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Dr. John Munroe

[0:00:00]

Dr. Munroe:

I imagine very early in it but it didn't hurt immediately. I finished high school in 1932 and I'm sure I was aware of the depression before I finished high school. I remember the bonus watch on Marsh Washington in, I believe, the spring of 1932 and I recall that we were aware as high school students that this was something historic that was going on.

I don't – I don't remember so many financial shock to my own family at that time and later, but I would supposed that we – I'm sure that we had them then that it was just because I was in high school and was protected from it that I wasn't entirely aware of it. My father was out of work part of the time in the depression, that he had a job that he worked in foundry and the foundry just closed down so he wouldn't be paid.

But then they closed for three weeks and then they'd opened again. And the time went on into the '30s, the closings would be for longer periods. It might be instead of three weeks to three months without being opened again.

My father did various work, little jobs but never very much. He would really seriously look for another job. As matter of fact, it was pretty hopeless anyway and he had a trade. He was an iron molder and he wanted to work as that and iron molders just wanted being hired then. He didn't want to do anything else.

My mother had been getting to put up somebody gardening at a house to get paid or some neighbor needed someone to do something like that if that was about the – the only thing I can particularly remember he's doing, I remember an uncle being out of work, but really, my best memories of the uncle are when I was I college.

I think the depression became much more severe starting at the time I entered college in 1932 than it had been earlier and maybe people were just running out of the university and running out of money. It's the thing until the – through the year or years of it.

A lot of price was stumbled, prices for bread and prices for butter and prices for haircut. I remember haircut being 25 cents, it had nothing that cheap before. Then we walked a good many blocks, I remember walking from 20th Street where I live to 4th Street for a 25 cents haircut.

Interviewer: Was there *[inaudible]* [0:02:58]?

Dr. Munroe: But when the depression came in 1929, and for the rest, we lived on 20th Street, that's where the boulevard in Wilmington is produced because Washington height section of Wilmington wasn't far from the Warner Junior High School.

My parents owned their home. There was a mortgage on it but the mortgage was held by a relative, an uncle or an aunt and therefore the pressure on that was not so great. My parents always rented a room or two rooms in a house, it's a big house. It had five bedrooms and I was an only child so we're normally using the three bedrooms and a fare room for spare and we had two rooms that could be rented out.

And that was done – well, that had been done before the depression, that had been done where you live in the house. It's their idea that they would rent a room and how to pay for this house. It was large given to them by *[inaudible]* [0:04:04].

Interviewer: When you said that you were aware of the historic – the importance of the *[inaudible]* [0:04:10], were you also aware of the – of the depression throughout the country when – I mean, when you're in high school?

Dr. Munroe: I think fairly well aware of it. Although, again, I think the awareness grew as we became older and as the depression became more severe in the early stages of depression and to expect it to be over very shortly, things like the failure of the stock market didn't hurt my immediately family very much. I had an uncle who invested in the stock market as a – he was a regular trader in the stock market and I supposed he was badly hurt, but not so – not so badly hurt, but I guess he couldn't continue his normal way of life.

[0:05:12]

My parents didn't invest in the stock market, had no money to invest in it so they wouldn't – be hurt by that. They own their own home, so they hadn't meant to pay or problems with that. Oh, I do remember this. The own two other houses and the house they've formerly lived in and a house they've bought as a – as an income possibility.

And one of those – I mean, one of those houses, the people who rented it – the man of the family was out of work being a great part of the depression and they'd been getting rent for it and, of course, this was

quite a – quite a blow to my parents because my father often wasn't working either and not to be getting rent for the house, we need to have to pay taxes on it.

Finally, because the people just wouldn't pay – wouldn't make any attempt to pay, they have an income because there were members of their family who have work, but the man of the house wasn't working. The man who had really rented it wasn't working.

Finally, my parents decided that they fix the house and then sell it because they couldn't – they couldn't provide free housing. It was a – it was a very respectable house, that it was the house that had been built – that they had had built when they were married and uncle had built for them, sold them when they were married. So my father fixed the house up, tore out the wall and large living room and did various things, painted it and decorated it and then sold it.

And – but I really supposed that would be year in 1935 in the early years of the depression. I think my feeling was that the depression for us got much worst in the mid-'30s. And it was in 1929 or '30 or '31, I don't remember things are bad then. I do remember when we were in senior year in high school and when we were going on a trip – the senior class was going on a trip to Washington.

I remember that one of my friends simply couldn't afford to go on a trip. And my mother had means and offered to lend them money so he **[inaudible] [0:07:35]** and packed it through, got packed because his family was in such difficulty that at that time they couldn't give him \$25 or \$30 or whatever the amount of money it was. They simply – they did not have the money though they had money coming in for something dollar, but they wouldn't make it possible to go a little **[inaudible] [0:07:55]** and they did, babies who were not – people who would ordinarily had been thought out as poor people.

But for example, people who loan property, retired people who loan houses from which as income was normally coming would find they wouldn't get that anytime, the people who rented would be out of work and wouldn't pay rent, then the people who owned the housing were lucky if they could trust from being destroyed.

Interviewer:

Were there any questions in the 1932 when you graduated high school if you're going on to college courses?

Dr. Munroe: Any question that I couldn't get to college, no, not really because there wasn't anything else to do. The University Delaware is so cheap. And I think it cost me about \$150 a year to go the University of Dela. I believe it was about \$70 for spring term and about \$80 for the fall term. There were some fees that one paid in the fall for the year. And I think my total bill to the university was about \$150 a year.

Now, in addition to that, there were books to buy, that we could buy second hand book and oftentimes we shared books. There was never any question of my leaving at the university. There was no question about by doing other than commuting. The commuting cost me 25 cents a day, I believe. I think we paid 25 cents round trip, maybe I'm wrong or maybe it was 25 cents one way. So I think we paid another – one of my friends who drove charged 25 cents round trip. If that was the amount, that was fairly standard. Every – there were good many fellows who drove to college and they all charged – their ride is about the same thing.

I believe the bus would have cost considerable more or the train. They run, too. And it might have been that the bus was, say, 42 cents. I think the train fare was about 2-1/2 times the number of miles and so it would have been something like 30 cents or 32 cents by train. The bus costs more than the train but run more frequently than the train did.

[0:10:18]

Interviewer: *[inaudible]* **[0:10:18]** at the University *[inaudible]* **[0:10:23]** university?

Dr. Munroe: Well, actually, people who went to college might not otherwise have gone to college. This is an interesting thing, I believe, people who went – our class was larger than the classes before because since the college was cheap and since people could commute, people who went to college who might have gotten jobs but couldn't come – who didn't necessarily want to college, went here because it was the only thing to do.

At college, I think there were about like students generally. They didn't have much money but there were some who did. After all, if their father had worked, the money went harder than it normally would so there were students who leave to college, while other students who didn't. But since they commuted, I did not, I think – think of themselves as deprived in many ways. That was after all what most did. And we carried our lunch or at least I did and most of my friends.

I remember a very – I can't remember a person who commuted and bought his lunch regularly. There may have been some. There were

occasions when we would buy a meal but not normally. Those would be very rare occasions. We carry our lunch in a paper bag. And then we'd all congregate – the men's college was separated from women's college and we congregate in the locker room in the basement of our college hall and would eat lunch there.

If we get out of class at 11 o'clock, we might get down there at 11:00 and start eating lunch, so we might off to start a bridge game while we were eating lunch. We may play bridge for two hours while we ate lunch and people came in, went out from class, they pick up hands in the bridge game. We could eat lunch in the locker room.

There was a lounge room on the – on the room first floor that is the floor that's ahead of the step, the second floor American style but it was called first floor I believe. There was a lounge and we played bridge there, study in the lounge but I don't think we're allowed to eat lunch, I believe, I don't remember eating lunch there.

I remember eating lunch sometimes in the car of the man with whom I commuted but I remember that he didn't like that because he was afraid that it would get his car dirty.

I do remember that the – that some of the students who drove car used very cheap gasoline. There were – there were gasoline like Aro and ACTO. They were cheaper than ordinary Atlantic or standard oil gas. And I particularly remember that one of my friends who drove a car would normally buy three gallons. That was usually all he could afford to buy because he was dependent on his riders for the money and he would drive up into the gas station and pay three gallons and we'd often tried to embarrass him when he came to the gas station by calling out the window to the attendant before he heard from the driver, we'd call out, "Full her up." He *[inaudible]* **[0:13:15]** make the driver to pay three gallons.

And I do remember another time when I was in college, when it's night, we wanted to go somewhere. We were in Wilmington where we live and one of us had a car and we wanted to go out, I think it was the war I think and there was a play or something and *[inaudible]* **[0:13:32]** that we could see, I don't know what's that, maybe it was band, maybe it was a summer festival of some sort, and the three of us together could only get money enough for one gallon of gas which costs probably 17 cents or so.

I remember there were three college students would bought one gallon of gas and our driver refused because he was too proud to go to that gas

station and buy one gallon – one gallon in addition to whatever we have in the tank which wasn't very much would have been enough. The drive was just only 7 miles from Wilmington and back. But his pride was too great to take that and go.

So we enjoyed college very much. We all kind of to wait around until the last man is ready to go home which meant about 4 o'clock everyday because some of the – we had a regular set of riders which is about six people to the car. The driver called for them all in Wilmington in the morning and all six of us would tend to wait around to go home together until the man – one of us might be finished at 12 o'clock with all his classes, but he wouldn't necessarily go home early. He might well wait for them. He might go to the library, for instance, just read. He might go to the lounge to study. He might play bridge in the afternoon.

Sometimes, we would go home early. We would go home early by hitchhiking or we could find a ride with another fellow.

[0:15:03]

There were lots of probably men and women who drove back and forth and we pretty much knew each other. We knew when fellows had cars and I say the price that we pay is pretty much the same we paid.

Interviewer: Did the depression has any effect the time you're starting to see?

Dr. Munroe: In a way, I think all of us were very conscious – we know how the depression affected us before – all of us were very conscious that we needed to do something to make a living. There were very few people who thought of being just history made or it is just the English made.

But I remember there was one man at my class that I knew who said he was an English major and he wasn't preparing to teach and I was amazed, how could someone afford to be an English major without preparing to teach or to do something that would – and teaching was the best – the only thing one could make out with to make a living from.

So I think we all had – vocational was very high in our minds of how we would – how we would be able to get job. And so that's something – that's certainly has something to do with my taking the required education courses to teach. I think I was very scared of it because I was – not in the young years, but I was young for my age perhaps partly for being an only child. Also, I had been ill for quite a bit at my high school

time and I was anything but sure of myself and I was not at all eager to go before class.

I had done something very unique things in high school but I've done it just to force myself to go before people. So I didn't want to, actually, I could have finished college in three years except that I was scared to take practice teaching before the fourth year and I thought it often before time.

I went to summer school to one summer school while I was in college and I almost always took an extra course in the – I would refuse a military *[inaudible] [0:17:06]* because of program *[inaudible] [0:17:09]*. And so I could take extra subjects comparatively easily and I normally took a bigger range of subjects than the average student did. And I went to one summer school because summer schools are very cheap, a fee with \$10, I think, for summer school and that's the needing cost.

And you'd see we had no hope of getting jobs in the summer. I remember people who had graduated in the class ahead of me, I particularly remember one man who has graduated in '34 maybe because he was having a '34 or '35 class and he was a good enough student because he was elected to *[inaudible] [0:17:50]* which was the all college honors *[inaudible] [0:17:53]* and therefore he had to be one of the best students.

And I think his major might have been business or business and economics. I'm not sure there was a straight business major. And after graduation in June, he did not get a job until December. Now, this was not abnormal at all. We rather thought this was a customary thing that if you finished in June that you spend month looking for job before he's at home.

Fortunately, in my year that I begin which I was graduated in 1936, there was some upturn or anything and prospects were very much better. As a matter of fact, I got a job before I was graduated in college because a man teaching in the local high school died and my professor of education told me about it.

And so got – about the first in January of my senior year, I went over to the high school and was interviewed and was hired. And I started teaching immediately. It was so near the end of the term that they got me dropped out of all the courses because they – we're meeting after school. Mostly, I had very few anyway, practice teaching in six hours and it was all over at Christmas time.

One class I think I would say the advance German class I was in, there was one other student who've acted – who's *[inaudible]* **[0:19:20]** schedule there or after the high school day was over, I think I was facing another course in which I was the only student and because I believe it had been meeting on days when I was practice teaching and the professor had agreed to get it just for me so we met in Compton.

So there was only one or – at most, two classes that I was missing and it was just a matter of a couple of weeks. People took my place in high school while I came over and took the final at the end of the term in January and I didn't mean to take any courses in *[inaudible]* **[0:19:54]** because as I say I could have – actually have avoided taking anything in the senior year had I – had I wanted to, had I not had practice teaching. It's an obligation.

[0:20:07]

Interviewer: When things started getting back to your family, as you said depression progressed for year, *[inaudible]* **[0:20:13]** going on more years?

Dr. Munroe: No, I don't remember that they – I'm sure they must have considered this because I know that things are pretty desperate. My mother sold her rings, for instance, I know. She sold all her jewels except things like her wedding ring. I do remember that that it came that bad.

My mother worked. Her sister had a store, a children store in Wilmington. My mother went to working there. But I didn't believe she had even been working in it before. I think she just need more work and that I think she'd been working before Saturday afternoon or Friday night just occasionally. And then I think she started working, not everyday but more often there.

I know my mother would be here for my father to register with – to be very active in that employment services and such. And I think he went through the motion but he really had no heart for being anything but what he was, an iron molder. And I don't think he tried very hard to get some other kind of work. But, again, it was so described and there were so – there were so little work that he had.

And I say, owning a house, renting rooms in the house, remember, was a – was a way of getting money, or there were various other things they did. I think my mother, for instance, stretched curtains for people, lace

curtains. She was rather good at this. She had stretcher and I remember lace curtains being all over the house stretching.

I think there were times when she baked angel cake and sold them. And I say – I'm sure she would probably think that my father would has to do. I remember one – putting up on him for some of this. It was a regular thing that he did. It was – it was a relative who was – who was a widow and owned an apartment house and my father would put up the **[inaudible] [0:22:25]** porch on each floor of the apartment house. My father was **[inaudible] [0:22:29]** taken down each floor for, I think, a number of years.

He may have done it before the depression for all I know but I doubt it, I imagine during the depression. And remember, they owned two houses, one of them came to just a constant – actually, it costs the money instead of gaining the money. The other one, they did get the money from. But the people on the other house – so the man there had a steady job.

They were – he's becoming the go people who would only pay the rent if my father arrived there, but the man got home with his salary. And before he went into the friendly neighborhood bar – perfectly decent people but they – if he let him start spending his paid check, the male would be able to pay only half the rent. So this always created a great deal of worry in the family because we were very dependent on these things and it sort of touch and go.

You see, I was too young, probably wasn't taken into a family discussion for some of these problem, but I would spare them. Another thing was I had been very sick. I had been in bed. I've had three transfusions in the summer before I went to college. When I came to college, I was allowed to walk only one block at a time. And so there was always, I mean, questions, if I should have the best food. I think I had beef Saturday night to eat, for instance, to eat.

My parents probably didn't, but I did particularly liver which was – which was I hated and which was supposed to be – to have an enrichment of the blood. I would – I had three transfusions. I've had a terrible hemorrhage. So I was spared many of these things. I was favored, the only child **[inaudible] [0:24:31]** and so all kinds of things were done for me.

But I couldn't think of something like fraternity, like joining a fraternity or I couldn't think of – of course, we never went away on vacation. Now, when I was younger, I remember going away on big trips and such but in

the – in the years of the depression, that all just completely vanished. There might be a one day excursion by train to Washington and New York or something on which we could go.

[0:25:02]

I remember going to the New York World's Fair whenever that was, just as I remember the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial of 1927. That was before the depression. So after Sesquicentennial and we went to the New York World Fair in 1935.

Interviewer: *[inaudible]* **[0:25:16]**

Dr. Munroe: Probably the *[inaudible]* **[0:25:17]**. I thought it was well run. I was still in college. They ran it for two years.

Interviewer: Most of the *[inaudible]* **[0:25:23]**. The reason I asked you about *[inaudible]* **[0:25:29]** was that a lot of people – well, in the end they have expressed the idea that – the feeling that rather than go on world fair, the family would do anything *[inaudible]* **[0:25:41]** there was a price. It was too crowded.

Dr. Munroe: Oh, yeah, sure. That had a great deal to do with it. I don't think we would have started rather than to go on World Fair but it never got quite that bad. Or I never remember I'm not having enough to eat. I'm sure that there must have been times when my parents were worried how they would pay for it, but I don't believe that they charged or anything. I don't think they ever bought food on charge. I was regarded and rather disreputable in my family, so I think they just got everything very cheap.

I think my mother would have made bread. She made cottage cheese, for instance, I remember that particularly and I still fail to get cottage cheese the taste of what she did. We called it pure taste which was a German – corruption of a German word for it. And – so an awful lot of things were made at home and done at home.

And I'm sure my father was sort of a handy man for the family to do all kinds of things. But one way or another with rumors in the house and such would say there were survival. My father didn't actually like the job. There *[inaudible]* **[0:26:57]** that the next morning he would get a phone call that – he worked at Lobdell Car Wheel Company and he was an iron molder and that the next day they will have a contract and he would be called by.

Actually, in the late '30s – around 1940 and from then on, he was a very busy man because he made big molds for paper making machine or the big kind of roll that you have in Curtis Paper Mill here in Newark, a much bigger mill before the – before the iron, I mean, the mold in the floor, a very dangerous job and a very – I think, they signed a seven year apprenticeship, learning it was very proud of it.

And he worked there until the firm went out of business and they did – they sold out to another firm. They wanted to take him out to go to Ohio. This was 1949 when my father were in his 60s. They wanted to take him to Ohio to train men at this job but he refused to leave Wilmington to retire there. Since the firm had sold out, there was no pension in retiring. There never was by that time. They were in much better financial situation, so, the '40s were a good times, a very good one.

Interviewer: Even before the war? I mean, the family...

Dr. Munroe: Oh, yes, yes. Well, even before the war. I mean, my father's working. He's just very busy.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dr. Munroe: So before the war, you know, the shortage I think caused by the war, that Americans were willing back to work and there was a tremendous call for what he made, I don't know why he refused really, but the why I think he's very busy man.

Interviewer: Of course, looking at entirely the first chapter is really of depression of *[inaudible] [0:28:54]*. The second chapter is *[inaudible] [0:28:56]* depression of Franklin Roosevelt.

Dr. Munroe: Yes. There's something in that. The – in the Hoover years, I think at first people didn't realize how much the depression is going to hurt them. And about the time that they got very gloomy indeed, for instance, I was in college, even the banks closed and we couldn't pay the man who drove the car, you know. We couldn't get money.

Interviewer: Yeah?

Interviewer: We just couldn't get any station, any coin to pay, any dollar bills even if we had to, only in the bank. And so there was actually a problem of in getting money. It was just a month or a week or so, getting money to pay for gasoline.

But then we – after Roosevelt became president, everything were much more hopeful and things were going to get much better. They didn't necessarily get so much better but people were sure they were going to get better.

And various kinds of work projects were started. There were projects started on campus in which people were employed. I was never employed in any of them and toward the end of my time.

[0:30:03]

But – well, and hardly – it would have been hard to afford to because I didn't live on campus where I could take jobs on the campus. If I – well, I think there was pride in that, too. I remember some of the students who had jobs painting the bleachers in the football field. And I was shocked that some of them – that some of them I knew their father had steady jobs during the depression and they just finished their job and **[inaudible]** **[0:30:32]**.

And I remember a man who had a job typing in the office and his typing fees was one page an hour. And he was kind of joker for it that he was getting paid for typing. He wasn't very good, but a regular typist to be – to be hired on that, but too rather shameful to do that.

But you see, about the time a lot of these projects were getting under way, things were looking better. Anyway, I got a job after all in January of 1936, I was about to graduate in June, but I was graduating in college, a substitute teacher came in the room or just another teacher in her free period came into my room and took over my class. And I walked to Newark High School which has been on this Avenue Street across the campus in metro hall, got in the line, got my diploma and walked right to Newark High School and took up my teaching then.

I was working and after working for one term, I bought an automobile on time, but I need to pay for it in one year. And so I teach **[inaudible]** **[0:31:38]** the next year rather than had difficulty in getting. I never lived here when I taught in Newark for 3-1/2 years. I lived home in Wilmington, saved my money so I can go to graduate school. Very few have thought of going to graduate school. That is something we didn't think of when we were in college. That's a great difference between then and now.

And I couldn't – I might as well would like to be lawyer, but it's impossible to think of being a lawyer, another three years after college. Well, after

I'd taught 3-1/2 years, I did think of going to graduate school, but that wasn't so much of a gamble because I had a teacher specific that I had taught apparently successfully.

They rated teachers in and I had a good rating and as a matter of fact, I was offered an assistant superintendentship. If I would not leave high school work, I could become an assistant superintendent in a high school, a particular one. Maybe it would not have gone through but at least I've talked to about this if I would not go away to graduate school. But I – by that time I decided that I like teaching.

Originally, I had showed in. I think I said, when you asked me, I should be teaching because I had to be something and I couldn't think of going to law school, so there's nothing else. I've played around with the idea of being an engineer because you can get job as an engineer after four years of college, but I dislike the subjects that engineers took.

As a matter of fact, in the first year of college, in my first year, I took English, History, German, English, History and German, Mathematics, I forgot another one, Trigonometry in one term, Botany and Chemistry. I took three laboratory sciences, one Language, Mathematics, English and History.

And then I decided by how well I do and then how much I like what I was doing to think what I should after English, History and German, not Mathematics, Chemistry or Botany. But I haven't even thought of becoming a scientist, something that you would make a living but had to be is extremely important.

And when I went to teach in high school, then I was thinking that particularly I wanted to teach in college, not in high school but there weren't - *[inaudible]* **[0:33:54]** were very difficult to get. I was a candidate for Rhodes College but then I didn't get one. It's very difficult to get *[inaudible]* **[0:34:02]**.

I was offered a scholarship in Germany. Delaware had a Germany foreign study plan in my sophomore year, but I was told that the scholarship had come to \$1,000 and I should put up another thousand dollars and I discussed it with my parents and decided, but that was just too difficult for my parents to put up that thousand dollars together.

I do want to say this that lots of families like mine had some resources in the family, I mean, someone in the family had some money, you know. There were bank accounts somewhere and therefore in this case, there

was the – there were resources that one – there were perhaps places one could go rather than the public assistance is necessary.

But on the other hand, in my family, which is partly Irish and partly German, there was a tremendous amount of pride in it and great objection to doing it.

[0:35:01]

You would do things for money, I mean, you would put up somebody's earnings and so you would – you would stretch somebody's curtain but she wouldn't borrow money, I mean, didn't ask somebody to lend you money. Of course, there was a mortgage on the house or something else that we had in the beginning but that was a mortgage on the house. It was regarded as a sense of investment, an intelligent thing to do to buy a house and pay it off gradually.

I remember my parents have a mortgage on the first house. I remember how happy they were the day they had paid that off and then you see, they began to think then in buying another house. And even I think there'd be people in the family who had dealt in real estate and thought of doing something like that, big trouble was it and my father do not have any work in the depression, they became to be much more dependent on this. And the real estate market just not have and they couldn't get money from the house they rented, so there was a trouble.

Interviewer: Do you see much cooperation in the family, then otherwise can borrow money for amongst them maybe?

Dr. Munroe: I don't – our neighborhood was a friendly neighborhood, but I don't remember any financial problems that were shared in the neighborhood in any way. I can't recall that. Oh, now, I remember a friend of mine in college, a girl that I knew had – who had always – her mother was a widow and this girl had always had jobs which she had done as I had not and partly because I was sickly. I'd had a – I've had a very serious hemorrhage in my last few weeks at high school.

And – but I remember that she turned over a job to me one summer that she had worked at at summer before and it was – I was a curator, the Natural History Museum which was in cool spring park in Wilmington. It was opened something like 3:00 afternoon to 8:00 and my job was just to go in there and sit there and I think made sure that nobody run away with their collections of stuff this and that and you now had the **[inaudible] [0:37:12]**.

I do remember that my mother came there and found me just sitting there and I think I clicked a couth when people came and when they out but I could click and then read for the three hours that I goes and I'm sure I didn't get very much because I got 60 cents an hour probably, the most but I cannot remember.

But I remember my mother coming out finding the cases so dirty that she came out of another time and wash all the cases at the museum. She was shamed at me as curator in the museum but at least, dirty this was and of course the dirt never bothered me. I was sitting there reading and I wasn't much interested in actual history so I was probably reading American history while I was in the building.

Another time, I remember driving. Well, this must have been a little later. This was probably while I was – after I started teaching school because I couldn't drive a car. My parents didn't have a car. It was a little expenditure and couldn't afford. They never had one. They'd talked of getting one, but that the impression not to. People who had car sometimes sold them or put them up and didn't run them.

And as soon I was teaching school, I bought a car after one term of teaching. And then I remember having a job at some time driving for someone on occasion or someone *[inaudible]* **[0:38:35]** perhaps to drive his car, take it in the market or something, getting paid for it.

I do recall now, too, that an uncle of mine gave me a dollar a week when I started college. This was presumably for transportation money, to say 25 cents a day, a dollar a week almost covered a week. I have classes six days a week, maybe he gave me a dollar and a half and I don't remember. I just remember it is a dollar a week.

That uncle died when I was in colleges but his widow, my aunt, kept up the dollar a week all the way through college. And I think I had a little job watering an aunt's lawn during the summer. I would everyday go over there and water the lawn. I don't know what I got for that whether it's 15 cents that time or something of that sort.

But I never remember lacking some money in my pocket really. It wasn't much money in my pocket. It was 15 cents or 20 cents or 25 cents or 30 cents. But I never – I remember no feeling of suffering whatever personally. The country was in a bad way and we knew that but on the other it was going to get out of it. We were originally sure of that.

Of course the wars are great deal of worry and also happened after college.

[0:40:02]

But, you know, I supposed I expected it might take six months to find something. I was sure that I would. I began looking for jobs at the beginning of my senior year in college. I began visiting school, principals of schools, superintendent. I began. I actually had visited only two I think when suddenly I got a job. And then I held that job until I quitted to go to graduate school.

It did seem – this is an interesting thing though, in 1939 when I quit teaching in high school to go to graduate school, it seems a terribly dangerous decision. And I remember some of my friends *[inaudible]* **[0:40:40]** I had a job and one didn't give up a job likely. Who knew that I would never be able to get another one after I went to go to graduate school.

And there, my great reliance was the fact that I love – an experienced co-teacher that I'm a 3-1/2 years experience and certified school teacher. And so if I could only afford one year in graduate school, I would come back and teach.

Interviewer: Is there – I guess, *[inaudible]* **[0:41:18]** to go feeling all just happy?

Dr. Munroe: Very little. It's a very apathetic campus. The – I remember that there was a student strike one year, a student strike or something or other, I don't know what it was, peace, injustice and whatever. And I do remember one student putting up a sign on campus that I – nothing happened here. The sign was posted. We knew it existed but that was awfully hard for us to strike under the economic circumstances that we were – we would thought it extremely fortunate to be – to be going to college and hardly in a spirit of striking. This was to demonstrate sympathy for something or *[inaudible]* **[0:42:06]** whether Spanish Republican there was.

Interviewer: Was there – it seems progress to get better, was there a change if people *[inaudible]* **[0:42:18]** with Roosevelt?

Dr. Munroe: Well, when Roosevelt became president, of course, I felt that there was a tremendous change of spirit in the people and things looked ever so much better. They didn't get that much better but they looked better particularly in the first hundred days. There was great assurance in people, banks reopened, and now never failed.

And in Delaware, you know, we were very fortunate in banks. There were very few banks failures in Delaware and the bank failures we've heard in Delaware were not serious. They were only, I think, three very small banks and I believe they paid off for their very high percentage, like, 90 cents on a dollar or something.

So there were many ways in which we were particularly fortunate here and did not suffer. People did in Baltimore have lost their resources in a bank. But we knew when Roosevelt became president, when he closed the bank, closed all of them, you know, and then reopened them after investigation. And when our bank reopened, we felt an end had put to it. And we've been going down hill and then all of a sudden things were going to go up hill again.

Now, there were fears about things. We heard fears of – oh, because it was undermining the American people's independence and individually for this and that. But nevertheless, we saw a great deal of optimism and some of that unjustified.

Obviously, in Delaware, made a difference because the Democrats carry Delaware in '36 and the Republican would carry Delaware in '32, so obviously, there was a difference in the – in the feeling of the people.

But I think the students in college were hardly the lowest class in the state and otherwise, I think they just couldn't have been here. They were poor, students here were poor, a big part of them, but they were not hopeless, not impoverish. They thought things were going to get better. The country was going to get *[inaudible]* [0:44:41].

Greatest shock to me in college, I think, was Hitler who became head of the German State, I guess, in my first year at 1932 or maybe at '33. I can't recall now.

Interviewer: '33.

Dr. Munroe: '33? On my first year, you see, was '32-'33 and that was a great shock which I – which I never probably had gotten over because I believe that from my point of view, my family's education would – she would do all things and will just had to go to college.

[0:45:12]

I was the first one in my family to go to college. And I was third generation generally and I heard that as my grandparents came to America, in some cases, great grandparents, with great grandparents or grandparents, and we didn't hear any questions that I was going to college, never had any questions. I mean, I couldn't go anywhere else in Delaware because I couldn't afford to go anywhere else.

It wasn't that I wanted to come here, I had nothing against that, but I might have dreamed of other college and so that was futile to dream of because simply I couldn't afford to be anywhere else. And, of course, Delaware was very good, too, in many ways. It as – I mean, it was quite surprising to people now, I think, that it would be so good in the '30s, but it was easy to get good PhDs in the '30s.

One man, who afterwards became a friend of mine who'd taught me here, had have a position offered to him in '29 at Wisconsin and several other, great American universities, when he was getting a doctorate, but instead, he took a post doctor fellowship at Harvard and went abroad on it.

When the year came up and that post doctor fellowship was over, he had one job offer, Delaware. It was the – it was at the '30-'31 or '29-'30, I don't remember, but he had only one job offer, Delaware. He had spent time much more to senior school than this little one that had under a thousand students then, but he took it, thinking he would be here two or three years and he was here until he died.

But, of course, there wasn't – I mean, he was the best. He was – he got the best traveling fellowship at Harvard that year. He was their best PhD probably of the whole year and I had the good fortune to have him here and we have those teachers then that those – the other school would be – would have a lot less to offer at faculty. It was so hard for people to get job, that they can get a very, very good people and people weren't going into graduate school unless they were very good and very much encourage to go.

Interviewer: Would there be feeling about Hitler?

Dr. Munroe: Oh, horrible from the beginning. There was no question about that. I remember reading an article *[inaudible]* [0:47:21] I was waiting in a doctor's office while I was in high school, the first thing I ever read about Hitler. And Dorothy comes and pointed up this kind of joker in Germany, of course. I thought I could be half German in ancestor and it could be

preposterous and impossible that people would be put upon by such a fraud.

And it was completely shocking that a people as well educated – this is where I was going to say about education of people as well educated than the German who had a much higher literacy rate in the United States and were distinguished in Science and Physics and Medicine and this and that and the other thing, History, that they should put up with a fraud like Hitler, that they would fall for such a mounted bank, that they – that this could possible happen.

And then it was unbelievable, in the '20s, my generation I believe that it was going through grade school that the world was made safe for Democracy, that things were going to get better, there'd probably be no wars anymore.

I remember rather regretting that because I played with toy soldiers and that history wasn't going to be any fun anymore, there weren't going to be any wars, you know, no boundaries would change. Republics would settle everything peaceable through the united – through the league of nation. It was ashamed we weren't in it, but short sided on that part not to be in it. But the world is now sensible.

All strange things might happen between Paraguay and Bolivia but that was rather a wild jungle area. The Chaco War was going on in the middle of South America and China was in evolution, but certainly not in Europe.

And then to suddenly be confronted with Hitler who was a beast lose in the world destroying the – *[inaudible] [0:49:06]* before that to be *[inaudible] [0:49:08]* young men in college to – oh, that they remember in Oxford – well, you've heard about this in Oxford in England that I think the students took a note that they would not die for God and country, or pulling country or whatever it was.

It was quite shocking to a lot of English that they would take those notes. Of course, mostly, the people who took that had died in the Battle of Britain side vigorously on behalf of their country. But this was suddenly a turn of – though there were several twists. First, that education didn't take care of things, that it was no – it was no assurance that the people would show character, that knowledge was not necessarily wisdom.

And then another shocker was that there was a devil, they existed, however I wanted to explain it, being here with Hitler to prove it.

[0:50:04]

And the goodness maybe teach wasn't the answer. How could one do other than fight Hitler? How could you permit this to go on? How could the English do anything other than they did do? How could they *[inaudible]* **[0:50:24]**?

The English made shockers, I mean, what should American do? We were reading about neutrality legislation and keeping out of Europe's words and yet couldn't reach this Germany it was far worse. We could believe that the Kaiser's Germany really wasn't so bad, you know, that old outmoded propaganda that American people have instead in 1917, we decided in the '30s, you know, with – they were short change and being told that they were keeping the world safe for Democracy.

But after all, the Kaiser Germany, whatever real ones had say about it, had a – had a legal opposition to rob its career, rob its career. There were members of the *[inaudible]* **[0:51:06]** in Germany who were voting against the war budgets, against the appropriation for the army, who were in favor of peace and not war, and they lived.

This was Hitler Germany was obviously so much worst than this and maybe we had been said foolish stuff in 1917, but good news now, we had a real *[inaudible]* **[0:51:31]** on our hands and whatever could come of. Of course, one was sure that Hitler was gone to be overcome by a revolt of the German people or the French.

We read in Time Magazine that the French army - we saw the plans that they had, how they would dash into Germany, here and this way. A line would go in here *[inaudible]* **[0:51:51]** would do nothing, but imagine a line that was clear and that they would pierce for them, that the German who had just inflated frown and that they could easily be looked upon if wars came about, that the French army were the greatest army in all history.

I remember reading this and we believe *[inaudible]* **[0:52:08]** was my student in social studies in high school that I taught, you know, had to – maybe he really did that he was going to get his come up and be nasty. But the whole idea that he really get that he thought that it was that the United States would really be necessarily involved in it.

Interviewer:

Yeah. And there could be series of involvement. They get hang *[inaudible]* **[0:52:32]** how they certainly behaved.

Dr. Munroe: Sure. Through the '30s, there was. Uh-hmm.

Interviewer: Was there a *[inaudible]* **[0:52:42]** isolation of feelings?

Dr. Munroe: Oh, yes. Tremendously. Isolation of feeling that we just better keep out. There wasn't, of course, with any – that isolation of feeling was not the normal part of it that I heard was not at all, with any simplicity, whatever for the German. It happened to Japanese either for that matter, not with any sympathy.

But I think it was a safe isolation of feeling. The United States could stay out of this and the Europeans would take care of each other.

Interviewer: There is no time, but we have a lot of more questions to ask you and – but this has...

[0:53:33] **End of Audio**