers: And when you got here, who was here in the Meteorology Department?

D'Entremont: Dr. Werner Baum. Dr. Seymour Hess. Dr. Noel LeSeuer. Hess and Baum have long gone, and LeSeuer is still on the faculty, I believe. And there were some others, too. And I worked for the university plotting 500 millibar weather charts, because nobody else knew how to do it. Anyway, what happened was, I did a little research at the end of my first

semester and discovered if you did real well, you could work for the federal government for \$3700 a year when you graduated, which wasn't attractive to me. So I went down to the vocational placement office in Westcott and said, "other than engineers, who makes the most money when they graduate?" And she said, "Accountants." So I said, "therefore, I am one." I switched my major to accounting and was fortunate enough to accelerate and go to summer school and I was ready to graduate, never having been in the university before, in February of '56. That's two years and nine months after I started.

Sellers: You were married while you were here. Where did you live here on campus?

D'Entremont: This is another story now. I lived in an apartment on Dunwoody Street, and the university had a small nine-hole golf course that ran behind my house. And I was maybe 200 yards from the goal line at Doak Campbell Stadium, if you looked straight out from my backyard. But that was expensive, that was almost \$40 a month.

Sellers: Oh, it was expensive for back then.

D'Entremont: Yeah, and I was only making \$170 on the GI Bill. So we went out to West Campus where you could rent for \$15 a month and they paid the electric. Another strange story. We were wondering through West – I don't know if you know what West Campus was then?

Sellers: Oh, yes!

D'Entremont: Okay. We were wondering through West Campus looking at the two or three things that might be available, and there was a duplex and one half was vacant. It was two bedrooms and a bath and a kitchen and a sitting room. Well, I walked up the path, and it was kind of woody out there, and there was a very pregnant lady sitting on the doorstep of the other half. And she looked up at me and said, "Gene D'Entremont?" I looked at her, and she was about seven and a half months pregnant, and I said, "I know you, but I don't know —." She was a girl I went to high school with. Sitting in the middle of a swamp in the middle of Tallahassee.

Sellers: And that's what West Campus was, was converted barracks and a swamp.

D'Entremont: Five years after high school. Well, it so happened that she had graduated from Connecticut College for Women and married a Ph.D. candidate at FSU in organic chemistry and was having their first baby about then. So we became close friends.

Sellers: And who was the professor?

D'Entremont: Dr. Ralph Becker. He graduated with his Ph.D. and went on to the University of Houston to teach.

But to get back to my first days at FSU, several interesting things happened. One was the first day — my wife was at home doing whatever girls do at home at night, and I was out with two or three guys I had met at the VA office. FSU had a VA office on campus at that time to help the returning veterans. And none of us had been on campus before, but a day or so before, and we went over to the fountain at Westcott because there was a little amphitheater about 100 yards toward Tennessee from Westcott, out in the open. They were going to have an introductory to the campus for the new incoming freshmen. We were standing and three or four young men who were students – sophomores, juniors, I don't know – came up and challenged us as freshmen not having beanies. And the two guys I was with were both football players, one an

ex-Marine DI and one an ex-Army paratrooper. And after we deposited those guys in the fountain three or four different times, they decided we didn't need to wear beanies. And after that, I mean within days, the beanie thing went away.

Sellers: That was about the time that it disappeared, yes.

D'Entremont: So we might have had some influence on that.

Sellers: Were you issued a beanie when you came?

D'Entremont: No, you had to buy them.

Sellers: Did they tell you you had to buy them?

D'Entremont: They weren't too pushy with the group of people I was with. Maybe the real out-of-high school freshmen. You know, there's nothing more sophisticated than a young lady, a senior in high school, and nothing more naive than the same lady three months later and a freshman in college.

Well, what else happened that was interesting?

Sellers: Being married, you probably didn't join a fraternity.

D'Entremont: Oh, I did, and that's another story. That's another story and I'll get to that in a minute. Well, I'll get to that now. Parking on anywheres near where you wanted to go to class was nigh onto impossible. I ran into Dr. Wesley Harter who was a business law professor and the mentor of Alpha Kappa Psi, which was a business fraternity that had a four or five bedroom old mansion-type house on the street that goes between Pensacola and the campus. Whatever the street, where the Sweet Shop was – is.

Sellers: Jefferson.

D'Entremont: Jefferson. They had a house on Jefferson next to the Phi Mu sorority house. And they had a big backyard you park fourteen, fifteen, sixteen cars in. So for twenty bucks a month – excuse me, twenty bucks a year to belong to a fraternity, plus \$50 initiation, I could park forever. And I also had a place to study between classes, an icebox to keep my box lunch in – my bag lunch in. So it was very nice. And they had parties, too.

Sellers: What did your wife think about you belonging to a fraternity?

D'Entremont: Oh, she didn't mind at all, except at the end of most of the fraternity parties we said we're going home and go to bed. [chuckles] And the other kids couldn't understand that. But anyway, Dr. Harder was a good friend and a good leader, and, you know, I thought it was nice and we enjoyed it.

Another experience I had – I purchased a little Nash Rambler convertible when I got out of the Navy, and being in Florida, it was wonderful. First time I had a dentist appointment, I went downtown Tallahassee and the dentist office was on Monroe next door to where the McCroy store was back then, on the second floor in the back. I went up and parked my car on the street and went up. Bright sunny day, and I came out forty-five minutes later, bright sunny day and the car was half full of water. It had thundered and rained and filled up my – I had the top down. It was kind of exciting because I didn't know that could happen.

Sellers: We used to have those, you could set watch by then.

D'Entremont: Mid-afternoon.

Sellers: Yeah, you don't have them anymore so much.

D'Entremont: And then there was my story about Dr. Mary Elizabeth Thomas. It's really funny. The first week of school there was a bunch of us, and for some reason we were scheduled — half the class was veterans, freshmen. And she went around — she's a nice lady, and she went around the class and asked us where we lived and where we were from and this and that. And she got to the guy next to me, whose name happened to be Cliff Allen, I discovered later, and became dear friends with, where he was from. He said, "Climax". And she said, "where is Climax?" And he said, "Right between dead tired and really excited." She smiled and then she finally said, "You guys are more fun than the rest of the students." She was a dear lady. You said that she was alive up until some time ago.

Sellers: I never ran across her, so I don't know if — she very well could be still live and living somewhere else.

D'Entremont: I would guess her to be about ten years older than I am, and I'm seventy-six.

Sellers: Well, there are a lot of upper-eighty ones knocking around out there that tell some really good stories.

D'Entremont: My English professor was Dr. Claude Flory, who recently died in the last couple of years.

Sellers: Yes, Claude died about three years ago.

D'Entremont: He was a really sophisticated, nice guy.

Sellers: Was he dating Daisy Parker when he was your English professor?

D'Entremont: I think so, yeah. I wouldn't be surprised if she were older than he, though.

Sellers: I don't know. She just died, oh, several months ago.

D'Entremont: She had to be in her nineties then.

Sellers: I would think so, yeah. They would not marry until his mother died. He lived with his mom.

D'Entremont: He must have been in his 60s when he married her, then.

Sellers: I would guess so, because they were pretty ancient when I came back. I had her as an undergraduate in the '60s, and then came back and worked with her when I did my graduate work.

D'Entremont: Now that we talk about Claude Flory, he taught me English or English literature on a second floor classroom on Westcott, which they don't have classrooms there

anymore. Maybe you experienced some classes in Westcott, too?

Sellers: The only classes that they held in Westcott when I was here (and I was here about six years after you, because I came in '62) — the only classes they had were art classes on the fourth floor, which they suspect is why the building caught fire in '69. [chuckles]
So you graduated in '56 —?

D'Entremont: One more interesting story. My freshman year, I believe, they had built a new library in what is now Dodd Hall. It used to be the old library. And they had, oh, six million books in there or something. So what they did is they caused everyone of the 5,500 students to come and grab ten books or twenty books over Christmas vacation; they couldn't get their grades until they brought them back to the new library. So that's how they moved all the books from the old library to the new library. Apparently it worked out.

Sellers: Yeah, that was the year that they built it. Strozier was built in '56 or opened in '56.

D'Entremont: Yeah. Opened in '56, I guess. But that's how they moved the books, and it worked! Pretty clever people, I guess.

Sellers: Well, they did what they had to do. Do you remember where you took your classes, other than the one from Dr. Flory in Westcott? Were there some on West Campus still?

D'Entremont: No, no. West Campus was starting to — the gymnasium and basketball court that they played intercollegiate basketball in was out there. An interesting story about West Campus is that there were a half a dozen or more married students with families that lived around us, and one that was married out of high school and was on a basketball scholarship, a gentleman named Bobby Ward. And he and his wife Joanne had a daughter who was about the same age as our daughter that was born in '54, and we were very close to them. And they, I believe, got divorced, but that's not the story. The story is that I was working for Honeywell as a regional market director out of Orlando in 1970 – '69, '70, '71 time frame. A B-52 coming out of McCoy lost hydraulics and power on a night flight over US 50 on the way towards Titusville, and there was a – believe it or not – there was one of the major space flights on the pad within two days of takeoff. And the pilot of the B-52, he dumped his crew out at about 2800 feet along US 50 and he had no power. He got the airplane over the thing and into the sand, over the space shot and into the sand, crash landed in the sand, and dazed, he found somebody beating on the door and they said, "Don't even try to get out. The place is full of rattlesnakes." Well, they had salted it was rattlesnakes to keep anybody from trying to come into the area from the ocean. Well, I would have thought that was Bobby Ward. And I ran into him at the Officer's Club at McCoy, he was a major in the Air Force and a pilot. He said they billed him for the airplane, \$17 million or something. That's how they clear their books.

Sellers: They didn't expect him to pay it though, did they?

D'Entremont: No!

Sellers: I didn't think so. You never know with the government.

D'Entremont: Yeah, but we had lunch and he had a good career in the Air Force. But he very cleverly saved a lot of lives and a lot of government equipment. That's a true story. That really happened!

Sellers: Well, now, you and your wife had at least one child while you were here?

D'Entremont: One and one on the way.

Sellers: Where were your children born?

D'Entremont: My oldest was born at Tallahassee Hospital, which is now Tallahassee Memorial.

Sellers: Okay, so it had moved out there by then?

D'Entremont: Yep. My second one was born in Minneapolis. Third one was born in Whittier, California.

Sellers: Okay, just scattered them around.

D'Entremont: The fourth one was born in Whittier, California. The fifth one was born in Whittier, California, and the sixth one was born in Orlando, Florida.

Sellers: Your wife was very busy.

D'Entremont: We had – let's see – she was nineteen or twenty when we got — she never finished Mary Washington. Yeah, we had — my youngest was born the day Richard Nixon was elected – November 5th, 1968, in Orlando.

Sellers: I'm not sure that's a good legacy.

D'Entremont: And my wife – my current wife – has two. The oldest son is ten days younger than my youngest son.

Sellers: Aha, so kind of a blended family.

D'Entremont: Yeah. We all get along fine.

Sellers: Tell me a little bit about graduation. The class of '56 must have done something a little nutsy, or were you part of the group that you had spent your time in the military and you just wanted get out and have your life?

D'Entremont: There's a twist to that, too. I was ready to graduate in February, after two years and nine months on campus. And I went to see about getting my paperwork and, you know, and so forth. I was told by Dean Rovetta, personally, that it's not a good time to graduate. There's a mini-recession going on and normally the people that would come to talk to you about jobs and the job market from various companies won't come until June. And I said, "Okay, I'll graduate in June." Well, I got a job offer from Pillsbury in Minneapolis that required me to be there late in May. So I went back to see Dean Rovetta. He said, "Hmm." He said, "Okay, I'll mail your diploma to the University of Minnesota; they're the same colors." He graduated from the University of Minnesota. "They have the same colors that we do, and you can go there and graduate." So I physically went to the Minnesota graduation, but I didn't get on the stage and get the thing. I got my thing anyway. But it was interesting. Dean Rovetta was a nice guy. He recently died, I believe, last couple of years. Nice man.

I'll give you a little small world thing here, too. My daughter who was born November,

'54, was carrying size and I used to go to the FSU baseball games. And I used to hang around with the football team because Tom Nugent, who was the coach here then, had coached high school back where I had played high school football and I knew him. I visited him a couple of times and I hung around the football team because I enjoyed it. Sitting in the baseball – where Dick Howser Stadium is now – the real Dick Howser Stadium was there, too, with a couple of wooden bleachers and same orientations – home plate's in the same place and all that. And I was sitting there with some of the football guys, holding my daughter who was by then 5 - 6 months old, and we were talking about getting popcorn and cokes. I said I'll get them if you hold the baby. Well, you can't guess who held the baby: Buddy Reynolds. And the other guy who was close by was Bill Proctor who is just retired as the president of Flagler. I talked to Bill earlier and I've talked to Buddy Reynolds once since then – Burt Reynolds. But my daughter will tell people occasionally that she used to be held by Burt Reynolds.

Sellers: I'll bet that kind of turns some heads. Although not a whole lot of people know who he is anymore.

D'Entremont: Well, he's burned out, I guess, is the best way to put it, much due to his own devices, I guess. But what you see is what you get.

Sellers: So you were out of here —

D'Entremont: I was out of here May of 1956, went to Minneapolis. My wife was about six months pregnant. She took the child we already had and she went home to her parents in Maryland, and Pillsbury flew her out to Minneapolis as soon as I found a place for us to live. We lived there for two years and were transferred – excuse me, we lived there for six months and were transferred to Los Angeles after the baby was born in Minneapolis. And we lived in Los Angeles for a long period of time and then we rotated back to Orlando with Honeywell in 196 – I went to Honeywell in '60, it was 1960, because the deal didn't work out and Honeywell transferred me to Orlando in '68. I was there four years and then they transferred me back to Los Angeles in, oh, '72, and I retired in Los Angeles. I had several assignments outside, in Seattle and other places. But I retired from Honeywell in '87, and went —

Sellers: And all of this is as an accountant?

D'Entremont: No. No. No. Accounting, you solve the same problem twelve times a year and then —

Sellers: Well, the last I heard was that was what was getting hired, so —

D'Entremont: Yeah, I went out and went to work as an accountant and I got involved in a military contract end of it and I ended up being a contracts administrator, manager, and program manager. The accounting background helped, a great deal in fact, because when you're in that business, program management, the most important thing is bringing it in at cost. Most of the program managers were engineers and they would engineer the hell out of a program until they spent all our money, and I wasn't an engineer, so I didn't do that. So it helped me to understand the accounting part of it. Anyway, no, I worked for Honeywell from 1960 to 1987, early retired and went to work as vice-president of a small company in Pennsylvania which was a supplier to Honeywell and worked there for another six years and finally, finally retired when the Cold War ended and nobody was buying military products anymore. So I was only sixty-two when I retired, but that was fifteen years ago – fourteen years ago. But I had a good career and made a lot of friends and a little bit money and enjoyed it very much.

There was another thing that happened when I was a student which was interesting. In 1954, the summer of 1954, there was a polio epidemic in Tallahassee. And I don't know this as a fact, but this was – the newspaper said there were over 200 cases of polio and every one was a white person. Black people apparently were impervious to polio. Well, that's what the newspapers said, and the city was about 50/50, you know, 25,000 of each or something like that. And then, shortly thereafter there was a measles epidemic and that's very bad for that people – again, according to the newspaper. So you know, I don't know. That's just an aside, it's not important, but it's interesting.

Sellers: Well, it's interesting because I interviewed the doctor who was the pediatrician who got Tallahassee through that epidemic.

D'Entremont: What was his name?

Sellers: Palmer. George Palmer. I don't remember the details of if it was primarily, you know, Caucasian related or what, but he said that it was quite a serious epidemic.

D'Entremont: They had 200 cases, I don't know how many dead. Around 200 cases out of 20,000 – that's one percent, I think.

[some non-relevant conversation not transcribed]

D'Entremont: That was the summer of '54, as I recall.

When you mentioned the pediatrician, OB-GYN or whatever, I have a funny story to tell you, then I'll get off, out of your hair. My wife, of course, got pregnant, oh, four months after we got married, and she figured out she was pregnant she decided she ought to go find a doctor. We went to see a doctor who still was practicing, but I don't think is any more, T. Burt [??] Fletcher, here in Tallahassee. She went in, and I didn't go with her because I was embarrassed to be around a pregnant girl. She came out in about a half an hour, handed me a book, and it said "Your New Baby and Your Pregnancy," you know, a little pamphlet. And it said, "November 23rd" written on it. So on the night on November 22nd she started to have labor pains and we trotted out to TMH and nine o'clock in the morning, we had a new baby. Well, a year or so later, she's pregnant again. So we take her down to T. Burt [??] Fletcher and she comes out, and I say "Where's the book? "What book?" "The book that tells us when the baby's gonna be born." And she looked at me like I was crazy. I said, "Remember when Jeanne was born, they gave us a book and they wrote November 23rd on it?" And she says, "That was just a guess." And I said, "What do you mean? He can't tell? He's a doctor." I was kind of naive. My son who was a Navy corpsmen, who's now a registered nurse, thinks that very naive, too.

Anyway, I don't have a whole lot more to tell you. I could talk in great length about my career in the military products business, but that's of no real importance. It was a good career, and for a good purpose.

Sellers: You came here for meteorology. You opted out of meteorology very quickly.

D'Entremont: Driven by economics.

Sellers: Would you have come here if not for that? I mean, once you were here, did you see other opportunities or were you kind of stuck here so you did the accounting thing?

D'Entremont: No, I did the accounting thing because that's how I thought I was going to make a living.

Sellers: Right, but would you have chosen Florida and Florida State University had it not been for the fluke of meteorology, which didn't end up?

D'Entremont: That's hard to answer. In retrospect, I would say that it was a great place to be because the cost of living was much lower than most parts of the country, the climate was favorable as far as cold weather and cold weather gear and heating bills. Air conditioning was – nobody had much of it, anyway. So it's an interesting question. Having been here and been part of the university and it's dear to me, you know, and I'd recommend it to anybody, but to answer your question, I never thought of it that way. I had no interest in being at home, in Massachusetts. I had no interest in living anywhere near a big city. And born on the water in Massachusetts – I lived three miles from the ocean – I like to be around water.

Sellers: Well, that wasn't exactly Tallahassee.

D'Entremont: No, but you're close enough to the coast to be there in an hour and a half. So that's an intriguing question. I don't know. I didn't want to be around a Navy town. Tallahassee was damn near perfect, if you come right down to it, as a place to live and a place to go to school.

Sellers: So it was kind of serendipity that that's the way it ended up.

D'Entremont: Yeah. It was meant to happen, maybe.

Sellers: You're aware we recorded this?

D'Entremont: Oh yeah.

Sellers: With your permission?

D'Entremont: You can do what you want with it.

End

Abstract:

Gene D'Entremont joined the Navy in 1948 and was trained in meteorology. While in the Navy, he mainly served on the ship U.S.S. *Bataan*, traveling to Guantanamo Bay, through the Panama Canal, to Guam, and eventually Korea where he helped the 7th Fleet in transporting soldiers. After his service, he moved to Tallahassee in 1953 to attend Florida State University. He reflects on his memories: everything from changing majors, joining a fraternity, being a married co-ed, and graduating, where he attended the University of Minnesota's ceremony due because of a job opportunity.

Addendum: 20th Century Civilization?

I was born 12 years after the end of World War I, 9 years before the start of World War II. Served 5 years in the Korean War; sold weapon systems during the 11 year Vietnam War and had my son serve in the Navy during the Persian Gulf War. Also, most of my adult life was lived during the “Cold War” with Russia, and I consulted with DOD officials during the Bosnian-Serbian conflict. (Don’t forget Northern Ireland, the constant conflicts in various parts of Africa and the Muslim World’s dagger pointed at Israel). Peace is just a word in the dictionary! And a rogue country like North Korea, although not a threat to the world as a national power, can arm the militant portion of the Muslim world so they can continue their violent 1,300 year assault on the non-Muslim world.