

Thomas: That I couldn't answer. I would say in many cases, maybe not. You know, we never really discussed it to tell you the truth.

Sellers: Ok, you mentioned in the information that you sent me that there were several off-campus things that went on in the world while you were here. How did some of those affect you? Cuban Missile Crisis and things like that?

Thomas: Let's see, the Cuban Missile Crisis – I came here that September '62 and the Cuban Missile Crisis came about in October, I believe, of that year. I would say, as reflecting back on it as a student, it was like "Geez, who'd really be interested in Florida?" Well, I didn't really know at the time you had Homestead Air Force Base down in Miami, you had Tyndall and MacDill and all these others, you know, yeah, Florida would have been a big target. I never really thought about it. I think my parents were more kind of like "Hey, what's going on?" and stuff. Parents were more worried than students. The other thing is – and this is going to relate to other issues over the next two or three years – was that you did not have the media coverage like you do today. You did not have anything on radio to speak of. You had the three major networks and over in Smith Hall there was one TV set down in the basement. Generally, that was tuned to Batman or some other serious serial at that time and you know, I think we were kind of oblivious, we were figuring, "Yeah, yeah, the blockade will take care of all of that stuff down there. Don't worry about it." Again, playing sports, it just was not there.

Sellers: No particular involvement with the ROTC aspect?

Thomas: No, I don't recall that being really brought up or mentioned or anything else. I mean, again, I think it happened over a relatively short time period. I mean, once Kennedy said, "Hey, we're sending down aircraft carriers and stuff and you're not sending anything through." That was the end of it and Khrushchev and the rest of them backed off.

Sellers: Ok, what about the assassination of John Kennedy?

Thomas: That was, there was no doubt, that was a very traumatic thing on the campus. It's funny, most people remember exactly where they were and what they were doing. I just remember walking back to the dorm and hearing somebody running out and saying that the president had been assassinated and so forth. It came on a, I believe it came on a Thursday, and classes were cancelled the next day and a lot of students, I mean every body went home, except for us who were out of state and didn't have any place to go. I remember there was another guy that I knew, he was not a baseball player, he was over in the dorm and he and I – there were only six left on our floor that weekend – and I remember that we went over and had dinner at the Sweet Shop because even Longmire was closed. It was a pretty somber time. A lot of games were cancelled, but I do remember Tennessee and Kentucky decided to play and Saturday I listened to that ball game, that was about the only thing going on. Then, I will say, it was easier to watch the television at that point because there wasn't anybody in the dorms. So we could go down and see the coverage from Cronkite.