DOB: I'm Dian Belanger. I'm speaking with George Toney about his experiences in Antarctica in the 1950s.

Good morning, George, and thank you for talking with me.

GT: Good morning, Dian. I'm very pleased to have this chance to talk with you.

DOB: Please begin by telling me something about your background: where you grew up, where you went to school, what you intended to do with your life, anything that would shed light on how you ended up on the ice.

GT: I'll try. I grew up in Massachusetts in Needham Heights from the age of five until I went to college in 1936. Needham Heights is a small community outside of Boston. It is now a sleeping community for commuters to Boston, but in my day most people worked in town and seldom went to Boston.

I went to Needham High School, and from there I went to Bowdoin College in the class of 1941. I was an English major and an undistinguished scholar, but enjoyed very much the college life.

Following college, I married Sara Dowty who came from Central Falls, Rhode Island, where her father was a minister, and we settled down in Providence, where she worked for the president of Brown University.

I took manual jobs in factory production from the time of my marriage until I entered the Army in December 1942. Because I had a college degree, for basic training I was assigned to the Chemical Warfare Service, where I attained the rank of corporal in very short order, a rank I maintained from that time until I was discharged from the Army early in 1946.

After basic training, I entered the Army's Specialized Training Program at the University of Chicago and studied French and France and its geography and sociology. I eventually was placed in a civil affairs regiment. Our ten-person detachment was first assigned to a small Normandy community, and later on in Versailles and Sevres, near Paris. Eventually our unit was moved to Belgium where it operated a refugee camp, and finally I was transferred to a military government unit in Germany.

I came home late in '45 and was discharged in January of '46, and then faced the problem of how to earn a living as a civilian.

I went to Harvard Graduate School of Education and began a course leading to a doctoral degree in education, which I never completed. But I did get a job teaching at Gloucester
High School, Gloucester, Massachusetts, out on lovely Cape Ann, and I taught there for three-and-a-half years. I taught English, I taught French, I oversaw the production of the student newspaper, but I was very dissatisfied as a high school teacher.

Through a friend I learned of the U.S. Weather Bureau's Arctic program, where the Weather Bureau and the Canadian Weather Service and the Danish Weather Service operated a string of far northern weather stations across the upper range of the Queen Elizabeth II Islands in Canada, and also in Thule, Greenland, in cooperation with Denmark.

DOB: What was the appeal of the polar region?

GT: It was as far a cry as I could get from teaching high school, I believe.

[Laughter]

GT: I was miserable teaching high school, although I seemed to operate satisfactorily according to my high school supervisors. But I wanted some definite break from that kind of activity, and the Weather Bureau offered it to me.

I spent a year at the Isachsen station on Ellef Ringnes Island. That is, as I said, one of the Queen Elizabeth II archipelago.

Following my return from Isachsen, I went to work in 1952 at the Weather Bureau arctic supply warehouse in the Boston Navy Yard. I then came to Washington in . . . it must have been '53, and worked in the Arctic project of the Weather Bureau there. During that time I spent a couple of summers in Greenland with tractor trains running out of Thule doing glaciology and seismology on the Greenland Ice Cap.

I finally got into the IGY [International Geophysical Year] as a loan from the Weather Bureau to the U.S. National Committee for the IGY in Washington as a polar expert having some knowledge of operating conditions in the northern regions, and some experience through the Weather Bureau with the logistics of polar operations—supplies and that kind of thing.

So I went to work at the IGY offices under Hugh Odishaw, O-d-i-s-h-a-w, who was the director of the headquarters.

DOB: So your background is not scientific.

GT: None whatsoever, no. The only thing I learned to do of a scientific nature was with the Weather Bureau flying balloons and taking temperatures and wind measurements and that kind of thing. No, I'm not a scientist.
During the Deep Freeze I operation, which was in support of the IGY Antarctic Program, I was still in Washington at the IGY headquarters. At the end of Deep Freeze I, I worked on the preparations for Deep Freeze II, which would be the beginning of the Antarctic program for the International Geophysical Year. I was still there when there came an opportunity to go to the Antarctic to be—I'm not sure what the circumstances were, but I believe that the station scientific leader for Byrd Station had not turned up. I never did know what happened. And I was there ready, willing, and apparently able, and I was given the job of going to Byrd Station as the head of the scientific complement.

DOB: I would like to go back just a minute. Tell me about the U.S. National Committee and how the IGY came about.

GT: First of all, the international scientific bodies decided that 1957-58 would be a great time to have an IGY because it was another sunspot maximum year, and it was fifty years from the previous polar year, and I think a hundred years from the first international geophysical effort. Through the scientific bodies in the United States—formed in ways that I had nothing to do with and wasn't present for—they formed the U.S. National Committee for the IGY.

DOB: How big was that?

GT: I suppose it had fifty members from all types of scientific organizations: meteorological, geophysical, atmospheric—academic and governmental.

[Interruption]

DOB: After that little pause . . . you were talking about the science and how the IGY came about fifty years after the recent polar year and a hundred after the first one.

GT: I think those dates are roughly correct.

DOB: I know it was the intent of what they were doing. It's also true, though, that the IGY happened in the middle of the worst of the cold war.

GT: It did, yes.

DOB: Can you shed any light on that interesting juxtaposition of peace and war?

GT: It really had no effect upon anything we were doing, except Sputnik went up in '58—

DOB: Fifty-seven.

GT: Was it '57? Thank you. And we were able to pick up the signal of Sputnik at Byrd Station and made attempts to see it, but we were not able to. But so far as I know, there was no impact upon our program at all.
DOB: I'm curious about planning this international cooperative peaceful event when we were so distrustful. And someone has suggested that that was why some of the appeal of IGY could be explained, that it was a way of pulling back from the brink of what looked to be a pretty awful abyss should the two superpowers come to blows.

GT: I think that was true, and you have heard perhaps of the exchange of scientists between the Soviets and the U.S. with a man from each side wintering over with people on the other side, which was apparently a very successful program. I never heard any derogatory remarks whatsoever from the people I knew and the U.S. people wintering with the Soviets. I made friends with a couple of the Soviets who wintered over with the U.S. people.

In fact one of them Sallie and I took to the airport one day after he had attended a meeting here in Washington, brought him by here and we had some vodka, and he was inquiring as to the cost of a Volkswagen Beetle.

DOB: So how much were you involved in the planning for IGY for the United States?

GT: Very little. The concern of the group I was with at the IGY was getting the personnel, getting them trained and clothed and transported, and making sure that their scientific equipment was properly prepared for shipment and transported to the stations. There were six U.S. stations, I believe.

DOB: Six plus McMurdo. There were seven facilities.

GT: That's right. Making sure that everything got to the station it was supposed to get to whether by sea or by air, on time, and the people there to operate it. So a lot of it was a logistics function that we had.

As far as the scientific program went, this was arranged by the scientists and by the scientific community in the universities and government agencies which were furnishing the people to operate it.

DOB: Antarctica had been claimed by a number of nations. A lot of countries had their sectors and some of these overlapped and provided conflict, and some of the continent had no claims on it. The United States had no claims, although we had a history of interest there particularly since Byrd and Operation Highjump where, I think, we were considering making claims but didn't.

So within this context, do you have any knowledge of who decided and how they decided which countries would make stations where?
GT: For those countries which had claims, naturally they looked to their pie-shaped claim area as a location for their stations. For the U.S. I'm quite sure—it was never widely disseminated—but I'm quite sure that the station at the South Pole was deliberately planned in order to be a potential source of strong argument and support for a claim if there ever should be one.

I've seen somewhere recently while I was refreshing my mind about all this that Byrd Station at 120 [degrees] west, 80 [degrees] south had, in addition to being what was then assumed to be a source of atmospheric pressure surges from the Byrd Plateau area, was also spang in the middle of a huge unclaimed wedge of Antarctica where the United States might well have launched a claim later on, if it came to that. Hallett Station was within the New Zealand wedge-shaped thing, and it was a New Zealand-U.S. joint operation. McMurdo was there because it was the only practical place to have a supply center for the aircraft supplying Byrd and the Pole and also accessible to supply ships during the southern hemisphere summer.

DOB: But someone else could have gotten dibs on McMurdo.

GT: Of course, then New Zealand set up Scott Base which is a mile or two away on the same piece of land, Ross Island.

DOB: I understand there were some politics involved in who got to do Pole Station among the international scientific committee.

GT: I have no idea. It was something that was outside the realm of where I was involved.

DOB: And I know that Admiral Dufek was concerned that the Russians would get there first when he first landed at the Pole.

GT: That may be. I haven't read his book, and I don't recall ever seeing anything to that effect.

DOB: Okay. You said that the reason for Byrd Station was this funny atmospheric—? Tell me about that.

GT: Sir George Simpson, who had been with Captain Scott, I believe, if not earlier, derived from his meteorological observations that there were these atmospheric pressure surges that must be coming out of the Byrd Plateau over there to the east of him. He wrote a great deal about this and he received a lot of attention for his theory. And that was one of the reasons that the Byrd Plateau was decided as a site for a station, to see whether he was right. And it apparently turns out that he was incorrect, that there were no such surges at all.
But in addition, it was on a high plateau and inland from any oceanic area that might modify the temperature. I’m not sure, but I think it may well have had some ionospheric interest that was unique.

Oh, I know one other thing. It was also one of a chain of stations that ran down the northern and southern hemispheres at about 70° west, and this was at 80° west so it sort of made a continuation along the longitude that the scientists were interested in.

DOB: So they had sort of some control perhaps over the experiments they were doing?

GT: Yes. I don't know why but they wanted a chain of stations and eventually set it up from the northern hemisphere through South America and into the Antarctic.

DOB: So you got an opportunity by being in the right place at the right time?

GT: That's right. But I must tell you, I've forgotten that I took the five- or six-month cruise on the icebreaker *Atka* in the preceding year.

DOB: Oh, you were on the *Atka*.

GT: Yes, which cruised along the coast of Antarctica and picked places like Little America or Kainan Bay for the Little America site and went into McMurdo Sound. We never reached the island but examined other places along the coast as possible station sites.

DOB: So that was the purpose of the *Atka* mission?

GT: Yes, to see whether the old Little Americas were still there—it turned out they weren't, they had gone out to sea—and to locate any other site on the Ross Ice Shelf that might be a site for a Little America station.

DOB: And you were looking for other stations as well?

GT: I think not. We were more interested in—well, we examined other coastal areas. We never did get in all the way to the eventual McMurdo Station site.

DOB: Why not?

GT: Ice.

DOB: Too much ice.

GT: And it was too late, too. If I recall, some people did helicopter over to what eventually became the . . . what's the name of the joint U.S.-New Zealand station?
DOB: Hallett.

GT: Hallett. Thank you. Some people examined that by helicopter.

DOB: Okay. How many scientists were at Byrd? I understand there were twenty-three altogether.

GT: Twenty-three total, and I think it was twelve and eleven.

DOB: Twelve and eleven? Which? Twelve Navy or twelve scientists?

GT: Twelve scientific. I think it's here on this list of personnel.

DOB: Yes, I could figure it out from there. And you did describe them very well.

So was Byrd one of the smaller stations?

GT: The Pole was smaller, I think, by a few people. They didn't have a traverse operating from the Pole and we did, so that meant five people right there connected with the traverse. And I think we may have had another program on geomagnetism or seismology operating over the winter that required somebody that they did not have at the Pole.

DOB: I understand there were many difficulties and delays in building Byrd Station. Was that before you got there?

GT: We got there after the first four buildings had been put up.

DOB: And when was that?

GT: That was late in '56 and early '57, by mid-January '57. The wintering-over people began to arrive in January of '57, and at that time the tractor train and construction crews from Little America had put up four buildings, and left most of the materials for another two or three—one of them major but the rest minor—buildings and had gone off [laughs] and left us there.

DOB: So what did you see when you got there? Four buildings?

GT: Four buildings.

DOB: How did you get there?

GT: Flew in from Little America.

DOB: And how did you land? Was there an airstrip?
GT: Yes, they had compacted an airstrip using tractors to flatten out the snow.

DOB: What did you have to do to get ready for twenty-three people to live there and do science?

GT: Well that's it. We had to build one building, which was a major dormitory and scientific office building. Then we had to construct the geomagnetic observatory—two small buildings actually. We had to erect a radio wind sounding dome for an antenna, to protect the antenna. We had to erect a meteorological balloon inflation shelter. And we had to erect the aurora tower for aurora observations.

And then, in addition, we had to get all our supplies under cover. There were no shelters for fuel drums or for food supplies or for all the rest of the equipment. So we had to build shelters for those and build a tunnel to connect the now five main buildings of the camp.

And we had no materials. The only thing that ever arrived for these tunnels was the chicken wire that was supposed to support the canvas over the tunnels. We used the chicken wire and parachutes and welded oil drums into columns and laid lumber and bent up roof girders and other materials across the oil drums, and covered it all with the parachutes from the airdrops that we had.

DOB: Is the word "innovation?"

GT: Yes. [Laughs]

DOB: Why were there not sufficient materials?

GT: Who knows? We don't know where anything but the chicken wire was, and that was with us. Where the rest of the materials were, perhaps back at McMurdo, perhaps never loaded onto the ship. We barely managed to get enough fuel airdropped to take us through the winter, and that was done in January and February, which is the tail end of the summer season.

There were some emergencies—on an amusing level was that the last projector lamp at Byrd Station burnt out, and we were left with a hundred and seventy-eight old movies and no projector—no entertainment. But an airplane flew out from Little America at the very—the very last flight of the season actually—flew out and brought enough projector bulbs so we were successfully entertained.

DOB: Did you have too much of anything? You didn't have building materials and I'm wondering if you had too much of anything that was sent to you?
GT: I don't recall. But for instance we had this kind of situation. The material for the aurora tower never arrived, so there was no tower material to place this observation box on. What happened was that the rawinsonde dome—instead of being erected on a tower with legs twenty feet above the surface—was placed on top of the building that served as the meteorological office as well as bunk space. That meant that the legs that had been provided for that structure became available for the aurora tower.

So through February and March into the darkness, really, of winter, we were putting these aluminum legs up straddling one of the dormitory buildings, and then muscling the panels of the observatory up onto the platform that had been built on the legs and putting the walls up and the roof on with the plastic domes for the observations. And then constructing a shaft from the observatory down through the roof of the dormitory underneath so that you could get up and down without being exposed to the winter weather. [The access shaft to the aurora observatory also furnished heated air to the observer, who lived in his elevated hut.]

We did this in temperatures that were minus fifty and the wind blowing a breeze at fifteen to twenty miles an hour. The aluminum tower legs were so brittle that the flanges at each end kept breaking off, and the poor Seabee welder, who had never welded aluminum, had to devise ways of repairing these legs.

But that was the kind of thing that went on pretty much until the dark period began. Trying to fathom some way of making up for the shortcomings of the supplies. And I must say that the shortcomings were not due to any personal faults or planning faults, but because it had been so difficult to get back and forth between Little America and Byrd Station. The tractor trains had enormous difficulties with crevassed areas. I think they made only two round trips when they might well have made four if things had been better. And the airdrop was almost an emergency because we had no fuel without those airdrops.

DOB: Why weren't airdrops planned for Byrd?

GT: I wasn't in on that. I suspect part of the problem was that earlier in the season there had been nobody there to receive any airdrops, and it was only after the buildings were up and the people were there on the ground that they could commence the airdrops. The weather impeded, interfered with the airdrops, that delayed them. And as it happened there were frequent losses because the parachutes didn't detach from the loads and the parachutes would drag the loads off over the horizon. Some of these never were found.

DOB: Was this your first trip to Antarctica?

GT: I had gone on the Atka earlier. The wintering over was the second trip.

DOB: How was the Antarctic different from your Arctic experience?
GT: In the first place, in the Arctic we were on land, we had wildlife around, we had animals and birds, vegetation. In the Antarctic, we were out there in the middle of the snow plain, and the only changing aspects were in the weather and the light, aurora light and various optical phenomena that occurred through the sunlight and snow crystals.

DOB: Tell me about that, the optical phenomena.

GT: Well, you have sundogs which occur when the sun shines through air that's permeated with ice crystals. And you've got two or maybe even more sundogs, the brilliant images of the sun to either side of the sun, and sometimes with vertical and horizontal cross arms.

DOB: And you don't get those in the Arctic?

GT: I don't remember seeing them. I possibly wasn't looking for them. In the Antarctic, where there's nothing else to look at, you notice these things. And the Arctic world is interesting for the topography and the animal life and birds and that kind of thing.

As a matter of fact, I did see them in Greenland when I was there in the summertime, on the ice cap during the traverses before the IGY that I mentioned.

DOB: So there were . . . you named what? Half a dozen different kinds of scientific experiments that were being done at Byrd?

GT: Yes, at least a half a dozen.

DOB: And one or two people are in charge of each one of these things?

GT: Usually one. One person. One aurora observer, one ionosphere sounder, one geomagnetician, who also had the seismology, so you had two disciplines conducted by one individual. There were four meteorologists. And what else? Oh, two glaciologists and two traverse seismologists detonating explosives to locate the depth of the snow, who were members of the scientific traverse, and the traverse mechanic, who provided the essential upkeep of the Sno-Cats they used.

DOB: What are whistlers? It's something that happens and was part of the scientific work, and I can't help you because I don't know the answer.

GT: How do you spell it?

DOB: W-h-i-s-t-l-e-r. Like whistling.
GT: Oh, whistlers. I have a problem with my hearing. Whistlers. They were an ionospheric phenomenon. I'm not a scientist, you understand, but they occur from the ionospheric layer above the atmosphere of the earth, and were recorded and studied with interest by people back in Boulder, Colorado, when they got the data from all the stations around.

DOB: What was the relationship like between the scientists and the Navy support people?

GT: Very good, generally. I noticed somewhere reading in preparation for this interview—we had a tough winter at Byrd, and there were frictions and antagonisms, but as somebody pointed out, there was never a physical dispute between anybody, among any persons at Byrd. I think this is kind of remarkable.

DOB: How do you account for that?

GT: I don't know. Just wondering, did we get particularly good screening by the psychiatrists before we went down? We had some very hot-tempered persons, and very sensitive persons, and we had people who were used to being physical in their relationships. But nobody ever—

DOB: Nobody got a bloody nose.

GT: We did have arguments and disputes.

DOB: How did you deal with the disputes?

GT: We tried to settle them. For instance, one in the springtime. The ice-coring team arrived. That meant about eight, ten, maybe more people having to live in the same place. It was judged that it was necessary to get our single cook some help, so we agreed that everybody would have to pitch in. The Navy doctor and I spread it among our people that we would routinely take turns in the kitchen helping the cook.

Well, these ice-coring people didn't want to do it, and they resisted. It took a while to convince them that eight or ten people dumped on top of twenty-three, or more by that time, created too much of a load for one man cooking three meals a day. And the fact was they also—about half of the ice-coring people—were enlisted Army people, and here they were saying they weren't going to do it. It made for a particularly delicate situation. But eventually it worked out.

DOB: They did do it?

GT: Yes, they did.

DOB: Who was your counterpart Officer in Charge from the Navy?
GT: He was Lieutenant, Medical Corps, U.S. Navy, Brian Dalton, D-a-l-t-o-n. An Irishman, born in Dublin, took his degree at the university there, and then came to the United States hoping that he was going to be able to perform cold weather research in the Antarctic. That's what he hoped when he signed up, but of course he found out that he'd be dealing with personnel matters and inventory and message traffic by radio—all the administrative concerns for operating the station and supporting the science.

DOB: How did he deal with that?

GT: He never did any research at all, poor guy. He was really disappointed and frustrated.

DOB: How did you get along with him?

GT: Very well. I liked him and I think he liked me.

DOB: Some of the stations didn't have such a happy time of it.

GT: Well, no. We kept hearing on the radio [laughs] things that were going on.

DOB: How did you make it work? You must've been doing something right, you and Dalton.

GT: Again, in preparing for this I kept thinking to myself some of the stupid things that I personally did. For one thing, I was not surprised that there were going to be tensions and aggravations and frustrations, and having been through it in a much less well-planned situation in the Arctic. Again, we had no physical brawls, but there could be a whole lot of tension there and some very peculiar people. They didn't have any screening for the Arctic program, whereas in the Antarctic, people presumably were screened out by psychiatrists before they were taken down there.

I think the best that can be said is that everyone has to be a little flexible, a little compliant, and a little willing to give in.

For instance, one thing that bothers me now, bothers my conscience, is that I had the aurora watch four times during the night, and so that meant I was up all during the night—it was dark anyway, but the nighttime, the night hours. And in between, I would play tapes that somebody had—one of the traverse people—and I can remember several of them complaining to me about the way I played these tapes, because they were sleeping in cubicles along the one side of the barracks, and the tape machine was out on a desk in the office area along the other wall. And I'd sit there and read and play the tapes until it was time to go to make the next observation and it wasn't considerate at all. I'm embarrassed today by it.

DOB: Did they call you on it and ask you to stop?
GT: They would yell at me, yes. The guy whose tape machine it was would yell at me, and I'd turn it down. It really surprises me today that I was that stupid to do something purposely that would aggravate the people around me.

DOB: What were the biggest headaches that you had with people? Or maybe I should ask what behaviors were the most irritating?

GT: I really can't think of anything very serious. One of the problems we did have was that among the whole crew of twenty-three, there were—

[End Side A, Tape 1]

[Begin Side B, Tape 1]

GT: —there were maybe seven or more as I think of it—but they were people like me who had wintered over in the Arctic, and others like the traverse people who had spent some time in Greenland during the summer months. So we all had a little bit of experience with that kind of extreme weather. And then none of the Navy people did, and it became sometimes difficult to convince the Navy people that it would be better if they did something else rather than what they were planning on doing.

DOB: Like what?

GT: Like where to place a cache of oil drums for use through the winter. Well as it turned out, they eventually got placed downwind of the major buildings so that meant they were covered with a twelve-foot snow drift long before the winter was over because of the snow drifting in the lee of the station buildings.

It took a long while to organize an emergency supply of food and clothing in case any disaster occurred in any one of the buildings so that we would have something to fall back on. And I'm not sure to this day that we ever did an adequate job of that. It took a long while to convince people that they ought to rope up or go out in pairs or follow a flag route when they were going out to the remote seismology and geomagnetic buildings or out to where the glaciologists had a snow-accumulation observatory. One guy got very badly lost and almost didn't make it back when he strayed away from the line of flags that was leading out to a remote area.

DOB: How did he get back?

GT: He lucked out.

DOB: He found his own way back?
GT: He wandered around until he hit something. I don't remember whether he hit a row of flags or something or other but he made it out. But he admitted—he told me later—that he was really frightened. He thought he was gone.

As a matter of fact, it seems to me in the later years, that did happen at Byrd. Somebody went out and got lost and never did make it back. I'm not sure where I came across this, but it seems to me I did hear of it. It's not an unheard of thing to happen in the polar regions.

DOB: Do you think that the scientists accomplished what they set out and met their goals? You had a late start and probably ambitious ideas.

GT: Yes, everyone had very ambitious ideas.

DOB: How did they feel about it when it was all done?

GT: As I was re-reading here—I forced each one of them to write the reports so that I could put it into my report—they all seemed to feel that they had very successful seasons. The traverse people in the glaciology and seismology traverse, they discovered all kinds of things that never had even dreamed about that area before.

DOB: Like what?

GT: The fact that underlying the Byrd Plateau is an archipelago of mountain peaks, when everybody had assumed it was a solid land mass a mile down below the snow surface. And they discovered all kinds of peculiarities in the fundamental rock bottom. [There are, for instance, areas of the continent under the snow and ice that are far below sea level. This finding created great interest back in academia.]

The aurora program worked very smoothly.

DOB: What did they do? What did they discover?

GT: I don't know what. All we did was make these observations and record them on IBM punch cards, which then went off to, I think, Cornell University for analysis. But we did make regular observations punctiliously throughout the dark period.

DOB: How often did you see the aurora?

GT: Oh, every day. Brilliant aurora. And then the meteorologists, they collected the data and transmitted it back by radio. Hard to tell what the significance is from the one set of observations that are available there at Byrd Station, but they did make all the observations that were possible. The data were carefully obtained and transmitted so at
least that much was done. The ultimate significance of what they learned, I wouldn't know enough to read anyway.

DOB: Okay. Tell me about the winter night. You were saying you were out working in the first winter.

GT: Not out, I was in the aurora tower.

DOB: But just building the camp in the beginning—

GT: It wasn't yet night; it was late fall. It was not winter.

DOB: How dark does it get?

GT: Oh, dark dark. Just as dark as it can be.

DOB: Even with the white snow?

GT: Oh yes, sure. Especially if it's cloud obscured and there's no starlight and no moon up, then it's very dark.

DOB: Does the moon give you quite a bit of light?

GT: Oh yes. If the moon shines, you can read a newspaper almost.

DOB: And how cold did it get there?

GT: I think our coldest temperature was around minus seventy. That's all in this report if you want to borrow it.

DOB: Oh yes, please. I would be very grateful.

GT: In the meteorology report are charted the numbers of the lowest and the highest temperatures and the date, and all kinds of stuff about winds—directions and velocities.

DOB: You were there for a full year?

GT: Yes. Maybe not quite. Maybe eleven months. It seems to me I got back to New Zealand in November, but I'm not sure.

DOB: Okay. Who did you meet on the ice that you were awfully glad to have there? Somebody in particular that you admired or respected or developed a particular friendship with?
GT: Well, let me say first of all that Albert Crary, whose name you've probably come across, I had known at the IGY headquarters where he was . . . I guess he was the deputy chief scientist for the IGY Antarctic program.

Anyway, I knew Bert. I knew of his reputation. He had been a fantastic man. He'd been on T-3 Ice Island in the Arctic Ocean, he was almost like the grandfather of the programs there, and was well known in Washington and in geophysical and glaciological circles. And then I knew him at the IGY, and he's just a beloved character, that's all. Just a wonderful guy. And he was going to Little America, so when the chance came to go to Byrd, it was like being able to be next door to Bert Crary, although I must say I don't think I talked to him on the radio more than twice the whole winter.

DOB: What made him special?

GT: He's just a marvelous, low-key, laid-back, unexcitable, unflappable country guy from northern New York who learned geophysics and had a lot of experience, full of dry humor. I saw him get angry only once in my life, and he's just a wonderful person.

DOB: Anyone else?

GT: I did get to know Brian Dalton, whom I had never heard of before, and incredibly haven't had much contact with since. But he was a witty Irishman who was quite energetic and highly charged who had to eat a whole lot of disappointment, and I really felt for him. I felt sorry for the poor guy.

DOB: There just wasn't time in the schedule for him to do his own work?

GT: They got him to volunteer for the Antarctic because they told him there'd be a chance to do some research, and that would be wonderful for a young doctor. He'd only been out of medical school two years, a wonderful chance to make a naval career and make a medical career for himself. And then to be dumped out there in the middle of Byrd Land with a disorganized crew and a mélange of supplies and being told that you're in charge, and here are the forms you must fill out. I was very disappointed for him.

DOB: But he seems to have not taken that out on the people who were there.

GT: Oh no. He was a very fair-minded man; he wouldn't do that. And he never had any trouble, to my knowledge, with any of his men, some of whom were a little pig-headed [laughs] and had been in the Navy long enough to know how to make their way around regulations.

I just felt that here was a guy who was used—and I felt bad for the United States Navy to have done this to an alien member. I don't think he was even then a citizen.
DOB: Were you ever truly scared?

GT: In the Antarctic?

DOB: Yes.

GT: No, I don't think so. What's there to be scared about?

DOB: I can think of some things.

GT: There were no polar bears. No, I don't think so. I probably should have been once or twice. As a matter of fact, thinking about sitting up there twenty feet off the ground on this aluminum structure, it's something I wouldn't do today. On the other hand, several other people were doing it, getting our noses and chins frozen.

DOB: So how do you account for your lack of concern for being in a very vulnerable environment?

GT: We were well dressed, we had adequate shelter, we had plenty of food, and if people used their heads and behaved somewhat prudently, there were no particular hazards. It was more hazardous flying back and forth in those airplanes than it was living there at Byrd Station.

DOB: No traffic accidents.

[Laughter]

GT: No.

DOB: You wrote that a number of people at Byrd Station gained a lot of weight.

GT: Oh yes.

DOB: And you wrote that meals were cut to two a day to save the cook some effort. But there were also reports of shortages of food and talk of shutting down the station because of that.

GT: Did I say that?

DOB: No. That came from somewhere else. Apparently radioman Bill Lowe made comments about being fearful of having to shut down Byrd and taking everybody back to Little America.

GT: I don't remember hearing that before.
DOB: And I'd like to know the true story of if there were shortages and what the concern was.

GT: If you have to use Spam instead of fresh frozen roast beef, is that a shortage? No, when we started off we had shrimp and we had lobster and we had frozen chicken and rabbit and other varieties of meats. When it wound down, we had a lot of hamburger, a lot of stew beef, and no variety, and it would get a little dull after a while. But there was no danger of starving, never that.

DOB: So you had never any concern that—

GT: No. Not at all.

DOB: —that spring would come and you'd all be fine.

GT: Sure. And spring came and we got fresh vegetables from New Zealand and fresh meat and eggs.

DOB: Okay. Tell me about the role of liquor on the ice.

GT: [Laughs] You've read what I wrote.

DOB: Well, I've read of what a lot of people have written, and they don't all agree.

GT: Liquor was great. It would've been wonderful if we'd had about a hundred times more beer than we had.

DOB: Was that a shortage?

GT: Yes. Again, because of the airdrop, either it drifted away or it never got dropped, but we had ten cans of beer per person for the whole winter, from like February to October. One guy was supposed to have drunk all his ten cans at one Saturday night double-feature movie [laughs], and then found out.

But there was very little beer, and there was even less of any hard liquor. There were some of the common Navy issue Old Methusalem bourbon, I guess it is, and the doctor had some medicinal alcohol, and he, in charge of the station, was in charge of the alcohol distribution, and he did a good job. Nobody suffered.

In fact, one or two of those Navy guys were getting a good cure because, I'm not sure, at least one of them was an alcoholic. As a matter of fact, he made a still and tried desperately to distill some alcohol during the winter.

DOB: From what? What was he distilling?
GT: I suppose raisins or something. I have no idea what he did, but he had a still in the garage hidden away behind a vehicle.

DOB: But you knew about it.

GT: I heard about it, yes, but I didn't think it was serious enough even to bother with it. But he apparently never succeeded in getting any production out of his still.

DOB: So too much alcohol didn't become a problem.

GT: No.

DOB: You didn't have enough to.

GT: We didn't have enough, no. The doctor made some available at the mid-winter's day party, and occasionally at some other holiday, maybe July 4th or something like that. We'd each have a drink, and that was it.

DOB: Now that you went through that and have told me really how I would say remarkably well all the people got along—no bloody noses—yet it is true that there are kinds of people that are better suited for Antarctic duty than others.

GT: I guess so because some people who were screened by the psychiatrists weren't allowed to go to the Antarctic.

DOB: Were there any among your group that really shouldn't have been there?

GT: There was one guy who was very aggravating to me personally. He was a civilian, a weatherman, and I think he did what he could to try to disrupt the harmony and make my job tougher.

As a matter of fact, Mario Giovinetto, who has just moved to Maryland from Canada, said he came across a letter which he had written to somebody or other at the end of our year at Byrd, defending me against this guy who had apparently made some official complaint about me as the station scientific leader. I never heard about the complaint, it never got to me, but I was aware this guy didn't like me and wasn't at all cooperative. On the other hand, he was a bright guy and a guy with experience in the Arctic, and intelligent and conscientious about his job and a good member of the weather crew.

DOB: What was his problem?

GT: I don't know. For one thing, he had been to the Arctic and he was intelligent and he was observant and he was instructable, and he'd learned about the Arctic. So when he came to the Antarctic—and he was there ahead of me, he got to Byrd early, maybe even in
December and I wasn't there till January—but he got there and he organized things and he did a good job. He kept things going and told people why things had to be thus and so, and I must admit he was a very valuable person to have around.

But when I got there, and I'm the station scientific leader, if anything's going to be done between the Navy and the civilians, it's going to be done between me and the doctor. This guy didn't like it.

DOB: Sounds like he wanted your job.

GT: I think so, yes. So when Mario says he had written a letter and found a copy of the letter he had written defending me, I wasn't at all surprised. I was surprised to hear from Mario about it, but I wasn't surprised to hear that this man had made some sort of complaint.

DOB: What did traverse parties do? Did you send traverse parties out from Byrd as well as the traverse parties just between Little America and Byrd?

GT: Yes. The traverse party started at Little America, got out to Byrd with their Sno-Cats and sleds and equipment, spent the winter at Byrd preparing to leave. I think they left in November to run a traverse route. Do you want to see a map?

DOB: Yes, later.

GT: They ran a traverse route out into Byrd Land.

DOB: For what purpose?

GT: They did this taking glaciological observations and seismic observations and geomagnetic observations at specified distances along the route, and recorded the data for later analysis.

DOB: How many people would be involved in a traverse like that?

GT: Five. Two glaciologists, two seismologists, and a mechanic. I think during the summer they may have had six. I think somebody else attached himself to the traverse team—aurora observer. He was a bright guy and his auroral work was over. He went along as zoologist. Zoologist and cook or something like that.

DOB: How long would they be gone?

GT: They went from November to . . . I think they got back in March.

DOB: Many months.
GT: Yes. It was over a thousand miles creeping along at maybe ten or fifteen miles an hour and stopping every few miles to dig their glaciology pit, to make a seismic sounding, and do whatever else they did, besides stopping for sleep.

DOB: Did they have a sleeping wagon?

GT: They had a wanigan, yes. A bunkhouse on a sled. I think that was the way it was.

DOB: So it was five of them against the snow, as it were.

GT: Yes, and of course there were days when they couldn't travel. Visibility was just too terrible. And they reached a few outcrops of rock and took some samples as well.

DOB: Did they have a particular destination or were they—

GT: No, to run this route that they had plotted out ahead of time. There had been a DC-4 come out from Little America and flew the route along with an experienced surface transportation officer to determine where they should avoid crevasses or where there might be outcrops of rock which they would want to approach and examine.

DOB: No animal life at Antarctica in Byrd Land?

GT: No, although the zoologist on the traverse did find evidences of a penguin hundreds of miles from the nearest water and headed away from it. That's in this report.

DOB: I remember reading that somewhere.

GT: He measured the depths of the footprints and the distance of the footprints and the lengths of the stride and gathered the scat and the frozen urine samples.

DOB: That's amazing. A single penguin.

GT: One penguin. I think they may also have seen some snowy petrels out there. I know some traverses inland have seen them well in from the ocean. Why were they there; was it a storm that drove them in; or where was this penguin going, apparently deliberately headed and never veered from its course?

DOB: A reclusive penguin.

You talked earlier about the sizable number of people at Byrd who had had previous polar experience. What difference did that make, do you think, at Byrd?

GT: For one thing, in flying weather balloons it's a great deal different flying them in the polar regions with blowing snow and high winds and extreme cold than from sending them up from Suitland. Just knowing how to operate, if you're a driver knowing that
you have to drive a vehicle differently in the snow and the extreme cold, knowing how to keep yourself covered up, keep your face protected from freezing.

DOB: But there were a number of people at Byrd who would have had no previous polar experience.

GT: Yes, mostly Navy.

DOB: How were they trained or how did they learn?

GT: For one thing, there were people around to give them advice. For another thing, they seemed to have gotten some good orientation before they came down. Maybe a Seabee organization of the Navy seems to have oriented them pretty well.

DOB: Did people complain about being cold or were you just dressed so much that you didn't—

GT: Yes, when we were working on the aurora tower. After a couple of hours, we decided it was time to have a cup of coffee, and come down and sit around in the mess hall for half an hour and complain about how nasty it was. But nobody was ever in any serious danger from cold, like extreme frostbite and gangrene and amputation.

DOB: None of that.

GT: We had good clothing.

DOB: What is the greatest danger, either actual or potential, in being in an isolated place like that?

GT: Aside from some accident that might occur in any set of conditions, I think that the greatest danger is inadvertent exposure from, as I said before, getting disoriented outside and losing your way.

DOB: Did you worry about fire?

GT: No. I never worried about fire. I don't think anybody ever worried about it. We had fire extinguishers around, and the buildings were all separated from one another. Between each pair of buildings there'd be an enormous drift of snow so fire wouldn't transmit from one to the other. I don't remember ever hearing any suspicion of a hazard from fire, even around the garage where there were all kinds of gasoline and oil and welding torches and all this other stuff.

DOB: What are you proudest of?

GT: With relation to this experience?
DOB: Yes.

GT: I think outstanding was just the fact that we got through the winter, accomplished all that could be done with the materials and instruments that we had, and never had any extreme injury or greater loss to anybody throughout that period.

DOB: That's significant.

GT: It is. Everybody did their job. Actually it was accomplished in a business-like way.

DOB: How much contact did you have with the outside world?

GT: Very little. For one reason or another, the amateur radio provided by the Navy seldom allowed voice transmission. And the only other contact we seemed to have had with welcomed regularity was through a set owned by the ionospheric man, who would transmit Morse code messages to an amateur radio person in the United States, who would then type them up and mail them to your loved ones. And that's not very satisfactory.

DOB: You had a family by then.

GT: Oh yes. I had a wife and two kids.

DOB: So it was a long time between—

GT: Yes, and it was not good for the kids either. I wouldn't do it again on mature reflection.

DOB: It's got to be hard.

Did the scientists get to talk with other scientists using the radio equipment?

GT: They attempted on a number of occasions to set up a roundtable radio conference of the, say, ionospheric people from each of the stations so they could discuss their problems and their programs. But this being a period of maximum solar activity, radio communications were often disrupted and in fact seldom satisfactory, so these conversations, these seminars just didn't work out.

There might be occasions when, say, the traverse people at Byrd would talk with Bert Crary of Little America because he was running a traverse there, too, and if there was a problem of a particular nature, they might talk back and forth for a few minutes about how to resolve it. But there was never any general communication over the whole network of stations.
You would hear occasionally about people complaining at one station to Bert Crary about what was going on at that station, but that was mostly for our own amusement. We didn't ever involve ourselves with another group's internal squabbles.

**DOB:** So how did people deal with loneliness and isolation and all of that?

**GT:** I don't know. I never had any problem myself. Most of the people had enough to do. Like I say, the cook had enough to do, the meteorologists were doing their regular routine programs every day, the traverse people dug a forty-foot pit out behind their quarters building and put thermometers and snow movement pegs and other things in it, and that kept them busy all winter as well as their snow accumulation observations. Everybody had something going on.

The few people that didn't, like the builder, the carpenter, he was drafted to help out in the kitchen. The electrician, after everything was wired up, he had nothing to do so he just helped in the kitchen. The tractor driver had to be ready almost all the time because he had to go and bring in fuel every few days from the cache outside, and that took thirty-six hours. I mean you start clearing today and by tomorrow morning you'd have the snow cleared away so you could get some barrels out and bring them in.

**DOB:** In my research at the Library of Congress, I came across a book by someone who was comparing being in the Antarctic to being in prison.

**GT:** Where in the Antarctic? What national group or what camp?

**DOB:** I don't recall, but it was just the idea that these would be analogous experiences. I guess because you can't go anywhere.

**GT:** You could walk four hundred miles in any direction and nobody would stop you.

**DOB:** I did read that Admiral Dufek came to Byrd after that first year with some press people to investigate the issue of shortages. What did he find?

**GT:** I wasn't there. I never saw all those press people.

**DOB:** Really. You were gone by then?

**GT:** I think I must have been. I read that somewhere, too. Oh, I know. Something else I'm going to let you read if you'd like. It's Harry Dater, historian Dater's Byrd Station report. Yes, I did hear that. What shortages? Old Methusalem? Beer? There must've been a lot of griping going on that I never was aware of. Maybe people left and went back and reported at McMurdo that they were starving to death out at Byrd.

[Laughs]
DOB: They also talked about enmities among the Navy and scientific people.

GT: One, two, three, four, five of us scientists, or scientific types, and three Navy people. We slept in the same building, in our building, and the other building was the same way. Five or six Navy and three or four or five meteorologists, all sorts. There were frictions, sure. One guy couldn't stand to see another guy who at the end of his meal always stood up and swept the crumbs into his tray from the table. [Laughs]

DOB: Small stuff.

GT: I don't think it was ever over anything serious.

DOB: Okay. You returned to the Antarctic after the Byrd experience. What did you do?

GT: I went to McMurdo where I was—what did they call me? I don't remember. I was sort of a coordinator. This was the U.S.-Antarctic Research Program, USARP, and I was sort of the coordinator between the program and Navy supply—the admiral in charge who lived there. Most of the time I'd go and have dinner with the admiral a couple times a week.

DOB: Who was the admiral?

GT: Admiral Tyree is the one I remember best, and I think it may have been during the southern summer for two years, and he was the admiral both years.

DOB: He succeeded Dufek, I believe.

GT: Yes.

DOB: While you were on the ice, how much were you aware of events in the world?

GT: I told you about Sputnik.

DOB: And what would've been the overriding political issues at that time?

GT: I remember later on the Cuban missile crisis when I was also in the Antarctic aboard the Eltanin, an Antarctic research ship, where we had almost no radio communications for a couple of weeks and wondered what the heck was going on.

I think I seldom gave a thought to the outside world, if you want to know the truth. There was usually enough of more urgent nature than what was taking place inside the beltway in Washington, during the cold war with the Communists.
We didn't have any news. I suppose the radio might have provided it, but I never had access to a radio other than on an occasional transient basis, and there were no publications. Every once in a while the mail would come in, but it would be nothing but old outdated news magazines.

**DOB:** How did you get mail?

**GT:** They'd fly it in.

**DOB:** Even in the night?

**GT:** Oh, you're talking about at Byrd; I was still at McMurdo. At Byrd, even less. Less communication and no mail for months on end—from March to October.

**DOB:** Did you have any interactions with counterparts from other countries while you were there?

**GT:** None at all. I did pay a visit to Scott Base and looked around when I was at McMurdo, but that was about it.

**DOB:** I have some questions for you that have to do with Antarctica today.

**GT:** I haven't been close to the place in twenty-five or thirty years.

**DOB:** I don't think it will matter for my questions.

Tourism is becoming an increasingly large phenomenon in the Antarctic.

**GT:** Yes. I abominate it.

**DOB:** Well, that's the answer?

**GT:** I think it's terrible.

**DOB:** Why?

**GT:** They talk about governing tourism and protecting animal and bird sites and vegetation, but every year some vessel runs on a rock and exudes a couple of thousand gallons of diesel oil. Every year more and more people are trooping into penguin colonies to photograph them and trample on the lichen and moss or whatever. Every year there's somebody or other who's going across the continent on foot over the Pole. No, I guess I try not to be involved with the exploitation of the area for those who fancy the novelty and can afford to pay for it.
DOB: There are also many, many more scientists than there used to be. Can the continent support increasing encroachment by scientific apparatus and scientists?

GT: I'm not sure that all science has been beneficial to the continent.

DOB: In what way?

GT: When they wanted to clear a site for Hallett Station, they had to move thousands of penguin chicks away from a couple of acres of soil so that they could put the buildings up. I'm sure it didn't do those penguin chicks any good when—

[End Side B, Tape 1]

[Begin Side A, Tape 2]

DOB: Do you think if they were building a station today that they would move penguins?

GT: I doubt it. I should hope not.

DOB: Regarding the Antarctic Treaty, it's set up on the premise that Antarctica will be devoted forever to scientific endeavor and to peace. Do you think that's possible indefinitely?

GT: Possible? Yes, possible. But probable? I have a question. If oil is discovered in the Antarctic, do you think it would be devoted to science and peace forever?

DOB: That's my question.

GT: I don't think so. No, absolutely. Look what's happening up north in Alaska. A few more inroads every year and another road surface this year and something else next year.

DOB: Did you worry in the 1950s about littering and pollution?

GT: No. Absolutely not. You couldn't conceive out there with five thousand feet of snow under you that any old crankcase oil that you threw on the surface was going to be a detriment to the environment.

DOB: Today you couldn't do that.

GT: No, and I think that's a good thing. But who was alert to the environment in the '50s?

DOB: What did you do with your garbage?

GT: We took it—it's in the report, Harry Dater's report—we took it downwind, put it in a pile, poured old crankcase oil over it and burnt it. What didn't burn got soon covered up.
DOB: Out of sight, out of mind.

What did you do after you left the ice? I know you went back at least a couple of times, and I understand you've become an attorney.

GT: Yes, but not for another decade. I went back to Washington and worked in what was no longer the IGY but the USARP office, and then went down to McMurdo in the summer, I think twice.

My boss, Tom Jones, and some other people got the bright idea of a research ship and got the Military Sea Transport Service to turn over a former cargo ship to become an oceanographic laboratory ship, and I was on the first two cruises of the Eltanin out of Valparaiso, Chile. These lasted about six weeks between port calls. I then stayed on for part of the third one, I believe, disembarking in Punta Arenas, Chile's southernmost city, and flying home from there.

Then, at the National Science Foundation, which by that time was getting so regimented and stuffy, my job was just something in administration at one time or another. Very little involvement at all with interesting polar matters.

DOB: What did you do at NSF?

GT: I think I was something like the assistant to the director of environmental programs or something like that. Some sort of nondescript title.

DOB: How long were you there?

GT: I quit January 1, 1971. Actually it was an early-out offer, and I had had enough government service by that time including my Army service, so that I qualified, and I was of an age so I could qualify for the early out and I took it, not knowing exactly what I was going to do but having some idea.

I applied to law school. Antioch College out in Yellow Springs, Ohio, was opening up the Antioch School of Law in D.C. I applied and was accepted.

DOB: How did you end up going into law after all of the previous—

GT: It's a long story. You know Hilda Mason, who's on the D.C. Council and running for reelection right now. She is married to Charlie Mason, whom I knew. In fact, I knew Hilda, too. But I bumped into Charlie one day in the '60s and I said, "What are you doing, Charlie?" He said, "I'm going to Howard Law School. I've retired from the government and I'm going to get a law degree." How wonderful. And he did. He graduated and he's been Hilda's legal advisor ever since she's been on the D.C. Council.
The more I thought about it, the more intriguing it became, and Antioch opened up its law school, I retired from the government, and I had a slight bequest that matured at that time so I could pay my tuition. It all worked out and I went to law school.

DOB: Did you practice law?


DOB: Congratulations again.

GT: Thank you.

DOB: Did you specialize in a particular kind of law?

GT: Yes. When I got out of law school, I was sort of a volunteer clerk for a practicing lawyer, whom I met through one of my professors. I said to him, "What do I do now, Leonard? I'm out of law school and just passed the bar." He said, "Well, go over to the courthouse and take some juvenile cases. If you goof up, the penalty's not too bad and it'll be good experience."

So I started doing juvenile work, and I don't think I had more than three or four adult criminal cases. I had a few civil cases and a number of divorces, and then a lot of neglect cases which became more and more numerous through the later years.

But then my hearing deteriorated. As soon as I knew I was going to law school, I got a hearing aid and I've gone through at least five different brands and varieties of hearing aids from behind the ear, within the bows of my glasses, and in the ear, and none of them was satisfactory. So I said, "Get out. I'm not doing anybody any good."

DOB: If you were an artist and could paint on one canvas the essence of Antarctica, what would it be?

GT: You ask tough questions. [Pause] I suppose it would be a snowscape, of course, lots of indication of strong wind, and appropriately placed some sort of optical phenomenon like the sundog. That all sounds very trite. Sorry I can't think of anything more original than that.

DOB: I've asked the question of many people and—

GT: They all say the same thing.

DOB: Well, I'm struck by the fact that mostly they don't put in the structures that they built in their scenes.
GT: That's not the essence of Antarctica, that's man's puny handiwork, a transient ephemeral intrusion.

DOB: Maybe I should ask a more mundane question. When you go to a cocktail party and someone says, "Oh, you've been to Antarctica," what's your favorite story to tell?

GT: Actually my favorite story occurred in the Arctic. I had inflated a weather balloon to send off one morning, and came out of the inflation shelter to go in and turn on the recorder before I released the balloon. And lo and behold, there in the area between our inflation shelter, our mess hall, our barracks, and our garage was a polar bear.

So I rushed into the mess hall where we had the gun supply, grabbed a thirty-caliber rifle and some shells, and yelled at the other guys still eating breakfast, "There's a bear outside." And they said, "Oh, go out and fly your balloon." I went out and having read Vilhjalmur Stefansson, I took aim and killed the bear. Then I released the balloon. Later on we skinned the bear.

DOB: What did you do with it?

GT: I brought the skin home, and we ate some of the meat.

DOB: Paul Siple, who was the scientific leader at Pole as you know, and had been there as a Boy Scout with Byrd, wrote that "The Antarctic generally wields a profound effect on personality and character, and few people are the same" after they've been there. Were you changed by your experience? And if so, how?

GT: No, I don't think I was changed. You'd better ask my wife. [Laughs] I know, I've read the same sort of thing from Admiral Byrd when he spent his winter in isolation. Either I am not constructed the way Paul—I'm sure I'm not constructed the way Paul Siple is, he's a very unusual person. Perhaps I'm just not tuned or sensitive enough but I didn't feel any personality change.

It was interesting. I enjoyed it. Every day was exciting. Every day had something to offer. But at the end, I reluctantly turned over my duties to Steve Barnes, who was replacing me, and came home.

DOB: Did you keep a journal?

GT: No.

DOB: Have you done a lot of writing about that experience besides the science report?
GT: Besides that? No. My Bowdoin College alumni magazine wanted a story from me and from another guy who was in the Arctic, but I didn't get around to doing it. In fact, it took me till 1962 to get my report from 1958 done.

DOB: What haven't I asked you that you would like to talk about that would be relevant to this history of the 1950s in Antarctica?

GT: You've come extremely well prepared. We didn't talk much about how we prepared our scientific people to go to the Antarctic, and I think that's one of the things where I would most credit the people at the National Science Foundation, the IGY, and USARP people for, is the detailed, quite elaborate program of orientation that was given to every single scientific person going to the Antarctic.

I can't for the life of me remember where those who went down when I went down that year got this orientation, but later on, it was conducted up near the Appalachian Trail at a resort camp out there where everybody was there and had to stay there. I think the first year it must've been done in Washington because one of the problems was nobody stayed put. They'd all go out and see the town at night.

But the program people were all out there in Virginia, and a series of lectures and demonstrations was given to provide at least the basics of survival skills and knowledge about conditions and how to cope with them. And there were enough lectures and talks and demonstrations so that everybody was aware of what the other people around them were going to be doing and what their objectives were during the year. And they had movies and polar experts and lots of good stuff.

DOB: How long did that go on?

GT: It seems to me it was a week.

DOB: And that was also true for the IGY people?

GT: Now you got me. It wasn't true . . . no, I don't think it was true for the IGY people at all.

DOB: They did not have an orientation?

GT: I don't think so. I wasn't destined for the Antarctic when the IGY people first became assembled. It was only late in the game when I got into it and I wasn't around here when the second group was being prepared for their Antarctic experience, so I don't know what happened.

DOB: It seems like an orientation would certainly be a useful expenditure to—
George Toney Interview, October 28, 1998

GT: That's why I wanted to bring it up because I think it was a solid, intelligent thing to do. [Thanks to the great people the IGY committee had advising on Antarctic research—Dr. Larry Gould, Paul Siple, and Eddie Goodale, all members of the first Byrd expedition—people going to the ice were as well equipped and prepared as possible before they left.]

DOB: Thank you. Anything else?

GT: [Laughs] You framed me. I can't think of anything else.

DOB: Thank you so much for talking with me. It's been a real pleasure.

GT: You're welcome. I enjoyed it.

[End of interview]