Kim Sawyer: This is Kim Sawyer conducting an oral history interview with Siva Chambers on April 25th, 2001 in the Special Collections Library at Texas Tech. It is 9:30 in the morning. Mrs. Chambers could you begin by talking a little bit about your early life? When and where you were born and where you grew up.

Siva Chambers: When I was born, I was born in the 8th of April 1936 in Bangkok, Thailand. I think World War came when I was about eight years old. I remember skating when one of the teachers said I think the Japanese came up to the railroad junction in the south in Mi Lai in the southern part of Thailand. Said oh good, you know. Then my parents came to pick me up at school. I didn’t know why. My father said we’re going to have to move out in the country. I said oh, good. It would be a new school. So, we had to move out in the country because school closed down. The main part of the school I went to was called Rah Chi Nese School. It was the south Rah Chi Ne, there are two of them. We did not go to that school because it was a long way from where we moved to. But I went to school all through the war with tutoring. Addition to it, it was a lot more work than normal school. Then after the war’s over I went back to my old school and finished that, went into teaching college. I finished early because of during the war, you know when you came back you have to take exams for placement because some of them didn’t go to school. SO, my classmate from
kindergarten up, some did not get to go to school because they moved somewhere there’s
no school. I was fortunate to have that much schooling. So, I passed a few classes so I
finished school very early. I went to England a couple years to learn English and then I
came back to Thailand in 1959, end of ’59. I was going to teach except it paid so little.

KS: It still does.

SC: Still does, ridiculous. So, I got a job at a new motel, the Air One Hotel.

That one was the cautious place at that time. It paid real well.

KS: I’m curious during World War II; do you recall an American presence?

What about bombing? Could you talk a little bit about that?

SC: Yes. Oh, the bombing. Well, my father imagined himself an engineer so he
built a bomb shelter, which is half of it under water. I mean it’s surrounded by ponds and
about nine feet of sand about it and we have a back gate that our neighbors could come
in. I remember my hedgers about why when I heard the siren went, my sister would drag
a blanket, she’s two years younger than I am and I would take two pillows and we would
run like mad going to the shelter. My grandmother, she was such a wise lady. She was
the one that, there was a section of it was we had everything we could hold out for at least
two, three days, food, water, candles, medicine. My father would go to the dockers place
with his flashlight looking at the map. He said I think they’re going to bomb it here. I
am still reacting if I was not expecting a siren to go off, I just think of that time. And
bombing they bombed so close to our house. I would say not half a kilometer from our
house, they bombed. Fortunately it went in to a big sand pile an incendiary stop and it
didn’t go off. But there’s shrapnel of some kind from the bomb that went through our top
story house. It’s still there I think.

KS: Was this in response to the Japanese presence?

SC: Yes, right. I believe this is very funny because we have to be friendly to the
Japanese, but there’s some serious thing that’s not a very good ting going on. Like there
a lot of stealing stuff from the Japanese and destroying them like their uniform. I’ve seen
those, but we were sworn not to say anything and my father made sure that we knew what
was going on. We were very polite to the Japanese and we had very big farm. My father
had also the thing.

KS: What kinds of things did he grow?
SC: Like chicken, ducks, geese, pigs and pigeons, rabbits and guineas and all what. He always you know sent presents to the Colonel who rent my grandmother’s house. The Japanese were a very good friend. But I remember the Colonel and this is always very touching, even when I was little I remember he came to he house to visit my father. We had dinner and there was a young Lieutenant who was his aid. My brother, who at that time, was about a year old and he was so cute. And this Lieutenant pulled out a little toy, cloth doll from his pocket and let my brother play with it. What he said was that was his son’s that he left. I remember I was sad. I remember that. I always wanted to know what happened to him. But I knew the Colonel committed suicide when the war ended. I also remember the bombing. Very fortunately, you know in Bangkok it’s full of Buddhist temples. Rarely they hit them. We did not get mad at the allies at all because we knew that some of our people said words where it’s wrong. Yeah. We knew what’s going on even when we were children.

KS: So, there was no animosity towards the Americans or anybody else?
SC: Oh, no. No. There’s a lot of thing that I thought about it and I don’t know how it could happen. You know for a young person to know about prostitution. I don’t know the function of it at that time, but I know. They were the ones that could sneak things in and out of the camp like medicine. That was a program of that going on. Well, I just listened to what grown ups say.

KS: So, there was a lot of discussion of what was going on interhousehold?
SC: Yes. In our house. WE knew what’s going on. Even I was taught how to use a small pistol.

KS: How old were you?
SC: I was nine, eight or nine. But the reason is this; my mother would not touch a gun. My father said you are it. In case something happens you are to use it.

KS: Were you the oldest child?
SC: Yes. I’m the oldest child and my sister, who is very sweet girl, would just see a gun and just go out screaming. But my little brother’s too young and I was supposed to be the one to take care of things.

KS: Did that ever scare you?
SC: No. You know when you are that age oh, anything is fun. SO, bent our pot coconut, tin cans or whatever, but I would never kill a bird or anything living. I have never done that, but I was very good shooter. I remember it was little Browning, tiny, little one. My father put it at a certain place and I knew it’s harmful so we never fool with it. I never had to use it, but I knew how to use it.

KS: What did he say in case, who was this for?

SC: The Japanese. In case, the Japanese. The survival, the Thai had to live with survival, fighting with everybody for along time. You learn, I don’t think I can kill anything, but when it came to protecting my mother, my grandmother I would. If it drove to that. But after the war, when the war ended I remember I was in fourth grade going to fifth grade. Then we had assembly and the teacher said we didn’t know, it was in July wasn’t it?

KS: I think so.

SC: Right. The teacher said did you know we had some to do that day special so we were going to do it. Oh, almost about 11:00 or 10:00 we had a little recess so we were out on the back of the school. There’s a huge rice field. Oh, another thing that was funny was that we used to get those leaflet from the ally would drop a leaflet we went wild. Used to we’d just go and grab it.

KS: Do you recall what they said?

SC: All sorts of thing. I don’t remember much exact word, but it was always good news this and thing. I tried to find them when I went home. Mother said I don’t know what happened to them. Wouldn’t it be nice to have one of those, but anyway I remember when we were told the war had ended. I remember everyone just went wild. Mother said now we can go home. Then we went home, we went back home and a lot of things. We went through Bangkok we’ve seen bombed buildings and things like that. Oh, we’re going to build a new one, you know stuff like that. There’s nothing that I could see now that would remind me of war things like that. But we always had wonderful food. Never the car across was motorcade.

KS: What kind of car did you have, did your family have? Do you remember?

SC: Ford. We had a Ford. Soft top. It was red.

KS: Was that common for families to own cars at that time?
SC: When you see a car you know who owns it, let’s put it that way. Not that many cars, but the gasoline we didn’t have any so we just didn’t use it. But we had cyclo the tricycle thing and tricycle. But mostly the cyclo, the tricycle. We went to school on that, but then I went into the boarding school after war.

KS: Could you talk a little bit about your experiences at school? What subjects you studied. Were boys and girls schooled together?

SC: No. It’s an all girl school. Boy can stay until fourth grade and they’re out. I liked it. It’s very wonderful. The principal was the King’s aunt, so our manor had to be very proper, extremely proper. In each class we had between 20. Each grade we have four groups and the most would be in the class would be 20 to 25 students. We had one homeroom teacher and each subject would be taught by different teachers. Like math, language, like Thai language, English, art and some other things. Each of them have their own teacher to teach and it is fun, because we know each other from kindergarten up to. I still remember my number. You know you have your number. Unfortunately, the only record I have of my birth certificate is that at school and it’s wrong of course, because the place where they kept records got bombed. So, I don’t know. But anyway it’s really a wonderful school. We have about not counting the kindergarteners 1,200. Kind of regular you know. Regular. I remember we had one girl who’s Christian and two Muslims and the rest are Buddhists. But we did we didn’t have any fight or anything. We like them but they are excused when we have ceremony every Friday afternoon. Every Thursday, first Thursday of the month we have a ceremony, a special one to honor our teacher every Thursday of the month. In each class, from first grade up one girl would be select to be head girl an assistant you know up to the high. Each would be given a pin. I still have mine, up until 10th grade. Then the 11th and 12th grade they get a different color pin and those would be our big sister who keep eyes on us. We can tell them our problem. They can straighten you out too, if you’re naughty or do something you shouldn’t and this teacher didn’t see it. It is good. We never had a problem. On the first Thursday of the month when we honor our teachers, would be the day awards of different thing would be given out, like poetry if you’ve done something good or depends on what you did in the class. I thought it was so much fun. I really like that.
KS: Now, was your sister in school with you at the same time?

SC: Yes. Both of my sisters. We all went to the same school. Even now you know I see my sisters friend. I used to play because I was so young in my class, so I went to my sisters class to play a different time. The boys, I remember the boys because there’s so few of them. We were up to fourth grade together and they went separately to different plan. This year I found out one of my classmate who was very quiet and we used to kind of push him around a lot he became a General, Two Star General. So, I guess we don’t push him around anymore. No, he’s still very nice. He was very helpful when I call and ask him to do something. He just went to it. It just always amazed me to see my classmates who became something. My college too. My sister found a photograph of a friend of mine doing things and the girl next to me, I call big sister because she’s a bit older. Her cousin now is our present prime minister. I know, it’s amazing. She’s been a teacher all her life also they came from very wealthy family. They work, all of them. WE worked. I’m glad she did, because she really didn’t need the money and she lived up country in Chi Nois. That was always good to see old friends. The problem was that you don’t have enough time to go around eating everything. Know where they found in town everybody came calling at the house or take us out or something. Every time I go home, I gain something like eight kilos. The Taiwan eat. They may not have anything else in the world. First thing, have you eaten? That’s the first greeting. You didn’t say how are you or something. Say have you eaten? If you come to my mothers house, that’s the same thing. My mother will look at you and say have you eaten? It doesn’t matter what time of the day. Every Sunday I can call home now, some of my friend will be hanging around there eating dinner. My sister’s friends. My mother is the only mother left of all my friends and my sister’s friends. The only mother left.

KS: What kind of food do you remember eating as a child? Did you do a lot of cooking as a child?

SC: I didn’t.

KS: You didn’t. You had a cook?

SC: We had wonderful cooks through my life. I never cooked. I don’t know how to cook Thai food until I was about 50 years old. My mother had a wonderful cook.
She has one now, a super cook. Mother is a very good cook herself and grandmother. You see, we have both grandmothers living with us until my grandmother, my father’s mother died when I was about 14.

KS: What did you father do?

SC: He has business. He left the government working as an engineer and then he had his export, import/export company and he sold it. Then he didn’t do anything. He just lived. Mother was a teacher, but she didn’t teach after she got married. She just took care of all of us. I have two sisters and three brothers. She adopted a few more. Mother loved children. She couldn’t stand seeing a girl duffer. I have one adopted sister now at home. She was born, she had cerebral palsy. So, she went to school. She went to college, finished college, but she doesn’t work. Mother doesn’t want her to have to work. I think she should. She doesn’t. Just hang around the house doing bits and pieces, but her hand shakes so badly. Nothing wrong with her thinking. This intelligent girl. It’s a good kind of life over there. It’s a bit hectic now. We don’t really know much about the outside world like the economy because we did not invest like madly like those crazy people. So, we didn’t lose anything, which is good. But I think the most important thing to keep everybody going in harmony because of being a bunch of Buddhists. They just lived each day and do what we have to do. Not to worry too much about things that’s beyond their doing. I should really follow my mother. She doesn’t worry about anything. I remember one time when they had a bomb on tow side actually and I remember discussion was going on. But mother said our house is not damage, so we just repair the road and go on. They’ll come and take care of it. They didn’t come and take care of it until a lot later. Fortunately, they didn’t go off. It was stuck in the sand. They said that’s the best thing that ever happened. It took part of the road. But my mother just did not worry about it and she didn’t see any point in worrying about it. I was afraid you know. After when I came back form England I worked for awhile and then knew Tom and then kind of volunteer worked for him. Hung around with him and I had a chance to get a job working for World Caper service. I was getting antsy to move on. So, the director said how would you like to go and work in Cambodia? I said aha, that’s good. So, I can learn Cambodian. My grandmother was Morwin and spoke Morwin in the family a lot and the language of Morwin and Cambodia are quite similar. Of course, the
Morwin say the Cambodian took our language. I don’t know exactly the truth, but that’s how I got to Cambodia. I work in Sim rab where uncle worked. Uncle told me concentrate and I go tot meet Henri Marshall. He’s the very famous French Archeologist. He was in his 80s and he did a lot of work for Cambodia. He lived there and he extracted and made a lot of improvement on how to. Catalogued it. I’m so sad to see a few bullet holes on the walls of thing they used. I’ve heard the Vietcong really potted. I got to go to a small temple. It’s called—it’s the ladies temple. It’s about 25 kilometer away. You have to walk. I did. I went there and it was beautiful. I think there’s a track now I think you can go in a jeep now I believe. That was a lovely experience working there because, my boss is good. Just let me do anything to the tourists that came and make sure they’re all right. Then after that I can do that. Looking at everything monkeys are still wild, birds. If you’re not careful he’ll come take you hat away. I’m not sure what kind of monkey. Macaab or something there everywhere. I made it clear den before that.

KS: Now, if I could back up jus a minute. You went to teaching college, was that in Thailand?

SC: Yes.

KS: How long was that?

SC: I only took three years.

KS: Then after that you went to England.

SC: I could teach primary school. I can’t teach kindergarten because I can’t sing.

KS: That’s an important skill in kindergarten.

SC: That’s an important thing. Right. They’re very, very serious about that. I can’t sing so I don’t teach them. I really anted to teach because the Thai children are really wonderful to teach. They’re very respectful. You don’t even have to yell, just look and they just straighten out as my experience in training. Of course, when you’re in that position the children seem to behave a lot better than when you’re a real teacher. But I have cousins that teach the student worker. The little one, I don’t want to deal with kindergarten because they do cry for mommy. I don’t want to do that.

KS: SO how long were you in England?

SC: I was in England for 2 ½ years.

KS: What were you studying?
SC: No. I wasn’t working. I went to school in Oxford to learn English and whatever was going on in that time.

KS: What time frame was this?

SC: It’s 1957 to late ’59.

KS: Is there anything you remember in particular about your time in England?

SC: Oh, yes. Very much so. I lived with a family and one summer I got to go to take class at Summervale. We went around a lot. My guardian’s daughter and I bike around a lot. Went to Second hand polks and that’s the thing. We had a grand time. Flowers so beautiful. We spent a lot of time trying to get to go to something. Free musical and things like that. You can do it all year practically. The beautiful buildings and history. You could not walk down the street without I don’t know anything about it. Let’s go home and somebody would tell you about it. Or Joan would tell me about it. You could not really go very far in a square mile it would take you at least two years to learn all about it. Really it’s amazing. You don’t know you’re having tea and then they said did you know that Shakespeare show something going on behind that? No. How would I know? Several wonderful people tat you didn’t know how famous they were when you were 20, you know 21. I just don’t know. I was so studious that they were wondering if something’s wrong with me. 6:00 I had to be home. Why didn’t you go out? I said uh-uh. I just cannot do it here. I was so weird. It just a habit that you just never do that. I never date anybody, that’s not done.

KS: That wasn’t done back home.

SC: Right. I wouldn’t do it here. You know I was too busy studying because I was afraid of failing. I did pretty good. I just loved to go to visit different homes, different gardens and sometimes it is so reasonable to just get on a train to go and then walk to see Roman villas. Fortunately Joan was a very good friend. She loved to do that and the Secretary of the college very good friend. She had a little car named mar so she would drive around when we have time to go places. Oh, it was wonderful. Even the colleges itself in Oxford you would like to go and like. Now, it’s closed up you have to get special permission to go into different places. It’s not done in those days. We went into every chapel, Joan and I. We just went in because there’s some brass rubbing we want to do. We just tear apart and they’re very nice they let us do it. But now.
KS: It’s no the same is it?

SC: No. It’s no the same. I went back two years ago. I went back, I was disappointed. There’s so many buildings, I guess you can’t go back past the house where I used to live. I don’t know who lived there anymore. They’ve built something ugly, you know tings like that.

KS: How did your family feel about you going to England for a couple of years?

SC: My father was very much for it because I had a cousin who went. One went to Christ’s Church and I’m trying to think of the college. Then he went there he took me to see where his room was. It was nice. It was nice then at that time. There were women’s colleges like Summerville, Subhilder, Lady Margaret’s, Saint Ann’s, all womens. They were separate. I don’t know, I like all those school. No mess around with boys. We’re not interested in the same thing. But things have changed tremendously. I don’t know it’s for the better. Educationally I think we have better education in those days. Because once you get to 10th grade you can choose another language. Kindergarten up to 10th grade, English.

KS: So you studied English as a child?

SC: Since kindergarten. But once you get to 10th grade you start taking French, Italian or any other language. I don’t know now what’s going on, but I probably no more. To be able to speak a language you should learn that don’t hear anybody speaking your language so you get used to it. Used to speak English but not anymore. After living here for 20 years hanging about Texas and Oklahoma, 40 years kind of ruins you a little bit. It was kind of fun in Cambodia too. I really learned a lot of the history. It just amazed me to see how things are done. I went everywhere that I could possibly go as the person working there and the guides were very good.

KS: So, this was when you were with the World Travel Service and this is a tourism?

SC: World Travel Service is still functioning very well. The same director. It belonged to one family. He’s the first person. This man as very interested. He was a student here during the war and was sent back trained and sent back to work in Thailand. He never told me exactly how he go there, but there’s a book about him that I read. I said so, why don’t you ever talk about it? He said, I don’t.
KS: What was his name?

SC: His name was Gusap. ______. This is a very famous family. His youngest brother was Prime Minister. They’re very famous. His father was the founder of Deboys School, that’s our opposite. Our opposition in school Deboys. Took after eat, because they weren’t any ___. Wonderful you could call them. But he was sent back with a lot of other Thai people back to Thailand. These are the guys that work and send words to the Americans to the allies and where to bomb and how to do these and everything. As a reward I believe they were allowed to come back and finish their schooling. I think he went to Penn State. That’s also very important, there’s a book about it.

KS: SO, in Cambodia you mentioned you did a lot of traveling. You mentioned the archeologist Henri Marshall; did you get a chance to work with him?

SC: No. I just got to talk to him, I got to visit his house and he showed me the work that they were doing. But I just went everywhere I was allowed or not allowed to go, you know. If you know somebody you can always sneak in some place. It was wonderful to see the different places. If you ever get to go to Pyramids or something, you wonder how on earth, the step is that wide. I found out why. You see the King when he goes out he doesn’t walk up. He didn’t walk up at all. He got carried up and the people who carried him had to go sideways. You see so it was wide enough because I tripped up and down that way I have to wonder people that’s how he walked up. You don’t walk that way because the width is not that big. It’s about that big.

KS: So you would lead tour groups?

SC: No. I just make sure that they have the tour, they have the guide. I would just make sure they would get what they want, a room.

KS: Was this in the late 50s?

SC: 60’s.

KS: How was the relationship between Thailand and Cambodia during the time you were there?

SC: Oh, bad. They severed diplomatic relations.

KS: Were you ever worried about yourself being there during that time?

SC: No. Well, Cambodia had been a colonial kind of place. And there’s a lot of corruption. Things were not done straight forward, as you would like it to be. The
telephone at the airport was still cranked. You know you have to crank it? There were
needing tourists very badly. Our company had established a strong hold there. We have
communication with the governor and all that. My boss made sure that. I was the only one,
the only girl they ever sent out anywhere. We weren’t worried at all. I knew of
something happened my boss would get me out of there. We did really well for the
company and for the tourists.

KS: Where were the tourists primarily from?

SC: From the United States, from Australia, and England. Wonderful people and
from Europe. Mostly Americans and there were two ladies I remember from Oklahoma
City wanted to go to ___. That took a lot of doing to get them there, to get a jeep. I said
it’s going to be a rough trip, but they both came, they went. They were I believe the only
two persons that went.

KS: What about American military presence?

SC: There wasn’t any at that time. There was nothing of American presence
apart from tourists in Ango WaLaw. Not one. I don’t know. There were, I believe the
aid USIS, USOM and people like that in Nom Pien. I’m not sure about a military thing.
I don’t even know about those people. I got to know a few of them that were part of
USOM. Like Gaylord Walker, Gaylord and Joann Walker, they were very important in
our life. Joann used to fly Tom around. She’s a pilot and played tennis. Gaylord and
Joann had scrounged up some food, clothing and also some stuff to help our Lon Pact
crew because we live in the boonies. Several other people that had helped up after Clint
and I got married in ’61 he came to pick me up and we drove. There wasn’t any sign of
war yet. I did not even think about it or know about it or pay attention to it.

KS: Was it in the newspaper?

SC: I’m sure it was something brewing going on, but you know we just too busy
to think about it. But then it hit me once we got to Phenom Pien, Clint and I had to drive,
take medicines and supplies up to Gartier, which we have a team up there. The reason
Clint got sent to Lom Pin because Tom asked him and said Clint are you ready to go to
work? I’ve got just that place for you, ready to go to work. When he said that watch it,
you’ve got to learn. Clint said, oh gosh yes. I’m ready to go to work. So, he went there
and the only thing he found was a little hut and a lot of marking of the area where the
hospital might be. Jungle, nothing significant around and he said yep, I’m ready to go to
work. So, he got George Henning to draw up a plan, a young man, another volunteer and
Ralph. I don’t know if Ralph did anything, but George did draw up the plan and tried to
figure how much it costs and all that kind of stuff. Then George and Ralph left to go
back to the United States. So, on our team there was a wonderful lady named Dodie
Stones. I’m going to go see Dodie. Dodie could do anything, practically. Carpentry—
give shot and Clint was a good carpenter so he always used those doting. When I got
there I look at the place and I just said well, we’ve go t lot of work to do, so we did. Clint
being from Oklahoma he would not bribe anybody and he just hung on. He had to go
miles to get his stuff he would. Oh, it was a rough road you know? I think he still
missed those rough roads. Every trip he’d go he would get lost on a dirt road, at least
once. There’s a perfectly good road, uh-uh he had to go on a bad road. Bu the road we
traveled it was something. But what really brought to me about the war was when we
were coming up from Pineom Tien taking another doctor Vern Chaney; he was a big guy
next to Tom. After Tom died Vern Chaney had taken over. Somebody said Prin you
better take a gun with you and Prin said Oh, no. I have my pocketknife, he wouldn’t take
the gun. I said why? He said oh, well you know you might run into some difficulty. No.
He said we have medicine so we got to Gra Che without any incident. We saw a house
fell down in a person. They were moving a house, I mean the whole house. People just
really carrying it. So, the man cock his head and we were just passing so we all stopped.
These two doctors ran over there took care of them and took off. That’s the first time
I’ve seen things in action. When we got to Gra Che after that we took some more stuff.
We went to our camp in Lom Pie. It doesn’t seem very long on the map, but it took so
long. We got to a river, we had to wait for the raft to take us across. Clint had done that
several times afterward by coming to get our supply from another town so we don’t have
to pay the local mill extra. It took a lot of work and time; we didn’t have that much time.
We’ve got to get it done because rainy season’s coming, but we did it. Then when they
marked out the buildings and things I start doing the landscape. I had no idea what to d
o, but I thought well, this has got to go. So, one day the boys decided to have a flagpole.
We had about 12 Cambodian young men working with us. So, they decided to take off
and go to find the tallest tree, make a flagpole and then drag it home. That was fun. We
paint the flagpole and planted it. I start planting the seeds. We had vegetable garden, but
that was a lost cause. We were gone to get the supply, when I came back the vegetables
gone. The cow went through tit. Then there’s not much to eat except my vegetables.
That was very annoying.

KS: I’m curious as you mention you were married in 1961, how did you meet
your husband Dr. Chambers? Also how did you become in Medico and Dr. Dolley?
That kind of goes together.

SC: You know I was kind of the volunteer for Tom. Since I met him I forgot
what many years. When he needed something he said Siva do you think you can get this
for me. I said I try.

KS: This was at the Air One Hotel?
SC: Air one Hotel.
KS: And you worked there?
SC: Right. Iaid yeah, I’ll do that. If I don’t I’ll find somebody to do it for you.

You know some small things like that always small comforts. He was very good; every
time he came he would bring me little presents. Sometimes we’d go and have some tea.
He’d tease me about I spoke English and make fun of me. But he was very kind, very
generous. That’s how I met Clint. Clint got brought up from Laos, Crew De Thai, I
think it was in ’60 wasn’t it. All the Americans were brought out.

KS: He was working in Laos?
SC: Yes, he was working in Laos. Tom said Clint how about trying to go to
Lampart? Clint said yes, he would go. That’s after we got married when we went to
Lampart and he built me a house, a lovely house. It’s about half the size of his room on
six trees. There are one, two living trees that this house was nailed on. It was a
wonderful house.

KS: So, it was elevated?
SC: Yes, it’s about five, four inches I can walk under it quite comfortably. On log
you chopped like this and make the steps go up. I loved that house and we had a little
balcony. One of the men got some orchid he shot off a tree and tied up to make it go on
one of my poles. That was nice. We worked very hard to get things done. The monsoon
came. Dodie lived on a tree house. The story had it that Dodie fed a tiger. Oh God the
tiger roam around there. We have seen it ourselves. The trouble public we had the camp
next to us the ___public who did all the woods that shot a tiger. I was so upset about that.
They said look, would you like to have about two kilos of the meat? I said no thank you.
But I took pictures of it. I felt so sorry for the beautiful tiger. I didn’t want to do. But
you know what those people were so underpaid. Once in a while they would come and
borrow rice from us. When we’d buy, we’d buy the whole lot. We had men to feed.
They would borrow it and then they had to go and get their own meat, but they were very
nice.

KS: Did they hunt the tiger or they just killed the one that came near the camp.
SC: They went out.
KS: They went out looking for it.
SC: Right. They got deer. Got lots of deer. You know whatever edible stops
made some things. They were meat it would turn you vegetarian. We also have another
man who was a good person to help us Wayne McKinney. Wayne was our man in Hong
Kong.
KS: He worked for Medico?
SC: Yes. He would try to get us supplies and food. He would get something like
Green Gage Jam, Spam; you know stuff that keeps forever. I did my best could you get
us some yeast and things. So, we’ve got flour and things so we could get some of these
for the whole crew. It was fun.
KS: How long did it take you and the group to construct the hospital in Long
Hok?
SC: it took us almost a year and Clint was called. What year was that? ’61 the
Cuban Crisis. Ok, he got a letter from the Air Force said, it’s time you get back to here
and then we were still you know working on it. It’s not finished. The hospital is almost
finished. Of course, that’s what we went to first. The house is still knocked down. Clint
got the septic tank and everything all done up, but it’s not all hooked up yet. We had
some friends who worked for the government who could do electrical stuff. These were
done by friends. They thought they came for R&R up in Lomp Kot. You know they
took their time off to come and work and Mr. Miller came to dig a well so we could have
some water. A few other people come up, gave out water come and helped to clear the
land. All these wonderful men helped Clint work on this. I paint like mad. I mean I was
good at painting, Painting bed, making the mattress. I sewed by hand.

KS: What was the mattress made out of?
SC: Material that I bought in the city at ___ to stuff it. It was very hard.
KS: These were the beds for the hospital?
SC: yes. Eight bed. I put the tie on the surgery. My first experience in laying tile
and Clint would come in and say could you make it a little closer. I did it two times and I
said to myself next time he would have to do it. I took it out so many times. But it got
done beautifully and Clint went and talked to Gaylord. Gaylord and Clint went tot talk to
some people at the Embassy in Long Dinh. They got the generators and surgical light,
surgical table. They talked you know American people are extremely generous. The
women and the people that worked for the government knew what we needed. I believe
we even got an air conditioner for the surgery. But we did not have electrical thing
hooked up yet. SO, when Clint had to do surgery, I had to hold the flashlight. You know
when you hold for so long he said please don’t move. I said ok.
KS: But your arm shakes.
SC: Your arms start to shake. I went around with him to do house calls. WE
walked six, seven kilometers sometimes across the river. WE did those house calls on an
ox cart. But you see I get quite ill from the movement of it. I can’t get in a jet or an ox
cart. I get that sick and I get ox cart sick so I walked. We always took food with us. You
never know when you’re going to run out of time. No food, no water but we took with
us. If they couldn’t come we would go to take them. Most of the people never knew
Clint’s name. They knew he was the Doctor and that was it. They were very good and
generous to give thing when they had very little. That’s a poor, very poor province. We
treated Vietnamese people were kind of wondering where they came from.
KS: So there were Vietnamese people actually in Lomp tok?
SC: Later on. Later on in ’61. Later on by Da Nang you know he spoke
Cambodian, but his name is Vietnamese. I said to Clint I wonder what he’s doing here?
Did he walk across? He did not know. But, he treated everybody including elephants.
KS: He treated elephants?
One time there was a whole bunch of elephants came by and the man I had a little dog and puppy chased. That was the worst thing could happen because scatter elephant and everyone start screaming. SO, I went after the dog, grabbed her. The man clamed that elephant down. They use a lot of elephants to move thing. One time another group came by and they had a baby with them, baby elephant. They asked e and said can a doctor treat an elephant? He has very bad stomach. I said well, I don’t know let me ask him. I said hey Clint can you treat elephant? He said I don’t know we can try. So, he and Dodie went and looked up thing and said how much does he weigh? The man said don’t know just weighed as much as baby elephant. So, they just sat there and stared at the elephant and tried to figure it out. SO, he gave it about how many people. Six seven, almost 1,000 pound or something. It was kind of good sized. They gave it a bottle, big bottle of Koepectate.

KS: I asked the man and he said oh, yeah he’s alright now one week later. We had things like that. Sometimes one came by and it walked out to the clinic, wanted to get in too. It was so sweet. We had a lot of montagnards who spoke Laotian. They’re really wonderful people when they came to town they put their clothes on. Because they don’t want their clothes to be torn up in the jungle when they’re walking. They walk miles. I can tell you in kilometers. It’s like 30 to 40 kilometers at times. Sometime the whole village would come. SO, we have a place form them to stay. They need some food, we have food. WE also have leopards that came. By the time when the leopard came we already had a house. It’s not complete it’s just liveable and we have a little porch. At night I could hear him sing. You know I don’t know how you could sing with that much trouble, but you could hear the sing. I would talk to them. They said they were going to go out to the forest. They went hunting and they came back with a bunch of squirrel and some other animal and they want to give us some. I said thank you very much, we have some food would you like some? They were very generous. They are generous people. The lady who would walk for about five kilometers, an old lady, brought their family brought us some eggs. Eggs ran, there’s no market. The sort of kind of market, you better get there between 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning or be gone. So, the boys would get up early and would go and try to get some as mush as possible if they can. But we have staple that they can use, canned foods and things. Big 500 kilos of rice
bags, which lend out and sugar is a premium. About by the end of ’61 there’s another
camp across the street from us, which we called Medicine Avenue. The route is about a
foot deep at east. And the camp across from us if for the police. I made friends with the
chief of police’s wife. So, every time they went hunting they would bring us some meat.
Deer meat which I know the men really craved meat. I, myself did not eat. I ate a lot of
asparagus, but the road was still very bad. We almost finished. Clint got deferred
because of the ambassadors and Mr. Mann who’s the head of the Usong. U.S. people had
wrote letters to the general and said please extend it six months.

KS: This is when he was called in for the Cuban Missile Crisis?
SC: He extended six months for Clint to finish that. They were very good. They
let him do it. So, we hurried up and finished it. I was sad to leave it, because it’s a good
kind of life and in the morning the children would walk past on the way to school to watch
Clint. They stop and watch Clint shave. They thought it was great fun. Several good old
people in the United States sent us bits and pieces. This is left over from when Tom was
alive. Like soaps. One group of the children sent us soap. Little soap from the hotel. I
would hand them out to the children. They were very happy to get those sweet little
things. Some people sent some seeds of flowers and vegetables. Some of the vegetables
were not suitable to farm there, but the flowers were good. I planted them. There was
one lady who sent us a drawing of Tom. I wish I had brought it back, but I though tit
should be at the hospital so people know who he is.

KS: Now, did Dr. Tom Dooley ever come out to this hospital when you were
there? Or was this after he had passed away?
SC: he dies in ’61. On the 19th of January 1961. On the way out there he
stopped to see me and the phone just could not get a hold of me. I was sad. I didn’t get to
see him and that was the last time.

KS: What were your impressions of him and the type of work that he did?
SC: Of course, I was crazy about him. I warranted my life away, the first day I
talked to him. Nobody could resist that man. He was so handsome and he had extremely
god people, just like Thai kind of. He could know how to deal with people. The women
are just mad about him. I mean he got scared sometimes. I know sometimes he said I got
three nurses with me and they don’t have any room, so they sty in my room and the
housekeepers went home. You know it’s stuff like that. He could just come in and say
need two rounds. Of course, what can I say? Went down stairs, talked to the chief and
said please help out. I call him uncle so he said ok, he can stay the pan am. He and the
pilot, it was sweet and the girls would go to the housekeeping section. I would just hang
around until we have room for them to stay two or three days. That’s my impression of
how good and there are rumors of things, which I could confess. The rumors of course to
know that something good, somebody had to say something bad about him. Of course,
there’s a lot of people medically. When you are in the jungle, you cannot have a room
like one of the best hospitals in the world. You just have to do what you can right there.
You know? It’s a good thing somebody did something at all. But lots of people still
remember him. I met a man the last trip I went t o Thailand. A Laotian man in his 70s,
this is strange thing he sat next to me on the plane coming back from Thailand to United
States and we got on talking. I asked him have you ever heard of this man? He said oh,
the doctor yes. I knew him. I knew him. You know, this has been how many years?
Forty years. So, whatever bad thing he was a funny man. He said funny things a lot.
Irish Catholic Democrat, which to be avoided. He told me so himself. He could say
something very funny all the time and he made you a part, when you are with him,
there’s nobody else in the world but you. You are a part of that thing. It’s important to
him at that time. He had this ability and you would run your feet off. You give him your
life before you know it. You say what am I doing? Before you knew what to do you
wanted to go. He said ok, there's where you go. You go. You don’t question. I’m sure
other people might question that, but there are people would just come to me and say
would you introduce me to him? And I knew they want to give the money. So, I went
and I said would you mind? He would say of course not. He would just sit there doing
things. He knew how to deal with people. He was a very good person. I wish that more
people like him to have the guts to go out there with nothing. I wish there would be more
people who would get going somewhere where nobody wants to go through criticism to
do some good. It doesn’t matter, one person, two persons. We’ve done something if you
don’t life a finger who’ll do it? I’m glad that I was a part of it. A very small part. He
had asked me several times to go to Laos with him while I was working at the Air One.
He said I need a gopher. I wanted to go so bad, but my parent said you’re not going to
run off with some strange doctor. Later on I did (laughs)>

KS: Just a different one.

SC: A different one. I should have gotten up there. It would be weird; up there I
mean it’s worse. But in reality I wish I’d gone, but wishing is no good now so I’m glad I
got to do that where we plant. Unfortunately, the language when you translate from one
to the other it takes a longtime before you get to the thing. You don’t just say they said
everything. I just have to listen and take whatever’s wrong with them. Clint would ask
me to translate back and forth.

KS: Were you the only one in Lom Pot that did the translation?

SC: In the beginning. But, there were two boys except there was one boy who
was really. Dodie and I kept teaching him and then he’d liked to work so there’d be to
boys later on that could do it. While I had to do something else, but I would like to hang
around there to make sure that it’s done right. I don’t want anything to happen to Dodie
or Clint, but I was not afraid really. There were two rifles, magnum .45 rifles. I don’t
know how to use it very well. Except the men around there, they’re exuberant. They
shoot. One night there were about five or six men running through the hospital shooting
flying squirrel. I was very annoyed. So, the next morning I took the rifle out there, stood
at my kitchen door. I said the next person shoot anything would have o answer to this. I
told Clint to go somewhere at that time. The Thai end of Cambodia completely severed
the relationship, but I work for medical, I was allowed. They just ignored me.

KS: They knew you were there and you were a Thai citizen.

SC: oh, yes the prince knew I was there. I was a good friend of his, maybe gator.
He complained bitterly to his navigator about that Thai friend or yours, I saw her at the
airport. I stood when everybody went down on their knees. I don not bow to Cambodian
King. I told my friend about it. He said you’re going to get me in big trouble. I’m not
going to take you.

KS: Did anything happen to you?

SC: Nothing. Nothing happened to me. It sounds kind of arrogant, but were just
too busy, we don’t care. Ok, throw me out. The whole team leaves. There was a lot of
will to do. SO they just ignored. What can I do? One short Thai person in there.
KS: Do you think they let you stay because of the good that you were doing for
the people?
SC: No, because of Tom Dooley Medical.
KS: He had a good relationship?
SC: They have this good and bad. Hate American week, and love American
week. It depends, but you know we are just so harmless out there. There’s nothing we
can do. But at the camp, when you crossed the river to come to our place, which is a long
way away from our old camp, there is a big camp full of Vietnamese people. We do no
know until this day, what’s really going on there. But every time you stopped there
waiting for the crossing, some of them would come out. They knew who we were. If we
had a certain kind of medicine to treat like diarrhea or what not. Clint would make sure
that we have medicine and he would treat them right there. They would come out and
ask them what’s wrong with them? A few cases of Malaria, things like that. Have been
very good. Said we can leave our truck here because one time we broke down. A big
truck, ¾ ton truck so we couldn’t go do anything and the green jeep. No, we broke the
green jeep axle so we had to walk and they just watch over it. And nothing happened.
They were kind of friendly back there. There’s always something funny going on. Ralph
moved to the team over there and then the head of the team’s name is Alan Rosenbloom,
he’s a doctor. Then the team heard that we were stuck out there so they sent the jeep to
come and pick us up. And that day we had a cake. It was Alan’s birthday cake.
Somebody swiped it and brought it out to us. I don’t think Alan ever forgave us for that.
It was very funny. Life throws very funny things at. If you are in the jungle, that area. If
somebody gets out and walked out. It’s the law of jungle, you never ask where that
person’s going. That’s a rule. You know on the way back one time when we were
coming back with supplies of building material. We would travel at night as well as the
daytime. I heard the boy was assaying hand me the rifle. They stopped and I looked up.
I was kind of half asleep sitting in the front. The tiger. Beautiful tiger, he stopped and
looked at us. SO, I said t the one I said you are not to shoot that. No, no, no. You are
not shooting it. They said why? I said because it’s beautiful, you are not shooting it.
You are not shooting it. His brother was the driver, he was very upset. He was one of
the head. I said not to shoot it, we just stop and watch him. He just stood and just looked
at us. So, I pounding on the horn. I wanted him to go, so we can go on. The boys were
just sitting there. He wouldn’t dare go against my word. He couldn’t say don’t shoot.
But he didn’t shoot him. But you know that was an experience just look at a tiger in the
face.

KS: how big was it?

SC: He probably young. He probably wouldn’t be more than six feet from nose
to tail, but e was a beauty. It’s a beautiful, beautiful tiger. I’ve seen them occasionally. I
do not like things encaged. He walked very slowly away. Didn’t run or anything. WE
had to walk in once, during the monsoon season. The whole place, just water
everywhere. The men left the truck. I had my camera in one hand, my boots the other.
Clint was one side and Vern was the other side. They have to hold on to me to take me
across. The water came to my shoulder that normally we could drive through and we
walked to our place. You know the hospital was built on stilts on piers. That was about
five foot four that I can walk quite easy and I can reach up. The water came about five
feet and from the house to the hospital Dodie was so clever. She made a raft out of this
barrel. You know, gasoline barrels. Planks of wood and tings to go from the hospital to
there. I thought it was hilarious. Life was funny. It’s no hardship to me. If you can do it
over again, I would. Tomorrow, it wouldn’t take me long to pack a few things.

KS: You mentioned you held the flashlight while Doctor Chambers was doing
surgery. What other kind of contact did you have with patients? Medication?

SC: Oh, me I don’t do that at all. I just translate and Clint and Dodie dealt with
all the medicine things. One time, there was a lady who came in. She had an infant with
her that was about nine months old and he was so tiny. She was swollen all over. I was
shocked and I asked what’s wrong. The husband came, the family other people came
another child came. I asked what was wrong and she said I think I walked into some kind
of animal’s web. Maybe spider or something. Clint asked me to go on furthur, what her
food, what she eats and all that stuff. Clint said I don’t think that was a reaction of that.
What she ate was rice, polish rice because you know and salt and once in a while you
could get dry salted fish, very few vegetables. So, it’s lack of vitamin.

KS: It’s a deficiency in her diet.
SC: Right. Very badly. So, he started giving her vitamin shots. I gave her about, I forgot, something like very high concentrate milk, powder of some kind. It has a name I have to ask Clint what it was. It’s like ensure except in powdered form and I said you must drink this about three times a day and we gave them some food to eat. You know she couldn’t eat very much, but she like that milk stuff. I said give it to the little boy too. So, I make sure that I mixed that. Now I would dispense food, but I would fed both of them that. In two days you see a different person. I remember we could see her beautiful face. I see her eyes. You know to see, I have a photograph of her. I was a photographer. That’s another thing. I didn’t know how to take photographs. I didn’t have a camera, except with Browning__. But this camera, my boss came into my office one day and dumped it on my desk and said somebody left it in my office and I don’t know what to do with it. I didn’t have a chance. He left before I said I wouldn’t know what to do with it either. So, when I left it was in my bag and box so I sat there and figure it out how to work it. Fortunately, it came out. All the record that we have came form that camera. Now I don’t know how to use it again. It’s up there, but that was most of the time. So, most of the time Clint after immediate disease or whatever illness they had he always handed out some vitamins. Dodie would make sure that it was not over, you know like tow years behind usage. I got to help one time in thing. A lady had fallen off a house. She was two months pregnant and was bleeding very badly. So, we sent our truck to fetch her. And Clint had to do ___ on her and she was in shock. Fortunately she understood Laos very well, so I talked to her. I said now look you cannot die, because I do not like ghosts hanging around here. We’re going to give you blood. It’s going to be the doctor’s blood. Dodie didn’t know her blood. I didn’t know what my blood type was. So, Clint knew exactly so Dodie took the blood out. Put Clint on the dining table and took his blood out. I was feeling nauseous in between that Clint said I need you to get all the instruments and clean it. So, I climb up on the top thing, drag out all the instruments. I haven’t got a clue what instrument. So, he would rattle it off and Dodie would tell me what. I would get the pot out and boil those instruments out and then Dodie helped there. She started IV on her. We did not have a proper surgical or anything. We just you know. I was shaking, I didn’t know. That was my first serious thing. She was bleeding like crazy. After we gave her blood and all sorts of things I’d
send him back to rest because you know why. I said I’ll watch her and Clint told me how
to watch out for trouble. Incase something happened you have to do it and Dodie would
be right there with me. She had a lot of experience. She used to work at Methodist and
we watched her. I would watch her face you know and talk to her, keep her going. I said
you will not die now, you’ve got a doctor’s blood, he’s strong as an ox. You’re going to
be ok and talked to her. She said I would like to hear a prayer. I said I can do that. I said
the prayer that I know. It’s pretty common. It’s universal among the Buddhists. So I
said the prayer for her. I said I said you an extra one in a different language. It’s on my
own language and she seemed to be comforted. I said you’ll be all right now. In a
couple hours the doctor will be back. He’s right here, he’s not really far away I can yell
and he will run over. Then I would go and make sure everything’s ok. The next day she
did seem good. I kept feeding her chicken broth, put lime in it. What the taste she’s used
to. I remember giving her Jello too. She liked that taste. We had a refrigerator, a
kerosene one. She’s all right.

KS: So, she recovered.
SC: She recovered very nicely. I said to her let’s not go through that again.
KS: Did you make it through the experience?
SC: I did. Clint would be yelling at me. He said put your head down between
your knees. I said you can’t do that. You can’t be chicken like that. They need your
help and Dodie would be yelling for something. Handing me this that and everything.
We went through that. We had a few emergencies like. One time we walked to
somebody’s house because the man, a tree fell on his head or something. So, we had to
go to his house and dealt with that. We spoke Laotian so we conversed very nicely.
They wanted to stay for dinner. I said we better get back because you know they’ll be
patients. What happens if every morning around 7:00 or 8:00 Clint would go to the clinic
and I’ll go with him. The patients would be coming. At the beginning, we had oh, 10 or
12 and we’d get up to 70 a day. Every day of the week.
KS: So, you had patients every day, all the time.
SC: Right. Yes. Something you know like I have to go. The highest kind of
disease and things like that. Clint had to record it. But we had a few that a man fell of a
wagon somewhere and hurt his arm very badly. When he came in, walked several days.
This is what might gross you out. There were maggots all over it. Clint said that’s good it keep it clean. Now, I said I would do the running and Dodie kept smoking and cleaning it up. He did well. It was something like that that I remember. There was a little boy; no it was a little girl when she came in her leg was like this. It had crusted infection looking thing and she was so thin. I looked at her and her other leg was normal and her mother had the same thing on the part of her shoulder and her chest. Clint think it was some kind of infection, so I don’t know how he treated them. But that little girl I looked and I said did she ever walk before? The mother said yes. Then you know it hurt so she kept her leg like that. So, the skin kind of got stuck with each other. SO, I said if she walked before she can walk again so don’t be ____. I had no idea. I just bathed her, hot, warm water and with medication. Clint gave her medicine and I fed her that stuff. Clint did a little bit of surgery on her.

KS: To remove the skin?

SC: To remove the attached.

KS: The connection.

SC: It was not skin really. It was not attached skin it was a scab. Then it hurt so she wouldn’t d that. But, you know once she got all soaked and medicated she was with us about two weeks, she could stretch her leg. I would go and do a massage. I don’t know, but I thought it would work and then let her sit in a tub of water and then make her do this and everything. She could wiggle her toes and all that stuff. Clint would give me the lecture not to do it. When she went home, a month later she could stand on her feet, but she still quite shy and bashful in using her right leg. But several months later, they came back, she was walking. She had not lost the use of it. It hadn’t been years, it’d been months.

KS: Was the leg a lot smaller than the other one? The muscle?

SC: At the beginning. It was building up, but she was so thin because of food. Then Clint sent vitamins and things over. I said make sure you only take one. You mustn’t take more that is dangerous. One vitamin we had for children as well. Thank goodness.

KS: I was curious when you were in Cambodia was there a military presence?

You hear about the Camere Rouge?
SC: We heard about Claire Rouge about Vietcong. No, sorry take it back. Not the Camere Rouge itself, but the Vietcong. The Camere Rouge came afterwards. We had heard about Vietcong a lot, but the only Vietnamese people we met they were patients. We knew that we had some American Armed Forces in the country because a group pf them came up to do some mapping. So, they said since I fed them they said you have a choice where we can put the benchmark. So, I said how about my kitchen doorstep. So we all went down there and that’s a benchmark at Lompoc.

KS: So, this was American military personnel making maps of Cambodia?

SC: Yes. American Army map makers. Military maps that came. But that’s a benchmark. We had wonderful furniture that Clint made. The boys cut the tree to make me a rolling pin. The whole tree just to get the right stuff. There was soldiers that came later. There are Cambodian I think they’re more border police than any other soldier. We thought that was a little odd to have such a big group of them across the street from us. We thought we’d feel safer from what. We didn’t have any trouble at all you know. Petty thieves and things like that. Didn’t have anything bizarre. The only run in we had was the cow at all my vegetables. That’s all the stuff that we lost. Apart from that there’s nothing. We finally finished it, the hospital, painted. The flowers were growing, the flags up, the gate, the fence all painted, sheets on the bed. The sheets came from the ladies, American ladies in the capital. They sent things. We had anything good to eat something special would come from the US people in the capital. They would bring us our. The Prince came for the dedication.

KS: Was this Prince Sina?

SC: Prince Sihanok.

KS: Sihanok.

SC: Sihanok came and his entourage and just before he arrived there was an accident. A little boy, who was about six years old, fell back in the camping fire. His back was just black with burns. So we all dressed up for the occasion. That’s the first time Clint put his suit on and Dodie put a dress on and so we were running around treating that little boy. Fortunately we have a nice place to clean him up and dress him. Then he came and went look at all those, gave a speech and the Ambassador came too. The American Ambassador came too.
KS: Do you recall what he said in his speech, he Prince?

SC: In Cambodia. He just thanked the medical for the founder and thanks Clint for head of medical and you know something like that. Clint made sure that he knows that his people had upheld and all the boys got dressed in white shirt with ties and Dodie gave them all a belt. She must have about 50 belts that everybody had given here and she never used one. She gave them belts and all dressed up. Clint told the Prince the men, the Cambodian men had helped build this place up. He was very pleased. He even gave Clint a medal called _______. _____mean a group united _______ it means kindness. And Dodie has one too. Then we start kind of pack up. We didn’t have anything but maybe two suitcases.

KS: So, did you turn the hospital over?

SC: No. After there was American doctors came to take over. I don’t really know their names. You know it’s funny Dodie and I left first because it’s difficult. You don’t know how we could get out. We got out because the roads going to get bad.

KS: Did you leave because of the political situation?

SC: No. We left because it’s a time to go back. Clint had to go report to the Air Force. That’s the time limit we had. So, Dodie and I left first so I can have some time with my parent at home. Clint came two weeks later. Unfortunately when he left he practically had to walk out. He got to Gratch another team. The team in the middle. He stayed with Risenbloom and somebody had Hepatitis and Clint caught it. When we were coming out he was ill already. You know we were going to go and take it easy. He was not feeling well all the way home.

KS: Did he go back to Thailand with you or he went back to the States?

SC: He went to Thailand to pick me up. We left form Thailand back to the U.S. Dodie is the opposite of vegetarian. SO, we would order two complete meals when we travel. I would eat all her vegetables and desert and she would eat all the meat. That was fun and then we came back to the United States. We went to Oklahoma City. That’s where his mother lived. And we were getting ready to go and report I believe to McCord in Washington State.

KS: Did he know at this point he would be going to Vietnam?
SC: No. No he didn’t. But then, he wasn’t feeling good. So, he went to the hospital and checked. Found out he had Hepatitis. So we all get shots of Comglobulin and I wasn’t sick. Dodie wasn’t. We called Dodie. So, the Air Force said Clint was so honest he could have got into the Air Force and have them take care of him. You know we were paid. I forgot how much we paid. That’s the only time in my life I got paid as much as Clint. I’m not sure if it was 100 dollars a month or 150 a month. With Medico. That’s to buy bits and pieces. We never spent it. There wasn’t anything to spend on. We saved all that. Clint went to the GMC truck station and bought a car for 2,000 dollar, a truck, cash. That’s practically all our savings. So, he was ill and the Air Force said well, get well first so he did. Then they said go and report to San Antonio after he got well. So, we did. No, no, no. Utah. We went to Utah first. We went to Utah. We got to Utah and got into the Air Force on Halloween.

KS: What year was this?

SC: ’61 on Halloween night. I remember the first time I got to go to dinner at the Officer’s Club. I said Oh, Halloween you know. How life is kind of like that. So, we were in Utah and while we were in Utah he got invited to give a speech, to talk to people a lot. Then they asked us where we want to go next. So, we had a choice of going to Pakistan or Taiwan. I said let’s go for Chinese food. So, we went to Taiwan. We worked in Taiwan for four years. Our children were born there. Both of them Tita and Clifford were born in Taipei. Then he applied for residency in San Antonio at Wayford hall. We hadn’t heard from them. We hadn’t heard from them. He almost changed his mind. He wanted to go into topical medicine. I think they probably accepted him already until he said well, let’s go to Thailand for a while. We go to see my mother. We took Tita with us and when we came back on New Year’s Eve said let’s go and get the mail. There were packs of mail there. There was an acceptance of his residency from Wayford hall. So, we cancelled the other one and packed up and went to Wayford Hall. Clifford was born in May. We probably left in June because Cliff was probably about four weeks old when we brought him back to United States. He was so good. Our friend from Taiwan let the same time. We had a whole bunch of friends. In the Air Force it’s wonderful. It’s just like a great big family. If you have problem everybody carries your kid around and start playing with it or feed it or whatever. But I had to keep Clifford close to me because
he was so little. We were sent to San Antonio. Clint went to residency. We rarely saw
him. The children just didn’t know. We would go and visit him at a hospital. WE would
take his dinner and his change of clothes and sat in a parking lot and hand him his clean
clothes. The children would run around and talk to him, play with him and we all went
home and id what we had to do. He was a Captain then. One day he came home a
Major. So, you know I did al his clothes so I had to put all those pin things. Then in’68I
believe in ’68 he went to Vietnam. He came home and he said I’ve got to go to Vietnam.
I said good, be a coward whatever you do. And he went. We didn’t fuss.

KS: How did you feel about him going?

SC: I was brought up in almost a military type duty. I hate for him to go, but he
has to go. He had to go. It is his job. He does it. We do our best at home. All his
bosses, the Commanders and everything, the General Shears, General Dawson and all his
residents below him, above him just pitch in. You know call and make sure we’re ok. If
the children were sick General Shear was very good when general called. And Doctor
Cameron who was his Chief Resident. He took care of us. I did not feel like I was in
need of anything except I wished he were home. But we pray a lot. Our knees are worn,
but we hurt for him quite a lot from the thing. Then one year, that year was hard. We
knew we were not the only one. I volunteered as Red Cross volunteer. My neighbor
would take care of the children. WE took turns take care of each other. I would go to the
hospital and work as a volunteer and I would see some soldiers and talk to them and
make a call for them and run errands for them. I just hoped that Clint didn’t get hurt,
that’s all. I knew other people had to go and even die. I was very annoyed about people
who if you’re going to fight somebody let’s go and win it. For goodness sake. We just
go the same direction. If he goes different direction not going to go anywhere. That is
how I felt. We were glad when he got home.

KS: He was there for one year?

SC: I don’t know for how long, but it seemed forever. Then after he finished
residency he said we could go anywhere if I just take a tour without you for a year. He
picked to go to Thailand and we got to go and visit him. The children were in school.
You know what I should have done; I should have taken them out of school and taken
them over. That’s not that important. But do other things first, it’s the children first.
Clint, children first. It’d been all like that all my life until now. Now the grandchildren we used to have a dog. We said we’re going to wait until the dog dies so we can go places. The dog already died for years we—that’s how it was. After that we went to Germany.

KS: He was still in the Air Force at this point?
SC: yes. We went to Maryland for a year. He went to do something at John Hopkins for a year. We were running around the East Coast. He dragged us to forts and historical buildings and we had a lot of learning to do. Then we went to Germany, four years. We had such fun running around Europe with the children. We had a saying in the family that, when we move to a new place we can complain, cry, scream for two weeks and after that we go on living. Never lasted two weeks. About three days when they could find things back to normal. Things come and go. You know the Air Force just likes to take care of things. I miss the Air Force terribly. Then we were back to Ohio for another another four or five years. Then we came to Lubbock. Clint had to go and become a hospital Commander at Reese. Then the time for him to retire, he could stay on, but he wanted to retire. We were thinking of a job somewhere else. You know once you move around so much never really in a happy mood. We wanted to go somewhere all the time. There was a job opening in Boonville. For Clint to be a director of a hospital, I just said goody I want to go. The only bad thing is our daughter just got into college and she couldn’t call us. We had to use radio and then you know you have to fly in and all that kind of stuff. Clint said if Tita called it was going to be hard from him to do that. She can call her grandmother and her aunt, but it won’t be the same. Said we can’t go.

KS: So, you didn’t go?
SC: We turned it down. Clint said, well I’ll just get a job here so he went and worked with Dr. Ratlidge and Bromwell. Bromwells retired so he went to work for Dr. Ratlidge since ’83. After he retired it’s the first time Clint and I could go some place and just sat on a hill and look at the sun go down. We went to some camping ground. It was so filthy, so we cleaned it. He picked up things and the dog. We had to tie the dog up so he wouldn’t run off and I cleaned everything. I mean the filthiest place, we cleaned and
we just left. I said to Clint, Clint from now on I don’t think I want to camp out ever.

Holiday and it’ll be it.

KS: What campground was this?

SC: It’s in Tres Rivers, where the boy scouts have a camp, but this is a public
camping ground. I had a chance to watch birds eating raspberries, that’s a good payback.

We have been in Lubbock ever since then in ’61. Twenty first of June 1961 until today.

Who knows? We were thinking of doing something like that again, but had no one there
to take care for the household. The children finished college, grew up. One lives in
Dallas has her own company. And my son with his family. We were fortunate to have
the grandchildren with us for a while. But we will do something again eventually. I
think the end of next week, Clint is going to take some class in medicine for the whole
week, so we can handle some normal thing instead of surgery.

KS: So, you’re talking about you want to go overseas again and work with?

SC: It depends on what strikes us. We could be doing helping in the United
States. We do that. We don’t want tot go too far from the children. This is where the dog
already died you know. But still the grandchildren. That’s what we’ll probably be doing,
but he would do something again. After 40 years the house needs cleaning. We have
boxes that’ve been closed since 1965. We haven’t opened. Probably we can pitch it we
don’t even miss it. Fortunately we have storage and somebody broke in and took quite a
few things so we never know what’s in them.

KS: I just have one quick question, backing up a little bit. During the Vietnam
War years your family of course was still in Thailand. What were their feeling about the
American presence? The build up of American military bases. Soldiers in Thailand. Do
you recall them saying anything about that?

SC: Probably just the same thing like when the War ended when the allies came,
you know? A lot of good things happened and there’s a lot of the usual not too good
things happened. It’s good for the economy, but it opens for some other things. You
know things tend to like the weakest point water would run. A lot of things is not good.
There’s a lot of development in land. I went to visit the base this time I didn’t see much
of anything that’s left that somebody had been there but the Thai Navy. The Thai Navy
had taken over. But there’s a lot of good things like the libraries and things like that.
The Thai people in the south had gone through so much. The Japanese during World War II came as a friend, not an occupation. We did not like that. That’s a different feeling. But the Americans, it’s just like every foreigner that came. Good things and bad things, but there is no animosity as a whole. The Thai make fun of everybody, including themselves and they laugh silly about it. I don’t think there is anything bad about it because we have Australian, we have the French. The French are a little bit different. You know all sorts of things going on. The War did not affect us that much because the Thai when they went there I looked up at the names of the people. The officers that went to Vietnam a very good friend of mine was the Captain of the only ship that went to Vietnam. He is an Admiral now. Several friends went to Vietnam, but they didn’t get hurt. They even profit from it, because one friend of mine went back as an attaché after the War’s over. I think in Thailand when the War is over, it’s over. We did not hate the Japanese. We did not like what they did in those days when we did nasty thing to them at the time and nobody knew it. But you know we have good relationships. So, the French we didn’t like them. We had the War. The Indochina War. People have written songs, nasty things about Imparvi. Oooo, he was a bad guy. Tojo that guy we don’t hear that anymore. I’m sure there’s a lot of very good things happened, but there’s no bad feeling in between the countries or the pole. Maybe personally a person might dislike somebody, but apart from that no. We’d still have Vietnamese groups living there. The Cambodians coming over the border. No, we still do have that problem. They want to come over because Thailand is not the richest country, but we never run out of food. The Burmese try to get over. We have a lot of people that have to be taken back to the border every day.

KS: Even today?
SC: Even today. As we’re speaking I talked to my sister. She said well, you know they’re still rounding up. They find dead people. They check, no take it back. Some even try to come in as a Buddhist monk, but you can peg them in no time flat if you’re a real monk or not. There have been cases, I went east as far as this hill that you can see over in Cambodia. I got up on top of the hill. My sister told me that after that was Cambodian. A group trying to come over, but we’re not too strict on it. But it was staring trouble. When I went to ordinary market out of Bangkok I sometimes can hear
Cambodian spoken. So, I knew that the people that came in. Just human nature that’s always a bad thing going on. I’m still in Lubbock.

KS: Is there anything else you would like to add?

SC: What would you like to know? Anything do you think that you might like to know?

KS: I’m curious when after Dr. Dooley died, did you notice a change in the way things were run at the clinic or with Medico?

SC: Well, it was run from New York. I knew that we lost something so important that it’s not going to last. Because there’s nobody who would charge out there whether he had anything to do or not. I mean you don’t have any money on that. You don’t have the passion for it. This is a job that I will do for a certain period of time. You don’t have his passion. You know the man would just walk into a room of nothing and he could see instruments, equipment, money all over the place. In reality it may not be anything, but in his head he had it. He would charge out there and somebody would get it for him. Somebody will. If he could. He wrote books and he would come to raise money even in Lubbock. My friends up in Floydada had heard him and books. Now, when I got to see books, if I find a book, his book I would buy it. You know that had belonged to somebody once. I’ve got a lot of those. Clint too. We were in Santa Fe one time and the library was having a sale. We found two books, we bought them. I would get as many. I know that there wouldn’t be another one like that. It got to be a little. But unfortunately he was ill, but he was still going. He was going like mad.

KS: Did you know he was sick?

SC: Yes, I did. I did because he went back to the United States. He told me that he had to go and check in all these little things he had. I never knew how serious it was. I thought oh, he is telling me just like maybe I have some surgery. Hang out for a while. Have a girl running around waiting on him. Everybody’s waiting on him already. Then he went to Singapore. Had something to do in Singapore with his brother, Malcolm was there. I went on vacation to Qu Nam. I called hi from there, talked to him. He sounded up beat. I’ve seen him down when he’s really tired when he came back he was tired. Very tired and I had to take his shirts and that. He always perked up. You’d never see him down. He was super optimistic type person. Foolhardy type I would say, but you
need people like that to get anything done. More cautious, I know caution, we need caution, but I don’t think he was that cautious. Hey, it’s easy we can do it. But then when the time comes to do it, just the person. You’re just the person to do it you know? Like Clint, everything just right there for you to do. Every thing was right there for Clint to start from digging a hole. By the way the first pier we poured we broke out peanut butter. We had a big plate of peanut butter out of a can. Ralph want Dodie to have peanut butter. So eat it. Alan and his wife was kind of careful about things like that. So he brought this and Dodie ate it. Then we cracked up and put them in the cement. When we poured the cement we had broken peanut butter jar in the first pier. We always have some sill thing going on you know? It is fun. I got really good at pouring cement and doing piers and that kind of stuff. It helped. You know I work on the Habitat for Humanity. Boy, I was good with my hammer. You tell put two nails, I would put five. It doesn’t move after I nailed it. I got really good at building. I hope we can do that again someday. Clint’s a good carpenter, you know that? He’s a very good carpenter. If he builds something it’s going to stay. I think he learned it when he was in college or something. I can lay tile, he can lay bricks. Between the two of us I don’t know what were doing much more. We will. You can come with us.

KS: That sounds fun actually. Was there anything else?

SC: I can’t think of anything. There’s so much of it, you know? But it was a good time.

KS: Well, this concludes the interview with Siva Chambers. Thank you very much.

SC: Thank you.