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Maxine Lebkuecher Drexler

Maxine Lebkuecher Drexler '46 and '57

Illinois Wesleyan University

Amy Uden '11

Illinois Wesleyan University

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Uden: Okay, go ahead.

Maxine Drexler: My name now is Maxine L. Drexler and the L stands for my maiden name which was Lebkuecher, a good old German name referring to the Lebkuchen cookie.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: I lived here in Bloomington ever since I was one year old so I went through the public schools and when I was at BHS I was of course in choir and I was first-chair clarinet in the band and I enjoyed all the musical aspects of Bloomington High. My junior year my mother thought I should take voice lessons, so she made the contacts and I started taking voice from a Mrs. Harry Admire. She taught privately in her home and her husband was on the faculty at ISNU but their daughter was getting her master's degree from Wesleyan, so they encouraged me to try out for a scholarship to Wesleyan, so I did (you go and sing your piece). I sang an aria from *Carmen*.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: And I won the top scholarship, which I kept all four years.

Uden: Great.

Maxine Drexler: And I was very happy about that. Because it didn't pay for all your tuition, which was, at that time, about \$250 a semester. My dad really couldn't afford that, but I was determined to go to Wesleyan. I definitely wanted to go to Wesleyan and so that meant I needed a job and Mr. Miller, Ray Miller, was so kind to me to let me work in Miller Music Store summertime and vacation-time when I was going to school and even let me run down for a few hours to work when I had a few hours free, so that was a big help to me. I was so glad to be at Wesleyan and I really appreciated that from him even though it meant walking a lot. My parents did not have a car so I walked back and forth to Wesleyan all the time—that was kind of awkward later on, I may mention that. But my freshman year was during the time when freshman still wore little green beanies on their head and you had to wear them all the time supposedly until a senior saw you—if a senior saw you without one I don't what was supposed to happen to you but anyway...

[Both laugh]

Maxine Drexler: I was happy to wear it; it didn't bother me a bit. I enjoyed having it on. That freshman year, I don't know whether Dwight mentioned about the burning of Hedding Hall, but that was my freshman year. I was walking out to Wesleyan to a basketball game—

Uden: Uh-huh.

Maxine Drexler: But since it was nighttime, I went downtown to walk Main Street, which had the most business on it and was safer, you know.

Uden: Yeah.

Maxine Drexler: So I was walking down North Main Street when I could see the glow in the sky and I—somebody said it was at Wesleyan. I couldn't believe it but it definitely was when I got there, so I won't forget that. It was wintery weather; it was cold. It was traumatic for everybody, that burning. So for years then after that, a roof—the old building came down except the stonework and they put a roof over that and, what was the name they gave that? They had a name for the building then besides Hedding Hall—Duration Hall.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: And they still held classes in the basement of it until, of course, the whole thing got torn down and now that's where the quad is, the grass is.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: It was right in the center. I enjoyed everything about Wesleyan for those four years. As I say, I was known as a town girl and Dwight was a town boy because we both lived at home with our parents and that meant missing a few of the college antics I suppose that went on but my sophomore year I became an SAI, Sigma Alpha Iota, and I've remained active all these years since then, so I did get—by being an SAI, to often stay overnight there, so I did get a certain amount of the college activities.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: After graduation, my four years there, I was hired to teach voice, which would not happen these days. Here I was just with a [laughs] college degree and nothing else. I was hired to teach voice full-time. I did have Dwight for a teacher my senior year, he'd come back from the war, I did have him for Form and Analysis, so we met each other that way in class but then it turns out that we—both living at our parents' homes, walked practically the same route that I did going to Wesleyan. We met walking often and so during that first year we met going back and forth and then we started dating and the following year we were married, 1947. I sang a lot in and around town and Dwight was my accompanist, which was really great for me to have some—such a professional person to play for me.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: And then I decided I needed to start a master's degree and Wesleyan was giving a master's degree in music then, so I completed my master's degree just after our first baby was born. Richard Drexler was born in 1956 and then soon, two years later, we had a little girl, that was Darcy, but since I was home then—I was doing my teaching at home, taking care of the two babies but teaching at home and I had quite a few

students, which was great but then, after a while and the kids got a little bit bigger and I could do more teaching, and by then Wesleyan had changed their rules—when I first was married I had to quit my job because two people could not be on the faculty at the same time, but that was later changed and I was hired as an adjunct teacher and this I did for 32 years. During all this time, I was very active in the Amateur Musical Club and that was a music organization citywide that took in students and members as well as the adults through audition. My job in the club was to sometimes meet the artist that the club sponsored. At that time, the amateur musical club concerts were about it as far as having music come to town—

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: To our city, so that was kind of fun. I would sometimes go and meet them at the train—at the old train station or they might arrive themselves some other way but I would contact them and try to take care of any of their needs that they might have. One time, I think it was Robert Merrill, he needed a button sewed on his overcoat, so I did that.

[Uden laughs]

Maxine Drexler: And so I met many prominent artists that way who were concertizing and sometimes we entertained them in our own home. I guess that's where my tale ends although I must say, I've remained active in SAI for all these years since I graduated in 1946 in the alumni chapter and of course been in the alumni grouping at Wesleyan—

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: All these years!

Uden: Yeah. What are some of the changes you've seen at SAI or just at Wesleyan itself since you graduated?

Maxine Drexler: Well, when I was first a faculty wife, that group (we don't have that organization anymore) was an organization of faculty wives.

Uden: Oh!

Maxine Drexler: And we had a president and secretary and all that and we met I think once a month, so all the wives got to know each other—

Uden: Mhmm and did you do any activities or—

Maxine Drexler: Quite well and it was—it was one of those things—teas were held, teas were very prominent then.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: And the president's wife would always have a tea. One president's wife always had nametags and that way she could tell who didn't show up, [laughs] so I don't know whether that was the purpose or whether it was really to help you know somebody else, but in those days, the faculty was so much smaller, we pretty much knew each other.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: So it was kind of a close-knit organization but of course the school was small then too.

Uden: Yeah. What were some of the traditions at Wesleyan?

Maxine Drexler: The traditions?

Uden: The traditions, mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: Well I told you about the little beanie caps—

Uden: Yeah. [laughs]

Maxine Drexler: My freshman year. I really can't think of any real interesting tradition offhand—

Uden: Oh, that's alright.

Maxine Drexler: But in the sororities, it was very common for the fraternities to come serenade—that's another thing that they, that all the sororities and fraternities would prepare choruses or pieces for homecoming—

Uden: Oh!

Maxine Drexler: And they had a contest, every homecoming there was a contest—I forget what the title [Greek Sing] might have been but even Phi Gam's had a chorus because when I was a senior, I think it was, they asked me to come over and help them with their chorus, which was kind of an unusual experience but I did do it and I think I helped them some. They didn't win!

[Both laugh]

Maxine Drexler: But they—it was actually a contest and of course you used to get kind of like points for homecoming projects and in those days they always had a float, they always decorated the houses—

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: And they had this choir—or chorus contest where all the Greeks participated.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: I don't know when that dropped, quite a few years ago though, and even—well they always had a parade. Besides decorating your house, there was the parade.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: I don't know whether they still have a parade or not.

Uden: I don't think so. Where did that run?

Maxine Drexler: Oh, it ran around, not just around Wesleyan, it went—it may have gone downtown, I don't know.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: But that was another thing—every group made a float and even groups other than Greek groups. I think there sometimes was an organization, I forget what they called it, but non-Greek, that's what it was—but they even would make a float and the floats were graded like a contest just as the house decorations were graded. So we had really three contests at homecoming and that involved the college kids, in a sense, a lot more. It seems to me it did. There was always a dance too—

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: A homecoming dance. I think you still have that don't you?

Uden: Yeah and—

Maxine Drexler: I don't know whether it's big but—

Uden: No.

Maxine Drexler: It was then. But, let's see what else... [Note from Maxine Drexler April 9, 2010: Another thing regarding those early Homecomings at IWU was that a girl from each group (independents and sororities) voted and chose their queen representative. It was "special" to be chosen and Wesleyan paid for portraits taken by a professional photographer. They were large and wood-framed and the prominent department store—Roland's—on the square had the queen portraits displayed in the front display windows so town people could see them. It was a fun and nice experience to be in the Queens Court and then they were presented at the Homecoming Dance—and where the girl who was chosen as Queen was presented (announced). My Senior Homecoming was fun for me to be representing SAI as a Queen candidate.]

Uden: You mentioned the amateur music club and SAI, were there any other student organizations that you were a part of?

Maxine Drexler: Yes, and I can't recall the names of them but they were scholastic.

Uden: Okay.

Maxine Drexler: I was in the sophomore one and then the senior one was—oh dear, I don't remember their names—but one of them, they came to your home and got you up about 3 o'clock in the morning and [laughs] it was an unusual initiation service, you know—

Uden: Uh-huh.

Maxine Drexler: Induction but those were actually school things and I guess it depended on grades.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: I believe it did. Oh, I should remember those, the names. Isn't that—that's kind of terrible but I remember—

Uden: Well, that's okay.

Maxine Drexler: The events.

Uden: It's been a while too.

[Both laugh]

Maxine Drexler: Yes it has.

Uden: Very interesting. Did either of you take part in any athletics while you were there or--?

Maxine Drexler: No—oh, here's another thing that's kind of interesting—I had had since childhood my—when I went to first grade they—I had what they call, I think, now rheumatic fever or back then that's the name, now I don't know what they call it. But later on, when I started Wesleyan, they give you a physical exam and this doctor heard a heart murmur, which I guess I've had all my life, but that meant I couldn't swim in the Wesleyan pool!

Uden: Mmm.

Maxine Drexler: And this was the old pool that doesn't exist anymore. [laughs]

Uden: Yeah. Would that be in the building that's the Hansen Center now?

Maxine Drexler: Yes.

Uden: Okay.

Maxine Drexler: It's underneath where the bookstore is.

Uden: Yeah.

[Both laugh]

Maxine Drexler: So Ms. Niehaus who was head of women's athletics decided I should have an hour of rest, what they call rest gym, which I always thought was very dumb because of my heart, I thought this was really peculiar because I would get up in the morning, walk this walk, hike a mile or two, to Wesleyan, lie down on a cot for my hour of rest gym.

[Uden laughs]

Maxine Drexler: Sometimes I made that walk twice a day maybe three times a day, which was a good walk, you know.

Uden: Oh yeah.

Maxine Drexler: I got plenty of exercise but then three weeks before graduation, a note came along that I couldn't graduate, and it turns out it was because I hadn't passed the swimming test.

Uden: Oh no.

Maxine Drexler: And I said, "Well, if you'll let me in the Wesleyan swimming pool, I will pass the test," because I swam everywhere else.

Uden: Uh-huh.

Maxine Drexler: I mean it's just silly things like that—

Uden: Oh, yeah.

Maxine Drexler: That you remember but—

Uden: Yeah. What were the course requirements like then? I know in the music department now, it's—you have to take very many specific classes and there are all the general education requirements and all of that, did that all exist back when you were a student?

Maxine Drexler: Well, I was working for a bachelor of music education. I thought I wanted to teach music, public school music.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: And I did do my semester of practice teaching and I enjoyed it but it also told me that wasn't what I wanted in music.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: So I was fortunate in that they hired me the very next year after I graduated and so that took care of that. I was teaching one-on-one, you know, voice privately and that's what I've done all these years but as far as my coursework, I took—I didn't take very much that was in the liberal arts section. I had English—that was a requirement—oh dear I don't remember much more. I had an elective once that I—that was a home economics course. [laughs]

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: Just—that was kind of a fun thing but it did have credit to it so—

Uden: Oh yeah.

Maxine Drexler: My work was mostly in the music school but I did have to take an English course or two.

Uden: Mhmm, makes sense. What was it like still—you said you still lived at home during your time as a student, did your relationship with your family change at or all or was that a challenge at times?

Maxine Drexler: Well at that time, my sister—let's see, my sister might have still been living at home—my brother was not at home anymore. My sister wasn't that into music, so it was a good thing I didn't do much practicing at home because she didn't go for that [laughs] too much but she soon got married too so the only inconvenience was that we did a lot of formalwear like the choir always had a long dress.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: And since we didn't have a car that meant I either had to drag the dress out somewhere and change there or hop on the bus in a long dress and I disliked that very much.

Uden: Yeah.

[Both laugh]

Maxine Drexler: But that's just the way it was, you know.

Uden: Mhmm. Yeah.

Maxine Drexler: You learn to live with it I guess.

Uden: Yeah. During your time on faculty, do you have any memories of particular people that you worked with that stand out or meant a lot to you as far as friendships and everything?

Maxine Drexler: Well, I have to say that I don't—I'm not in correspondence very much with any students that I had except that on this Facebook business now all these names are coming up that—and they say, “Well I took voice with you...”

Uden: Oh. [laughs]

Maxine Drexler: Some of them I don't remember I'm sorry to say.

Uden: There's so many.

Maxine Drexler: You know.

Uden: Yeah.

Maxine Drexler: But I've had the privilege of being in touch with some of the high school students that I had. After Rick was born I did teaching at home and I always had a nice class of students and for the last year or so, I've been having emails and all that contact with a couple of my high school students and that's very rewarding.

Uden: Yeah.

Maxine Drexler: Dwight has contact with some of his too that he really enjoys.

Uden: Mhmm. What do you think of the way that everyone—it seems as though students are very connected now with all the Facebook and emails and that, what was social life like without those things and making plans and things like that?

Maxine Drexler: Well, Wesleyan was small then and you knew a lot more of the students and especially with all these—like the homecoming events that brought everybody together.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: So I think it was—what has sort of given Wesleyan a foundation. It is different now but that's the way it started and I think that gave it a good start.

Uden: Yeah, absolutely. Did you ever get to travel at all with any of the ensembles or—?

Maxine Drexler: Oh, he didn't tell you about taking students to Europe.

Uden: He mentioned it a little bit but—can you tell me about it?

Maxine Drexler: Well he took students—how many times did you take students? Dwight, how many times did you take students to Europe? I went once. How many times did you take students to Europe? Three times?

Drexler: Three times.

Maxine Drexler: Yes. He took three different groups.

Drexler: I made ten trips.

Uden: Wow.

Maxine Drexler: And I went on one of them with students plus our personal trips.

Uden: Uh-huh.

Maxine Drexler: That was fun. And we since—what'd he say, ten trips?—we've been back. Our first trip though was when our children were young, Darcy was eleven and Richard was thirteen and Dwight had a sabbatical leave, so we made plans to just go to Europe and that was the era of the \$5 a day book and we lived on \$5 a day per person in Europe!!

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: Believe it or not that sounds—but he worked at it very well. Dwight studied places to go and we needed a car anyway, so we bought a car when we first got over there and just drove all over Europe and with no reservation, not even the first night did we have a reservation, and that was kind of scary.

Drexler: Well, we had one but it didn't work out.

Maxine Drexler: Yeah, we had one but it didn't work.

[Uden laughs]

Maxine Drexler: That was kind of scary sometimes.

Uden: Yeah.

Maxine Drexler: The first few nights and maybe the first, yeah the first few nights were kind of hard. I mean we found places but—he may want to tell you more about that if you want to hear it, but it—there was some question about whether we should take children, kids that young out of school for a whole semester. Darcy's teacher kind of gave her a hard time and—but Rick's didn't. [Clears throat] I've got to get a drink.

Uden: Okay!

Maxine Drexler: I don't talk this much.

[Maxine Drexler and Uden laugh]

[Short pause]

[Dog growls and barks]

Drexler: No, no!

Maxine Drexler: —made plans to, for what he wanted to see and we started up in Holland and came on down through Germany and went to Austria, right?

Drexler: Pardon me?

Maxine Drexler: Oh, well he can't hear me. We started up in Holland and came on down through Germany and to Austria.

Drexler: Yeah, we picked up the car in Amsterdam.

[dog barks]

Maxine Drexler: Hey, hey!

Drexler: And we, well first of all, we landed in—

Maxine Drexler: Luxembourg.

Drexler: Yeah, we landed in Luxembourg and took the train to Paris and stayed there a week and then we took the train to Amsterdam and stayed there a week and picked up our car. Then we started—we went from Amsterdam to Delft to the—

Maxine Drexler: The Hague.

Drexler: Huh?

Maxine Drexler: The Hague.

Drexler: The Hague and then the place where the Philips, the electric place is, and we went to Germany, the Hague, and down the Rhine and then we went to Stuttgart and then we went to Munich and then we went to Vienna I guess. We stayed in Vienna a month.

Uden: Oh wonderful.

Maxine Drexler: Yeah, it was.

Drexler: And I've been to Vienna about 13 or 14 weeks altogether, you know, because I—when I took trips, we were gone for four weeks or three to four weeks. I'd always be two weeks in Vienna with the students.

Maxine Drexler: Then we went on down—

Drexler: Then we went into Yugoslavia and that was, that was—

Maxine Drexler: Traveled down the Dalmatian coast.

Uden: Mhmm.

Maxine Drexler: And we spent several weeks there.

Drexler: Then we came back and—

Maxine Drexler: Put the car on the boat and went across to Italy.

Drexler: We took the boat, ferry to Italy and drove up through Switzerland and France and Germany and then flew back home.

Maxine Drexler: Well we had to put the car, take the car up, and send it off. [laughs]

Drexler: We took the car to Antwerp and then—

Maxine Drexler: That was the big trip, you know, because that was a whole semester we were gone but then he took students three times. I got to go on one and that was fun. And then we have been back to London and to Vienna, of course. He and Susan Brandon played in Vienna.

Drexler: Well—

Maxine Drexler: We went to Yugoslavia twice.

Drexler: After—yeah—

Maxine Drexler: And Spain.

Drexler: After I retired, we took a couple of winter trips to Spain.

Uden: Mhmm.

Drexler: And—

Maxine Drexler: Portugal.

Drexler: And at one time, it would be in the early '80s I guess, well I figured we could go to Europe for—we would go for two, three, or four weeks and spend less money than if we would drive to Florida and spend—and then prices went up so high in Europe because that was no longer—but well the first time I took students, it cost them I think around \$750 for it would be—

Maxine Drexler: Two weeks

Drexler: Two or three weeks and that covered money for—I give them \$5 a day out of that for their food—and paid for a lot of concerts. It was cheap.

Maxine Drexler: And the lodging.

Drexler: And yeah, lodging. And we—I took the family and it was—it cost us 15—

Maxine Drexler: Well, it was basically \$5 a day.

Drexler: Yeah.

Maxine Drexler: But that didn't include concerts and so in Vienna we went to 23 operas!

Uden: Wow!

Maxine Drexler: That's a lot of opera.

[Uden laughs]

Maxine Drexler: Our son Rick said he had enough opera for a lifetime.

[Uden and Maxine Drexler laugh]

Drexler: But we would get standing room tickets or those “in-balcony” tickets.

Uden: Mhmm.

Drexler: Now I liked it because you only see half the stage but I could look over and see the whole orchestra.

Uden: Yeah. [laughs]

Drexler: And—

Uden: Sounds great. Hmm, I'm trying to think of anything else that I wanted to ask. I think you guys have covered most of it. Do you have anything that you wanted to add at all or—?

Drexler: What?

Maxine Drexler: I've talked enough.

Uden: Okay.

Maxine Drexler: Do you want to add anything?

Drexler: Oh, I might say the organization was much—

[Dog growling]

Maxine Drexler: Shhhh.

Drexler: Less rigorous than now.

Uden: Mhmm.

Drexler: There was a university senate and I was on that because when I—this was when I came back from the army, I was head of the department, the piano department, so I was part of the university senate and we would meet Sunday evenings over at the President's house and it was—getting faculty—Dr. Neumeyer was head of the music department, he had a file of people that he knew and if there was a vacancy he would just send, make a few telephone calls and we would—none of this national search.

Uden: Mhmm.

Drexler: And things were—I got—for a long time, the university didn't give very many sabbaticals because they didn't have much money but I got an early sabbatical and I had to make a, you know, proposal, so my proposal was to study contemporary performance practice in Europe and that meant go to concerts and—

[Uden and Maxine Drexler laugh]

Uden: Yeah, that's not a bad thing to study.

Drexler: And I also went to a historical spot. In Vienna, they had a visitors' book with places with shields, they'd know somebody lived here, somebody did that and they had a couple of hundred of those. Well over the few, several trips there, I went to practically all of them and I played on pianos that Beethoven played on, that Schubert played on, that Hyden played on and I visited places where Bruckner—I mean, you know, that sort of thing, but I don't think you could get by with that proposal now but it was, for me, that first year over which was my first time in Europe, was a remarkable broadening, I mean I really feel I grew a lot as a musician and—

Uden: Mhmm.

Drexler: And a teacher and so on.

Uden: Great, thanks for telling me about that.

Maxine Drexler: Did you mention that you spent your army—

Drexler: Hmm?

Maxine Drexler: Did you mention that you spent your army time in Africa—South Africa? Did he say that?

Uden: A little bit.

Maxine Drexler: Okay. Well, I didn't know.

Uden: Did you want to tell us more about your time in the army?

Drexler: Oh, well I knew that I was going to have to go and I didn't want to—and I knew also that with my background I would be probably classified as a chaplain's assistant or something.

Uden: Mhmm.

Drexler: And I didn't want to spend my army career setting up chairs for chapel services and so on and I also didn't want to go with it because I was older at the time, you see I was almost thirty. I didn't want to go as a soldier, I mean as a foot soldier, so I'd always been interested in science and—but my college career had been predominantly music, so I wrote to the commander of the meteorology school at Chanute Field and set up a visit. This was early, this was in '41 and we were just in the war, so I went over and, like applying for a job, and he said, "Oh," he said, "I'd sure want you to be in a school," so I said, well this is just before Christmas, I said, "I can sign up today but I've got a hundred and something, hundred and fifty students in my, or a hundred, a lot of students that I've got in a class which will finish in the end of January and I can—have to give them grades and so on." He said, "Go back and finish the semester and then sign up." So I came back and did that but during that time, the army changed. At that time you could enlist and say where you wanted to go, at that time they said, "No, you go through this thing." So I went up to a campground in Rockford and had this classification and I had this, he was an Oriental but he was a first lieutenant, yeah a second lieutenant. I think he'd been in the army just a couple of weeks, so he said, "Well," he says, "with your background you ought to be chaplain's assistant." I said, "I don't want to be." And I had gotten a letter from this fella saying that I was, would be good. He says, "But I don't dare go against the major." So I stayed two or three days up in Camp Grant. They'd come in by the carload, they'd come in the barracks, they'd go through the routine, and the next day they're gone, then a new—and I'm sitting here all by myself. Finally, I got orders to go with, and there were three carloads of us went...railroad cars...went out of Rockford to California and at Sacramento we went on one of the fast trains then or challengers. At Sacramento they put on a carload of Japanese Americans that were going to a detainment camp and he switched us with them to Southern California and April 1, 1942 we got off the train. There was one tree and the rest of them was just barren and that was Camp Taft, that was—and we stayed in tents and my recruit or indoctrination was for two weeks in tents. Then I was—we were given tests and I got into the weather station there, so I stayed there for several weeks and then I got a order to go to, a detachment of thirteen of us, to go to [inaudible] and I was the alternate so I remember the night before we went out on the town and I was so careful of the others so that I would—so I stayed in and then I was finally sent to New Jersey to go to India. So I took a train from California here to my folks and had a couple weeks leave and then I went to the—we went to Atlantic City and

they had taken over the hotels but the same thing happened. These group of recruits come in and they'd go out in a day or so and I didn't have any orders, so finally one morning—well I guess I'd get a leave and I'd just go out around the town all day and come back—so after a couple of days of that, I was out on the town and the MV's picked me up, took me back, orders had come in to go to India. And I hadn't taken my test so they took me out to the sand dunes and I spent the afternoon shooting every kind of gun and whatnot and then got on a ship and I was on the boat 51 days. We went from Atlantic City, we went on the Mauretania which was a Cunard Line refitted.

Uden: Mhmm.

Drexler: There were, I forget, 7,000 troops or so. We sailed without escort because we were faster but that was a month of the most sinkings. We had a zigzag course outlined for us because forty-five seconds or something or certain amount of time was the amount of time that it would take for a torpedo to come from the sub when they got as close as they could get, and so we would be changed course. Anyway, we went to the island of Haiti and then went to Rio, were in harbor a couple of days, a day or so. Then we went to Cape Town and the night, the day that we went into Cape Town and landed, subs sank three freighters outside there so they had a lot of survivors in town and a number of them were Australians. So I got twelve in Cape Town leave and I had wonderful times with Australians and some Scottish. I remember we were in a nightclub and we had some Scottish with their kilts and of course the question was, "Do you have anything underneath the kilt?" And they—this one guy said, "Hell no!"

[Drexler and Uden laugh]

Drexler: I mean it was, it was, you know, a really fine evening. Then we went up to the island of Madagascar and in the harbor and there were a bunch of sunken ships there and then they went up to Ceylon and transhipped to another boat, went up to Bombay and got another and went up to Karachi and got off and we were there for a few days. Then I got on a train, went across India clear up to—just near Kashmir and down and landed in [inaudible] countryside and I was in seven bases, air bases, and I was a staff sergeant so I set up three new weather stations and went, moved over. And I had to fly to The Hump a couple times to see what I was forecasting so I went to China and back.

Uden: Mhmm.

Drexler: And I was there for two and a half years almost, then came home. Well that was interesting—

Uden: Yeah.

Drexler: Interlude to my academic—

Uden: That's very interesting. Thank you. Okay, well anything else?

Maxine: I think that's quite a bit.

Uden: I think that's quite a bit, yes. Thank you so much.

Drexler: Well, what's your last name Amy? Uden, U-D-E-N.