

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE HARRY FRALLEY

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEWED CONDUCTED BY

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and

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SILVER SPRINGS, MARYLAND

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins an interview with Mr. George Harry Fralley on April 17, 1999, in Silver Springs, Maryland, with Sandra Stewart Holyoak and ...

Shaun Illingworth: Shaun Illingworth.

Jacqueline Fralley: Jacqueline Fralley. (Daughter)

SSH: I would like to begin by asking you when and where you were born.

GHF: ... I was born in Belleville, New Jersey, the 26th of February, 1923, many years ago.  
[laughter]

SSH: Can you tell us a little bit about your family?

GHF: Well, ... when I was pretty young, my father was working for the telephone company at the time, and my mother was a homemaker, and we grew up, and we went to school in Belleville.

SSH: Was your father originally from New Jersey?

GHF: No, he was from New York, and, actually, so was my mother. I don't know whether you want to hear about this, you know, Elmira, from my father.

SSH: Yes, we would love that.

GHF: I mean, it's on the paper.

SSH: Yes, but, we also need to have it on the tape. [laughter]

GHF: You need it on the tape. Well, let's see, go back here, he was born in Elmira, New York, ... in March of '89, and he passed away while I was in the service and home on emergency leave, ... in 1946.

SSH: Do you know where your grandparents were from?

GHF: No. I've been meaning to do a study, just haven't quite gotten there. [laughter] I did get down to the Adventist people one day, but, they were closed. [laughter] Anyway, my intention is to research that. I've documented the history of the family from my father and mother on, and my brother, and his children, and all that, but, I haven't gone back.

SSH: Do you know why your father's family was living in Elmira, New York?

GHF: I don't know. ... I really don't know.

JF: ... Their names are Welsh, so, George, and Harry, ... and Fralley, we think.

SSH: Do you know anything about your father's education?

GHF: I guess not really. ... He did not have a college degree, but, he advanced in the telephone company, New Jersey Bell, quite rapidly and was holding management jobs in Newark, New Jersey. ...

[Tape Paused]

SSH: Where was your mother born and raised?

GHF: ... She was born in New York City, yes. She was also born in ... 1889. ...

SSH: Okay. Do you know anything about her family, the Honekers?

GHF: Oh, yes. There were nine of them and ... they all lived close to where I was growing up, so, I had lots of aunts and uncles, nephews, and that kind of history I do have documented.

SSH: Your father served in the Army during World War I.

GHF: Yes.

SSH: Do you know anything about his siblings?

GHF: No, I really don't. ... There was a brother and a sister, and I was very small and young when I met the brother, who was in the Navy ... before World War II, and the sister moved out into the California area, and I've never seen her since I was four or five, maybe.

SSH: What was your father's military background?

GHF: He was in the Army. That's all I know about that.

SSH: Do you know which ship your uncle served on?

GHF: No, I really don't. ... I did go over to New York City, once he was in, and toured the ship that he was serving on. He was an enlisted man. That's all I know about that.

SSH: Okay. Your mother was from a very large family. Did you know her parents at all?

GHF: No. They died when I was quite young. I didn't know my grandparents on my mother's side.

SSH: Were they born in the United States?

GHF: Yes.

SSH: Had their families been here for several generations?

GHF: No, no, not that far. I think they were only here one generation, but, I hope to, you know, get up on it one of these days and get into it.

JF: The grandfather was German, Honeker, and the grandmother was Irish, Walsh, and Wesley was your uncle, right? ... Your dad's brother was Wesley. What was his sister's name? I don't know that I've ever heard her name. We'll go hunting for her. ... [laughter]

SSH: These are hard questions to answer, unless somebody has done the research.

GHF: Yes, well, ... go ahead. I'll tell you later about my Army research. I can't find my records, but, go ahead.

SSH: You were raised as a Baptist.

GHF: Yes.

SSH: Was your family active in the church?

GHF: Yes.

SSH: Where?

GHF: In Belleville, New Jersey.

SSH: What was it like to be part of the Belleville church community?

GHF: Well, Belleville was a small town and I generally went to church. I got a series of pins for going regularly, and I would go early and meet with the children, and then, meet my folks for church services, afterwards. They'd come on down and it was, oh, I don't know, a half-hour walk to the church, I guess, maybe.

SSH: You mentioned that you had one brother. Did you have any other siblings?

GHF: No. I had one brother and he was eleven years younger than I. This was a delayed birth.  
...

JF: He was born after the Depression.

SSH: How did your family fare during the Depression? How did it affect your family?

GHF: Well, I'm not sure. The best I could tell, it didn't affect us a lot. I was going to school, and that was about a ten minute walk, and I guess there was some problem with gasoline in there.

At the time, we did have a car and I don't think that we suffered any. He had a good job with the telephone company, so, there was income. ...

SSH: Do you remember how the Depression affected your mother's family?

GHF: Not really.

SI: Did you notice how the Depression impacted upon your classmates and other members of the Belleville community?

GHF: We were all sort of in the same boat, and on my one street, Mertz Avenue was one block long, the houses were all built about the same time, and the various families there had one or two children, and we all went to the same school.

SSH: Was your family politically active in the community?

GHF: My mother got active with the Women's Club. Dad never ... got active, politically.

SSH: Growing up, did you witness any major changes in Belleville?

GHF: Oh, yes. The high school was expanded when I went there, after eighth grade. We had a grammar school that was kindergarten and one through eight, and then, you'd go to high school, and ... they had started to expand the high school when I entered it, and, other than that, ... well, they did build a few other elementary schools, as the town expanded.

JF: I was going to mention that you had grandparents, and an uncle and his wife, in your home when you were growing up. ... He was a builder. ... He worked on building the high school.

GHF: ... Well, my grandfather and grandmother lived there with us, but, I was, you know, three, four at the most, something like that. My uncle was a steelworker, and he also lived with us, and he retired and starting getting Social Security, for not having paid for it, [laughter] but, I forget when he passed away. ...

JF: Ironworker.

GHF: Yes, ironworker.

SSH: Was he a member of a union?

GHF: Oh, yes. ... He was a union man, all the way through. In fact, ... when he stopped working, he kept going to the union meetings, and he enjoyed life and his colleagues, and he was actually involved in expanding the high school. He did a lot of bridge work in New Jersey.

SSH: What was his last name?

GHF: Rice, R-I-C-E, George Rice. My father was George Fralley and I am George Fralley, so, there were three Georges in the house.

SSH: Where did the last name Rice come from?

GHF: He married my grandmother's sister, I guess.

SSH: He was an uncle by marriage.

JF: Another Welsh name.

SI: Would you say that most of the families in your community were of similar ethnic background or was Belleville a mixed community?

GHF: No, similar. We didn't have any African-American people in the area. I mean, this was just sort of the beginning of things. I had a couple of classmates in high school, ... and there was an Italian community that came into the high school, but, that was a separate sort of a community in Belleville that was, basically, all Italian, and the rest of us were just a mixed variety.

SI: It was a very segmented community.

GHF: Well, I guess you could say that, until we went to high school.

SSH: What were your interests in high school?

GHF: Well, I was interested in the scholarship aspects of things. I did take Latin, and I did take French, and I played high school football. I was in the band for a while. I played the saxophone.

JF: ... You played in a little group, too.

GHF: Oh, yes.

SSH: Did you play with this little group to make extra money?

GHF: Not really. I can't recall that there was any money involved, but, we did go out ... and play at various places, I can't remember now ... what they were, but, there were four or five of us.

SSH: Do you remember what the group was called?

GHF: No. [laughter]

JF: You can fill in the gaps.

SSH: That is one thing that you can do when you get this transcript back. You can add to the transcript. We appreciate that more than when you edit things out. [laughter] Was Rutgers the only college you looked at or did you apply to other schools?

GHF: Oh, yes. I applied and was accepted to Dartmouth, and Lehigh, and a couple more.

SSH: Why did you choose Rutgers?

GHF: ... It was close, and I could ... get home, and the folks could get down, and my high school girlfriend was going to Douglass. ... [laughter]

SSH: Were you able to get a scholarship to Rutgers?

GHF: I forget what the status of things were. Because I was a local, you know, the costs were not as if you were from out of town and this kind of stuff, so, yes, ... we got some money, reduced tuition.

SSH: Did you work while you were on campus?

GHF: Only in the fraternity. I was a Delta Phi and I did work, you know, as a waiter at tables for a couple of years.

SSH: Going into college, did you know what you wanted to major in?

GHF: Well, yes, I did. I wanted to major in the engineering program ... and I focused on civil engineering. I didn't get a degree in civil engineering, because I came back to school after the war, and had a wife and child, ... and another one on the way, and so, I ended up with a business degree, and I'd gotten credit for all the engineering courses I'd taken, and I think ... they helped direct my life and the way I approached things. I was glad I did it and sorry that I just didn't finish it that way.

SSH: You were initiated as a freshman and went through Hell Week. How was that?

GHF: It wasn't too bad. I forget exactly when I got affiliated with the fraternity, but, they worked us over. [laughter] I think, at one stage of the game, I was in charge, and, you know, you get influenced ... by how things went before. ...

SSH: As a freshman, did you have to wear a dink?

GHF: No. ...

SSH: Was your initiation into the fraternity more grueling than the regular freshman initiation?

GHF: Oh, I don't think so. ... They had a lot of fun with us. ... Are you a fraternity man?

SI: No.

GHF: ... I guess, you know, some of them got jumped on pretty hard, not in my fraternity, but, several in the other ones. ...

SSH: Do you remember any incidents from when you got your just rewards as a sophomore?

GHF: Not really. I had my hands full with the class work, and the homework, and sports.

JF: Nothing in particular that you did to the youngsters who were coming along behind you, as part of when you were in charge?

GHF: No, no. ... We just extended their days, [laughter] made them suffer for not having enough sleep for a while.

SSH: You stayed in Hageman Hall your first year.

GHF: Yes.

SSH: Then, you went on to Delta Phi after that.

GHF: Right.

SSH: Did you serve as an officer in your fraternity? How active were you in the fraternity?

GHF: I was pretty active. I was not the president or anything like that. I was in charge of Hell Week one year, but, then, you know, with the war coming up, things sort of settled.

SSH: Do you remember any of the activities that Delta Phi either hosted or took part in?

GHF: Well, we did have parties. ... We had a barn in the backyard, a rather large place where we could hold affairs, and it was okay, at that stage of the game, to have, you know, tap beer and this kind of stuff. I don't know what the ground rules are now. ...

SI: They are a little stricter now. [laughter]

GHF: No, we did host dances and things of that nature.

SSH: Did you interact with the NJC women? How did you meet them and get to know them? You mentioned that your high school girlfriend went to NJC. Was that a good segue for you to get involved in the NJC side of town? [laughter]

GHF: Oh, yes. Well, Jacqueline and I both graduated from Belleville High at the same time, and then, you know, she was over there at Douglass and I was at Rutgers, and most every weekend, I'd walk over there, and ... they had a deadline time. I forget what it was.

JF: Curfew.

GHF: Curfew, yes. We had to get out of there and there was always a mess of us walking home. You know, they said, "Get out of here by eleven-thirty," or twelve at the latest. It depended upon the day, I think, and then, you'd start to go through New Brunswick to get back ... to Rutgers, and there was always ... several groups of ten or more, probably.

SSH: What do you remember about the NJC campus?

GHF: Well, it was very nice. See, originally, it was ... in one of the first dormitories, sort of across from ... the chapel, up to the main street, and then, there's dormitories right there, and that's where she was at first, and then, she was across the highway, further down, Gibson? and then, she was down by the Ag School. ... She was a leader, a house leader, a very active student.  
...

SSH: Do you remember what her interests were, academically and socially?

GHF: Socially, it was me. [laughter] Academically, she was interested in science and she ended up being a science-biology teacher. She eventually got her Ph.D. here in Maryland and she was interested in all kinds of community activities. She was just a wide awake person, interesting and contributing wherever she could.

SSH: Did your families know each other?

GHF: Yes. ...

SSH: When did you pop the question? Did she wear your fraternity pin?

GHF: No. After I got commissioned, I asked her, and, you know, we went on from there. We'll get to that later, I'm sure. [laughter]

SSH: Was she still at NJC?

GHF: No, she had graduated.

SSH: You had both graduated.

GHF: No, I was in the Army.

SSH: Okay.

GHF: Yes, well, you know, I did not get a chance to finish college then. In fact, I didn't have a degree ... when I proposed, but, I was commissioned and had a local job, which didn't last very long. [laughter]

SSH: Were you drafted out of school?

GHF: Well, I was in the ROTC program and a member of the Black Fifty. I don't know if you've run into anybody in the Black Fifty.

SSH: Right.

GHF: ... I have my Black Fifty pin on one of my coats here ... and they took us. There were fifty of us who were technical students, really. We were, like, in the Signal Corps program, because we were ... engineering students, civil, or mechanical, or electrical, and then, they just took us out of school, sent us all down to Fort Dix, New Jersey. We went through basic training there, and I don't know for sure what happened, ... and we also had other ROTC students from different parts of the country come into Fort Dix, and then, my guys all went out to Camp Crowder, Missouri, but, not me. They said my records were lost. Well, it took me about six weeks to get organized and get shipped to Crowder. ... I had to do that by going back to the university and ... getting the military people there to, you know, help me out. Anyway, I did catch up with the guys, and they had finished their technical program while I was doing it by myself, and ... they all went back to Rutgers. I forget what the year was, '43, I guess. So, I got back just before Christmas in '43, joined them, and was one of the first elected to go to OCS, so, my loss didn't really hurt. In fact, I didn't quite finish the program. They yanked me out and commissioned me.

SSH: The OCS program?

GHF: Yes, in the OCS program, and then, I went to Officers' Training School, and then, I got assigned to the communications center in New York City, First Army Com Center, and my folks were living in Belleville, and I'd just go, catch the bus, get the subway, and go to work.

JF: What was the place you were assigned to?

GHF: First Army Headquarters.

SSH: Where did you do your OCS training?

GHF: Fort Monmouth.

SSH: At Fort Monmouth, not too far away.

GHF: It was Signal Corps.

SSH: When you came back to the university, did the ROTC program help you locate your records?

GHF: Yes. ...

SSH: What did you think of the ROTC program at Rutgers?

GHF: Well, I enjoyed it. ... I ended up, at one stage of the game, teaching ROTC myself. We can get to that.

SSH: Right. [laughter]

GHF: But, no, I thought ... it was a good program, kept us out of trouble.

SSH: Were you active in the ROTC right up until you entered the Army?

GHF: Until we all got, yes, sent to basic training.

SSH: Were you one of the leaders of the group?

GHF: Well, we didn't have official leaders, but, yes, I was one of the three or four active guys.

SSH: You played sports at Rutgers. Did you continue to play football at Rutgers? You had played football in high school in Belleville.

GHF: I played football in high school. ... Initially, I went out and did everything. I played lacrosse, but, I couldn't stand it, because the other guys on the lacrosse team were experienced. They'd been to private schools, and ... played lacrosse for a number of years, and I was just getting beat up. I ended up playing 150-pound football as a freshman. I rowed for a while, and then, in my sophomore year, I was playing regular football, and, while I wasn't on the first team, I was on the team.

SSH: Who was your coach that year?

GHF: I don't know. He was glad to see me come back when I did in '47, can't think of his name, but, I didn't go play then. I had too much stuff going on. [laughter]

SSH: Were you involved in any other sports at Rutgers?

GHF: Well, we had intramural softball and basketball, and I swam.

SSH: The engineering program is very intense. Are there any professors that stand out in your mind?

GHF: Yes, there was at least one, but, ... I'm now seventy-six and I have noticed that my memory is not as good as it used to be. I even forget people's names here in the building. ...

SSH: Do you remember your favorite subject? Usually, the favorite professor goes along with the favorite subject.

GHF: ... I think it was a surveying course.

JF: You did some surveying afterwards, as a job.

GHF: Oh, yes. ... I worked at it after.

SSH: What did you think about mandatory chapel?

GHF: I had no problem. I had been, you know, brought up in church. I started off as a Baptist, I ended up as a Methodist, and, you know, I enjoyed ... going to the chapel. Nothing rings any bells.

SSH: [laughter] Do you remember any of the programs that were held during chapel?

GHF: No.

JF: Did you go with Mom? Did Mom go or did they have their own?

SSH: I think NJC had its own services. Did you have any summer jobs?

GHF: Yes, I worked for a construction company. ...

SSH: Was this your family's construction company or another?

GHF: It was a local, New Brunswick company. ...

JF: Was that building the road interchanges there?

GHF: Well, eventually, we built Route 1 through New Jersey, and they offered me a job when I graduated, even though I wasn't an engineering student. I was offered a job to run their asphalt plant, but, I really didn't want to be in construction, and I thought that the offer from the telephone company was worthwhile, and, in fact, they took care of me when I was recalled for Korea. I didn't go back there, but, you know, they kept my job open. [laughter]

SSH: That was good. Since you were stationed in New York, were you able to come back and continue dating the future Mrs. Fralley?

GHF: Oh, yes.

SSH: Did you attend her graduation?

GHF: No, no, I was someplace else.

JF: Let's see, you said that you proposed to Mom after you got commissioned. Was that before you went off to Officers' Candidate School?

GHF: That's where you get commissioned, at Officers' Candidate School. I was working in New York when I proposed to her. She was living in Belleville, I was living in Belleville. ...

SSH: Was she teaching at that time?

GHF: She was working for a pharmaceutical outfit up in Nutley, New Jersey.

SSH: Hoffman-LaRoche?

GHF: Hoffman-LaRoche.

SSH: Do you know what she was doing at Hoffman-LaRoche?

GHF: She was doing experiments. I don't know on what.

JF: Her major was nutritional chemistry and home economics and she was working in their nutritional chemistry research department.

SSH: How long were you in New York after you proposed?

GHF: Well, we got married, I don't know how long it was between the proposal and the marriage, and I was still working in New York City, on Broadway, [laughter] and then, shortly thereafter, I got orders to go out to the Pacific. So, we both went our own ways. [laughter]

SSH: Where did you get married?

GHF: In Belleville.

SSH: You had a ceremony there.

GHF: Yes, in the Methodist Church.

JF: Now, that was September, right? What year are we in?

GHF: '44.

SSH: Okay, 1944.

JF: ... You were commissioned in?

GHF: June. ... I had good military records. My 201 file is one of the more outstanding, but, I can't locate it. I don't know whether Jacqueline threw it away. [laughter] ... No, it's got to be someplace here. ...

JF: So, you were married in September and when did you go off to the Pacific?

GHF: I think I went off in October.

SSH: Where did you go and what was your assignment?

GHF: Well, I was ... working in New York City, as a signal officer in the com center, and that's what they assigned me to in Hawaii. I was assigned to Fort Shafter, which was the headquarters of the Army operation there, and we started pulling a shift.

SSH: What were some of the activities that a Signal Corps officer would be involved in on a typical shift?

GHF: Well, we'd handle the traffic, and make sure the traffic was being received properly, and direct it to the right office. I was involved with cryptography and that's where I really ended up with my career, with communications security, making sure that ... our communications, ... if they were intercepted, that they weren't compromised.

SSH: After you were married, did your wife continue to live in Belleville?

GHF: Yes.

SSH: How did you make your way to Hawaii, after you got your orders in New York?

GHF: Got on a train, rode for about four days. They were not moving by air, but, I went down to San Francisco, and then, they shipped me up to Seattle, and that's where I got on a ship with a bunch of other officers. I was assigned to State Room So-And-So, and, when I went down there, you know, State Room D, I guess it was, I said, "Hey, this is good." I got down there and the capacity was, like, sixty-eight officers, or sixty-eight people, [laughter] but, we survived. We were a little shocked not to find the state room was a state room. [laughter]

SSH: Had you done any traveling prior to this?

GHF: I had done some traveling, but, it was all by car and it was ... from the New Jersey area to the Pennsylvania area, where my relatives were, in Towanda. ... Oh, okay, I did, as an enlisted man, ... go out to Missouri and back. That was all that was. So, the next thing I know, it's California. [laughter]

SSH: Do you remember anything about your travels across the United States?

GHF: Not really. I was surprised. When you meet people, ... I grew up on the East Coast, I knew what the ocean was like and I'd been in it, you'd go down and swim, and people would ask you, "What's the ocean like?" you know, but, they'd been in the center of the country and hadn't had an opportunity to travel, and not many of us did in those days. Anyway, next?

JF: What did you do on the train for those four days?

GHF: Ate and slept, played cards.

SSH: [laughter] Did you get really good at playing cards?

GHF: Not there. Later on, I got good at playing bridge, but, no. Well, I was a bridge player and I was a poker player, and so, I knew the games.

SSH: Do you recall where you were when you found out about the bombing of Pearl Harbor?

GHF: Yes. Well, my folks were down visiting me at the fraternity when the war started. I remember it was a Sunday, and, to my knowledge, I was still focused on what I was doing in school, and at the fraternity, and, you know, in the sports. ... Yes, we knew there ... were problems, but, it wasn't a controlling factor, as far as I was concerned, at that stage of the game.

SI: I know that some refugees were brought to Rutgers and NJC through the efforts of several outreach groups. Was your wife involved with any of these groups?

GHF: I don't have any recollection of her being involved, but, she was that kind of a person.

JF: After you were gone from the campus, I know that ... she and my grandmother knitted things for the servicemen. ...

SSH: We know that some professors were able to get the children of fellow European professors out of Europe and into Rutgers. Were you aware of any foreign students attending Rutgers?

GHF: ... No, I was not aware of any. ...

SSH: When Pearl Harbor was bombed, you were with your parents at Rutgers.

GHF: Yes.

SSH: Do you remember anything that happened at Rutgers that day? How did people react to the news?

GHF: Well, I guess we were all shocked, and, in those days, the communications were not like they are today, where we've got people sitting over there. ...

-----END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE-----

[We have covered a lot of dates and activities, so let me put in a summary of my military life. I went to Rutgers in September of 1940 and was an ROTC student. I entered the advanced ROTC program in my junior year. We were taken out of school and sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey, for basic training in 1943. We then went to Camp Crowder, Missouri, for specialist training and

were returned to Rutgers in December 1943. Early in 1944, I was sent to Officer's Candidate School and Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. I was commissioned in June 1944, attended officer's training and sent to First Army Headquarters in New York, where I was a signal officer. In October 1944, I was shipped out the Pacific where I served in the Army Headquarters Communications Center. I subsequently was assigned to the signal company, Army Headquarters Kauai. In late 1945, I was reassigned to Army Headquarters at Fort Shafter, Hawaii. I served there until 1947, when I went home for separation. I was separated in July 1947 and returned to Rutgers to finish my degree. I was recalled to active duty in November 1950, served at Army Security Agency Headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. In 1951, I was assigned as an ROTC instructor at the Army Security Agency Unit at the University of Illinois. I was separated from active duty in February 1954. I stayed in the Army Reserve Program and retired in February 1983.]

SSH: This continues an interview with Mr. George Fralley. You were telling us about the reaction around campus to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

GHF: Well, I don't know whether you have much to recall there. It didn't seem to change my life, you know, in terms of schooling and other activities. The ROTC program might have gotten a little bit tighter. ... The people that were a year ahead of me were not involved, and I don't know why I was not keeping track of the people a year ahead of them, and, right now, I don't even hardly remember when I got my notification ... that I was no longer a student but an enlisted man. [laughter]

SSH: Did recruiters arrive on campus almost immediately? Had they already been on campus?

GHF: No, I don't recall any recruiting, but, it may not have been in my, you know, activities.

SI: Were any of your friends or classmates moved to enlist right away?

GHF: No, no.

JF: 'Cause you were in a stream, with the ROTC, that was taking you forward to the Army.

GHF: Yes. ... I don't recall anybody being taken out Rutgers. ...

JF: You said, once, that they let the people who were juniors or seniors, or maybe seniors, finish college ... before taking them into the stream, but, those of you who ... had two years had to be inducted.

GHF: Well, that's what they did. ... We were in the advanced program, which starts your third year, and they let anybody that was in their fourth year finish, and they took us out.

SSH: Do you remember any of your classmates? For example, who was your roommate?

GHF: Well, I had a roommate over ... in the fraternity and I had a couple of fraternity brothers that were in the program. I'm having trouble with names.

SSH: You can always add those in later. How long did you stay in San Francisco?

GHF: Oh, only about, maybe, three or four days.

SSH: I guess you did not get to do much sightseeing. [laughter]

GHF: Oh, no, no, I don't recall. Well, I do recall going out to some restaurants. ...

SSH: Coming from the East Coast to the West Coast, did you notice any differences in the culture?

GHF: Not really.

SSH: How were GIs treated in San Francisco?

GHF: In San Francisco, well, I was commissioned then and there were no problems. We were like anybody else, you know, unless you got out of control. Some people just couldn't stay normal. [laughter] You know, they were wearing a second lieutenant's bar. They thought they were top of the hill. ...

SSH: What do you mean by "getting out of control?" Would this be on nights out?

GHF: Well, yes, "I'm the King of the Hill," and this kind of stuff. Some of the people were like that, but, if you weren't like that, then, ... everything was sort of natural, but, that was the way I was brought up and acted.

SI: Did you see that "King of the Hill" mentality in any of your superior officers?

GHF: Oh, yes. Now, I can't give you any specifics, but, sure.

SI: What was your general feeling?

GHF: ... I just sort of avoided those kinds of people. [laughter]

SSH: How long was your voyage? Were you part of a convoy?

GHF: We were in convoy and ... it was a four day trip, at least. ...

SSH: How did the Navy treat you?

GHF: I don't know whether this was Navy run or not. I can't recall. I think everybody onboard was Army, but, I don't know whether we had Army people running the ship. [laughter]

JF: How was the food?

GHF: It was there, we didn't starve. ...

JF: Did you stay with people you'd been on the train with and carry on with the cards and the friendships?

GHF: No. ...

SSH: Where did the Black Fifty go from Missouri? Were they all sent to the same theater?

GHF: No, ... they split up. I guess it depended upon what was needed when we got commissioned. ... They were shipping people directly out to Europe and directly out to the Pacific. How I got to go to New York City, I have no idea. How I got, later on, sent to the Pacific, instead of Europe... I mean, here I am in New York, closer to Europe than the Pacific, I have no idea. You just read your orders and do 'em.

SSH: Once you got to Hawaii, how quickly did you get settled into a routine? Was it chaotic or was it orderly?

GHF: No, there was about, like, a two day procedure that took place up in the mountains, and then, I got sent to Fort Shafter, which is on the edge of Honolulu, ... and then, went to a regular schedule. Sometimes, you're working day shifts, sometimes, you worked in the afternoon or evening. ...

SSH: The two days that you spent in the mountains were basically used to assemble everybody coming into the area, and then, distribute them to their assignments.

GHF: Right.

SSH: During all of this time, did you run into any other Rutgers men?

GHF: I don't think I did.

SSH: What were your duties in Honolulu? Were you facilitating the communications traffic?

GHF: Yes, I'm ... running the communications center. Now, for example, in New York City, the communicators there were all women. Many of them were AT&T people who were sent in there to do this job, and maybe that was two-thirds, and a third of them ... were WACs, ... and that was New York City. Now, in Hawaii, I had men and women running the teletypes and the communications security equipment. ...

SSH: Were they all military at that point?

GHF: They were all military at that stage of the game.

JF: And also from all over the country, like you?

GHF: Yes.

SSH: What was Hawaii like for a kid from Belleville, New Jersey? What were your impressions of Pearl Harbor?

GHF: Well, it was still suffering from the attack and hadn't been reconstructed.

JF: ... The attack was December of '41 and you got there in?

GHF: I got there, I guess, in '44. ... I don't have my records.

JF: Well, yes, October of '44. ...

SSH: How long were you stationed at this one base in Hawaii?

GHF: I don't know, six months, something like that, and then, I was ... sent to the signal company on Kauai, and, there, there were two of us, I mean, in charge of the company, and this was providing communications throughout the island, reconstructing telephone lines, ... and running the com center, and this kind of stuff.

SSH: Were you reconstructing a communications system that had been destroyed in the attack or were you installing a new communications system?

GHF: ... Most of it was new, I believe. ... There was some that was old. ... I didn't think any of it was damaged by the war, but, it was old stuff, you know.

SSH: Was this a pre-existing base that you were sent to or had it also been constructed as a result of the war?

GHF: No, it was the headquarters ... for the island, except for the air base, which was, I don't know, twenty-five miles away. ... Well, let's see, the air base was twenty-five miles away, the Navy base ... was forty miles away, and where I was was the Army base, and they had all kinds of activities there. ... Well, there was communications, which I was involved in. There was ordnance, which was nice to have them there, because I was able to ride a motorcycle that belonged to the ordnance group, and that helped you get around, and what else did we have there? We had a small medical detachment.

SSH: When you were traveling around by motorcycle, was it for recreation or official business?  
[laughter]

GHF: Well, both. It was mostly recreation.

SSH: Did you explore the island?

GHF: Yes, that was nice.

SSH: Did each branch of the service have its own communications center or were you the communications center for the entire island?

GHF: We were the communications for the island, but, you know, the Air Force had their own base communications, and with the aircraft and this kind of stuff. We didn't have that. We were in charge of the Army. ... There's a map up there. My wife made that. Kauai is the big one on the high left and next to it is Niihau, which was a private island. ... I finally got out there. I had a group out there. We had no soldiers, per se, out there, but, that was ... one of our warning units, and they would not take anybody but local natives.

SSH: Really?

GHF: Well, Hawaiians was all that could go out there, but, I did go to pay them once. I was listed as the tenth Halde to have been on that island.

JF: The owners were ... native Hawaiians?

GHF: Yes. ...

SSH: Was it owned by someone or was it part of the territory?

GHF: It was a private island.

SSH: Had it been owned by the royal family?

GHF: No, it wasn't the royal family. I think it might have been the Robinson family who owned it. ... The island is not very big, and the units that we had out there were strictly locals, and they were not permitted to let any of the local inhabitants of Niihau come and see the kitchen, any of the modern advances, that they were living with.

SSH: Interesting.

GHF: It was very strange, but, it was ... our furthest outreach location.

SSH: Did you meet the owners of the island?

GHF: Yes.

SSH: Was this a business meeting or were you there socially?

GHF: Mainly business. ...

SSH: Was this a plantation? Was it a cattle ranch?

GHF: Well, ... there were some cattle, and a couple of planes had crashed, with the Japanese raid, on the island, and they were just trying to keep it isolated, ... so that they could run the thing themselves. I mean, I saw wild turkeys, and, you know, lots of other kinds of birds, but, it was cattle. ...

SSH: I was wondering if it was a pineapple plantation.

GHF: No, no, there was no pineapple there.

JF: ... Didn't you bring Mom a ... necklace that's only found on Niihau? Was it coral?

GHF: Was it coral? No.

JF: It was a shell, a tiny shell, that somebody found there.

GHF: Yes, I forget what they called it. The necklace is still in there.

JF: But, they ... allowed you to take it. ...

GHF: You know, what happened here was, my wife passed away just a year ago, and we've been suffering through it, like we suffered through it for two years prior to that, but, we were ... married a long time, and we had relationships much longer than that, and we traveled worldwide, Europe and the United States. She was one of the first wives to come overseas after the war. I said I'd stay. I got sent back to Honolulu, and so, she was ... actually on the second ship bringing people over, and that's where we really set up housekeeping, and my oldest daughter, who lives in Highland Park, was born there. It was a territory at that time. So, we lived at Fort Shafter. ... I was a reservist, and I couldn't get a regular commission, and they kept saying, "Don't worry about it, you know. One day, you'll get it," and I finally concluded that it was time to go back and finish my college education. So, we did that. I guess we got back ... in '47, and I graduated in '49, but, I got myself sent back to the Class of '44, where all my buddies were.

SI: Since you were at Rutgers both before and after the war, what changes did you notice or were you affected by?

GHF: Well, when I came back, I got housing. It wasn't immediate. I had to live out in one of the little suburbs for a while. In fact, ... we rented a second floor apartment in a farmhouse until they opened up, ... I can't even tell you the name of it.

SSH: Hillside.

GHF: Hillside, yes, and then, so, we moved to Hillside. I was the mayor out there for a while, and then, we moved up behind that, into more permanent places.

JF: You were in a trailer first, and then, you got a little house.

GHF: Hillside, then, we went to a house, and so, you know, all that stuff across the river was developed.

JF: Did you have to get a second or a third child to get that little house?

GHF: No.

SSH: Did being the mayor help? [laughter]

GHF: That was Hillside, yes, probably, but, you know, ... we all did our bit. Jacqueline was just an active person, and taking care of our first one, and then, two, and, also, participating in what's going on at the university.

JF: Oh, that's right. I was born before you were finished. My other sister was born the summer after.

SSH: When you were in Hawaii, you went over to the private island and paid them for the services that they had rendered to the Army.

GHF: ... Yes, money for payday.

SSH: Where were you stationed then? Do you stay there until 1947?

GHF: Oh, no. ... It was, like, a one day visit.

SSH: I am sorry, I meant on Kauai.

GHF: Oh, on Kauai. Yes, we had a headquarters building, and the officers' club was sort of like here, and then, there was a number of two person barracks, and so, ... I had one of them, or half of one. My signal unit headquarters was in the main headquarters.

SSH: Did the responsibility of being one of only two in charge weigh heavily on you or keep you very busy?

GHF: Well, it kept ... us busy. We knew what we had to do, and ... we trained our men, and we utilized the men to the best of their ability.

SSH: Were there any women working under you at this point?

GHF: No, there weren't.

SSH: Oh, really?

GHF: ... I didn't have any women over there.

JF: At Shafter, but, not in Kauai?

GHF: Yes. Were there any women at all? Well, there were some nurses in the hospital up the road, but, that was all there was.

JF: How long were you stationed on Kauai?

GHF: I don't really recall.

SSH: You mentioned that there was high security, because of the cryptography involved. Was everything done via the phones lines or did you have to have messengers running back and forth?

GHF: Well, everything was pretty well done electronically. You know, ... the messengers were, like, in the headquarters building itself, that's all. Once it came into the com center, ... there, it was a one man operation and we'd give it ... to the people who were transporting it. It didn't have far to go, like, it was from here to fifty yards away, at the most, but, you know, the room was locked, and nobody could get in there, except my guys and me. ... A companion couldn't go in there.

SSH: Were there any native Hawaiians working on the base on Kauai?

GHF: Yes, but, they were mostly, like, working in the officer's club in being cooks, and stewards, and that kind of stuff.

SSH: You were able to take a motorcycle and do some exploring. Do you remember any of the things that you found? [laughter]

GHF: Found, well, I made it all the way, ... well, you couldn't drive all the way. I mean, there was a section of the island that had no roads, so, you know, we'd go over there, and then, walk around in one area, near the Navy activity, and then, we'd be down by the airport at the other end of the island. ... It was pretty interesting, seeing the construction, and what people were living in, and then, the farms. ... There was pineapple growing ... on this island. It seems to me there was something else they were working on.

JF: Fishing?

GHF: Avocados, I think.

SSH: Okay. It was a very exotic place back then.

GHF: ... Yes, right, and I could go out in some of the fields and pick avocados myself, from ... a tree, not a plantation, and they were good. I'd bring them back and give them to the cook. They'd fix them up with mayo.

SSH: Did you have people from all over the country working under you?

GHF: Yes. We had people from all over and I had people twice my age in my outfit. ...

SSH: Were they called back from the Reserves?

GHF: No. I can't recall the circumstances at the moment, but, there were ... at least three guys in their late forties.

SSH: Were they from the National Guard units that were called up?

GHF: Could have been, but, they enjoyed it and ... they stayed. Then, I had, you know, a lot of younger people. I had West Coast people and mid-country people, a variety.

SSH: Were you involved in trying to break any of the Japanese codes?

GHF: No, not at that time. I was involved later on, but, it was strictly communications security, you know, protecting our own communications. ... I didn't get involved in any of that other kind of stuff until I was a civilian again, and then, working for the National Security Agency.

SI: Did you find that the nature of the theater, particularly the reliance on radio, made it more difficult to encrypt messages?

GHF: Well, the encryption process ... was not difficult. The radio process was influenced by, you know, the weather, and the equipment was still young, you know, but, things have progressed quite a bit. I was looking this morning ... at an article about the digital TVs that are coming out, but, we're talking, I don't know, I've got a computer here, I got one in the other room there, and it's got a 56K ... modem, yes. Now, the modems we were using were 2.5, and, you know, we've come a long way. [laughter]

SSH: When you were waiting for your regular commission, who were your commanding officers? Where do you think the drag came from?

GHF: Well, I think the drag came ... from main Army headquarters. ... They were protecting the jobs for the graduates ... from West Point and I never did get a regular commission. I'm retired now and I'm collecting a pension.

JF: Retired Reserve.

GHF: Retired Reserve, and so, ... in my case, I had a lot of active duty. I stayed on after World War II was over, and I was recalled for Korea, and so, most of the reservists maybe had a couple

of years ... of active duty. I was up to nine, and then, I got the rest of it by staying active in the Reserve program.

SSH: Was it rare to be able to bring your wife over, particularly since you were not a regular Army officer?

GHF: No, that was not a problem.

SSH: Did she come to Kauai?

GHF: No, she came to ... Hawaii. I was back on Hawaii when she came.

SSH: Okay. When did you get transferred? How did that come about?

GHF: Well, when the war was over, things settled down quite a bit, and I guess I was due for normal rotation anyway, so, they brought me back to Hawaii, and then, I got assigned to what was then started as the Army Security Agency. I was no longer Signal Corps, I was Army Security Agency, and I was in charge of all of the codes, and ciphers, and equipment in the theater, and so, we started, you know, collecting it from various sites that were no longer active, and Washington would send me next month's and the month's after code books and cipher instructions, which I, then, had to distribute to the active groups, and so, I did that out of Fort Shafter, until I decided to come home.

SSH: Were you on Kauai when the atomic bomb was dropped?

GHF: No. I say no, I forget when the atomic bomb was dropped.

SSH: Were you aware of that program or that it was going to happen?

GHF: No, no. I was not aware.

JF: When was the date of that?

SI: August 8th and 12th, I think.

GHF: When?

SI: I think the first bomb was dropped on August 8th.

JF: Of?

SI: 1945.

SSH: Four days later for the other one.

GHF: Yes, yes, so, you know, those kinds of things, the Air Force people may have been aware of, but, we weren't, and that's part of what you call communications security. [laughter]

SSH: Were you scheduled for the planned invasion of Japan?

GHF: ... I was on the list. I was the head signalman. A colonel, ... after my wife had gotten her orders, had put me on the list to go out to Tokyo and it didn't happen. I don't know why it didn't happen. ...

JF: To go out after the end of the war?

GHF: Yes. To go with, you know, the troops that settled down. I spent a lot of time, eventually, in Japan.

JF: But not then?

GHF: ... Not then, no.

SSH: You really did not travel outside of the Hawaiian Islands during the war.

GHF: Yes, well, I got down to ... Christmas Island. ... Well, it's a little bit ... west and south of Hawaii, but, ... that was it.

SSH: Was that on official business?

GHF: Yes, yes.

SSH: How different was Christmas Island from Hawaii?

GHF: Well, it's not that big. It did have multiple service people there and it was another out station that was watching the Japanese.

SSH: Did you get there by boat?

GHF: No. I flew in there. ...

SSH: How long were you on Christmas Island?

GHF: I spent probably five days, something around there, and it was pretty interesting. There were a lot of birds there, terns, pretty interesting.

SSH: Were you aware of what the Army had planned for the invasion of Japan?

GHF: No, I was not. We were still responsible for protecting the island and we had several alerts, but, ... no invasions.

JF: Alerts to be ready to go for the invasion of Japan or alerts that there might be an invasion coming back to Hawaii?

GHF: Alerts that there ... was an invasion coming in.

SI: Were these standard alerts or were they triggered by an event, such as the appearance of enemy submarines off the coast?

GHF: ... They were triggered by something, but, you know, ... it never happened. I guess there were two occasions when that happened. Then, we just secured everything, and got ready, and didn't need to be ready.

SI: I recently read an interview with a man who had been an officer in the Signal Corps in Europe during the time of the Battle of the Bulge. He said that, if the Germans had been able to get to where he was stationed, he had been instructed, essentially, to kill his people, rather than let the Germans obtain their knowledge of encryption. Did you ever receive similar orders?

GHF: No. He was instructed to get rid of his people?

SI: Yes.

GHF: So they couldn't be questioned?

SI: Yes. He decided that the Signal Corps was not for him after that.

GHF: No. ... I've got a lot of friends and people that were in the Bulge. I never heard anything like that.

SSH: How did you secure your equipment for a possible invasion? What did you do with the code books and the different ciphers?

GHF: We had them ready to burn and blow up the equipment, but, none of my people.  
[laughter]

SSH: After the atomic bombs were dropped and the occupation forces were sent into Japan, did communications traffic through your part of Hawaii increase?

GHF: Well, I was near Pearl Harbor, and, you know, most of the traffic came through there. My interest was in the hardware, communications security hardware and the instructions for operating it. You know, we either had to send out rotors, what they called rotors. You changed your rotors periodically. You set them up in different ways. We had ... a lot of one time pads. They're just what they are. ... I could send you a message, if you have the same pad that I've got. I can send you a message once on that particular one. So, we had to distribute them and I distributed them both to the Navy and the Air Force groups. ...

JF: As well as to the Army?

GHF: Oh, yes.

SSH: How far would your communications go before they had to be recoded and resent?

GHF: Well, the Army was focused ... in Hawaii, until they moved their headquarters to Tokyo, I guess, and then, the communications didn't come to Hawaii, they came to Tokyo. So, it was just a matter that the communications were extended.

SSH: When Mrs. Fralley came to Hawaii, were you living in base housing?

GHF: Yes.

SSH: You had housing then?

GHF: We had a nice two story house. ... The first floor was a living room and kitchen and the second floor was two bedrooms.

SSH: Did you get a pass to go welcome her or did you have to go right back to work?

GHF: Oh, well, I met her at the boat, and picked her up, and took her home. ... You know, I was running my own operation, and, while I was doing that, I had enlisted people covering for me. I might have had another officer, a young one. ... So, I had no problems.

SSH: Were you able to take time off for the two of you to explore the island?

GHF: Oh, on the weekends, things settled down, pretty much. We closed up on a Friday night, unless there was something special going on, and, yes, we visited most of the island.

SSH: What were your social activities at this time?

GHF: Well, on the base, there was always something going on at the officers' club, and, you know, dances, and this kind of stuff, or your neighbors. One of my neighbors is now living in Florida, and, when she came over, she had a son already. ... This was a ... six unit building we were in. The end ones were one story, and the middle four were two floors, and so, this particular family, which we've maintained a relationship with, was in the far left as you faced it, and we were in the second, the first high one, and people came and went.

SSH: Is this the only family that you have maintained your Hawaiian connection with?

GHF: I guess so.

JF: Weren't the Peterson's there as well?

GHF: Well, yes, that's right.

JF: Two couples.

GHF: Yes, a retired general, who's down here in Virginia.

JF: That they ran into later, ... when he was posted to Germany.

GHF: Yes.

SSH: Leaping ahead, when you came back to Rutgers, you were the mayor of Hillside [laughter] and you were also the father of two.

GHF: Yes.

SSH: Was your family glad to have you come back?

GHF: Well, I think so. My dad had passed away. This was just before my wife came to Hawaii.

SSH: Were you able to come back to the States to be with your father ?

GHF: They sent me back on emergency leave. ...

-----END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE-----

SSH: This continues an interview with Mr. George Fralley on April 17, 1999, in Silver Springs, Maryland. You were telling us about how you came back to the United States on emergency leave. How did you come back?

GHF: Well, they flew me. I got the word that my father was quite ill, and I guess we got it through channels, and, the next thing you know, I had emergency leave orders and was flying home.

SSH: Did your trip consist of hops on different military aircraft?

GHF: Yes. ... I went from Hawaii to Dallas, Texas, I believe, and then, from there to the East Coast to ...

JF: McGuire?

GHF: No, somewhere south of here, I think. ... Was it south of here?

JF: Aberdeen?

GHF: Well, I forget where it was now, but, ... once I got over here on the East Coast, I just grabbed a train to Newark and my brother picked me up. I guess, no, he picked me up for Mom's death. ...

SSH: Did the Red Cross or your family notify you of your father's illness?

GHF: I think it came from the Red Cross.

SSH: Were you able to stay for the duration of the illness?

GHF: Well, yes. I forget when I went back. ... They were telling me that I really didn't have to go back. ... My wife had her orders by then, and I had a job that was a good one, and so, I went back, and then, she followed.

JF: But, you could have mustered out of that?

GHF: Apparently. ...

SSH: Your wife had her orders to travel to Hawaii.

GHF: Yes.

SSH: I thought that maybe she joined the military there, in between. [laughter]

GHF: No, no. [laughter]

SSH: Did you travel back to Hawaii together?

GHF: No.

SSH: You went ahead of her.

GHF: Yes.

JF: When did she come over, Dad?

GHF: Not too long after, a month later, or something like that.

SSH: When was your first child born?

GHF: Well, the first child ... was born, oh, it was Roxanne, like, nine months after she got there.

SSH: [Laughter] Well, I did not mean to pry.

GHF: Yes.

JF: ... January of 1947.

GHF: January of '47.

SSH: We can almost figure out exactly when your mother came over. [laughter]

GHF: ... When we brought her home, ... I don't know, maybe she was three or four months old.

SSH: Did you and your wife fly back?

GHF: Yes.

SSH: It was kind of novel at that time to fly with children.

GHF: Yes, no. We flew into California and, actually, visited some relatives there.

JF: Oh, who did you visit?

GHF: Well, one of my mother's sisters was living there with her child, Gertrude was a child, and then, we flew back home.

SSH: Did you fly back here from California?

GHF: Yes.

SSH: When did you buy your first car?

GHF: When I was in Rutgers, before the war.

SSH: Oh, really?

GHF: One of my fraternity brothers. I don't know why he was selling the car, because he got another one or he was leaving to go into the service. I had a Buick, like, a \$300 dollar Buick.

JF: You had already been working on your Dad's car, or on a car at home, right?

GHF: Oh, yes. No, I always grew up with tools and had no problem with automobiles.

SSH: Were you spiffy, driving around campus in your Buick? [laughter]

GHF: No, we didn't. I kept it in the back of the fraternity, maybe there were five or six other cars there, and I didn't drive it around too much. Well, I guess going to Douglass. [laughter]

SSH: I guess that helped with the walk.

GHF: Yes. [laughter]

SSH: When you entered the Army, were you able to sell it to another fraternity brother?

GHF: I forget what happened to it. It was still running. ... I have totaled a couple of cars, one fairly recently. [laughter] ...

SSH: When you came back with your wife and infant daughter and settled in Hillside, did you have a car at that point or were you just too focused on school and work?

GHF: Well, let's see, we had a car. It might have been a Ford, I guess. ...

JF: Did you have space to park it, right there by the trailer?

GHF: Yes.

SSH: Living in the trailer, if you wanted to get water, did you have to go to a community facility? [laughter]

GHF: Yes. The bathroom was down the street. ...

SSH: The mayor did not receive any perks? [laughter]

GHF: Nope. [laughter]

SSH: How were you elected mayor of Hillside?

GHF: I guess I really don't recall.

SSH: Were you running opposed to someone?

GHF: Well, I think it was, you know, somebody else said they'd run and I said I'd run.

SSH: Did you act as a liaison between the community and the Rutgers administration?

GHF: Yes.

SSH: Did you have any voice over how things were run?

GHF: Not much, not much. You know, we had our own rules and regulations, you know, for Hillside and that was, basically, where we were trying to stay.

SSH: Do you remember any of your neighbors?

GHF: We didn't have any problems. Oh, yes. In fact, the wife of one of them is living here in Leisure World. He passed away.

JF: Who's that? Claire? ...

GHF: No, it is Mary Lou Flechsig.

SSH: Did you have a deputy mayor or was there just one elected official?

GHF: ... Just one elected official, and, you know, ... it wasn't a big deal, didn't have any major problems to solve, and I think the term was only a year.

SSH: Okay. Were you still active in your fraternity at this point?

GHF: Not really. I mean, yes, we participated in fraternity activities, but, I was not, you know, an officer.

SSH: Were you still involved with the ROTC program?

GHF: No, not then.

SSH: Had the rules and regulations for underclassmen changed very much from what you knew as a freshman and sophomore?

GHF: ... Not that I recall. Again, I was focused. I was a father, and a student, and I had some part-time jobs.

SSH: What did you do?

GHF: Oh, I worked for something like Burger King, I'm not sure whether it was Burger King or not, and then, I got hooked up ... with the construction people. What I was doing was working Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, all day, and I'd go to school Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday morning, and I had one night course, and so, I worked for this construction company, building Route 1.

SSH: Did you return as a much more focused student?

GHF: Yes, I think so. I didn't have to study so long, or, you know, concentrate.

SSH: Did your grade point average go up? [laughter]

GHF: Yes, I think it did. I don't even have that around here, but, I had no problem getting the necessary credits. ...

SSH: Why did you change your major from engineering to business administration?

GHF: Well, it was ... an easier program, let's put it that way. I'm sure that if I had to go back and ... pick up a bunch of engineering courses, you know, that would have been tougher. ... My tough problem was, I had to take a language, and so, rather than taking advanced French, I took Spanish for two years. ...

JF: ... You had to run off a PE obligation. That was your one other problem. What was that about? You owed somebody laps. ...

GHF: Oh, yes. I forget what that was all about. ...

JF: The physical education requirement?

GHF: Yes, yes. I was able to take care of that without too much difficulty.

SSH: What did you do?

GHF: ... I had to run around the track and it'd help keep us up to speed here. They wanted me to play football and I just couldn't do that.

SSH: What was Mrs. Fralley doing at this time? Obviously, she was a wife and mother.

GHF: Well, she ... worked for a doctor in New Brunswick, just across the river, who went from Hillside down there. ... I don't know what happened to Roxanne at that time.

SSH: Did you have child-care facilities at Hillside?

JF: I know you had a couple of good friends in those trailers that ... I think you traded baby-sitting duties with, back and forth.

GHF: Yes, I can't recall.

JF: I think there was a family with a child the same age, ... right close in the trailers, and then, I was born in February of '49, the second year. They actually went from a fraternity party. They had a false alarm, went to the hospital, and then, they went back to the fraternity party. Roxanne was upstairs, ... sleeping in a basket.

GHF: Yes, we had really big baskets. We'd take Roxanne in that to the affairs and put her up in one of the, you know, rooms upstairs. [laughter]

SSH: Were other fraternity brothers in the same situation, carrying little baskets and parking them upstairs? [laughter]

GHF: Not really. I think I was the only one.

SSH: What do you remember about Robert Clothier and Dean Metzger?

GHF: The names are good.

JF: Was he the President?

SSH: Yes. Did you feel that they welcomed back the returning veterans?

GHF: Well, they took good care of us. ... I remember spending a little time with both of them.

...

JF: Did they have a reception for you?

GHF: No, you know, getting organized, and getting back into the routine, and getting my study program set up. They encouraged the veterans. ... They had the helpers to make sure we got good care.

SSH: Did you go back to Hillside after class or did you go directly to work?

GHF: ... No, I'd go right to work. I worked the afternoons on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and then, some Saturdays, I would work, ... depending on what the contractors were doing, but, they fired some people, because I was available to them. ... I was sort of the supervising engineer at the job headquarters out on Route 1, and so, they got rid of some people that they were paying. ... I was limited in what I could accept, but, that was all right. ...

JF: ... Because of your veterans' benefits?

GHF: I forget why I was limited. ... It was something like some of these problems ... you get up with the income tax. You know, you got some limits, but, anyway, ... it was nice. They appreciated me and I appreciated the job.

SSH: Did you have to join a union to work on this job?

GHF: No. I was like a professional.

SSH: Did you participate in the graduation ceremony or did you go right out the door to work?

GHF: No, no, we went through graduation, and then, we moved from New Brunswick up to Belleville.

JF: ... Did your family come down to the graduation?

GHF: Yes.

JF: Mom, Gramps, Nana, and Bob, and aunts, who else came?

GHF: I don't remember.

SSH: Did you have two baskets then? [laughter]

GHF: Yes. ...

SSH: You began working for the Bell Telephone system.

GHF: Yes, working out of Hackensack, and I was the assistant plant engineer, got involved in a lot of the new construction, was involved in some of the facilities that we had to put up when they started working on the stadium in the, ... I want to say Plains ...

SSH: Meadowlands? Were you part of the Meadowlands Complex?

GHF: Yes.

SSH: Okay.

JF: What was your job there?

GHF: Putting in telephone support. Well, you know, ... we used the same poles as the Public Service people, and so, we put in some poles and they put in some poles.

SSH: It was a cooperative operation.

GHF: Yes.

JF: ... What was your position? ...

GHF: System plant engineer.

SSH: Were you shocked that you were recalled for Korea?

GHF: Well, sort of. Now, I'd been continuing the Reserve activities, once a month I guess it was. We'd have meetings just off the Pulaski Skyway, and my MOS was very rare, and so, I was one of the first called back. It was December ... of '50, and that was shortly after my youngest daughter was born, but, ... you know, they stayed there in Belleville, and I came down to Washington, ... over at what's called Arlington Hall Station. It had been an all girl's school, but, it was the focal for the Army Security Agency, at that stage of the game, and that's what I was assigned to, I was not Signal Corps, and, while they were checking up on my clearances, and so forth, my job was to recall the other Reservists. So, I had ... a lot of friends up in New Jersey who were calling, "What's going on, George? What's next? Am I or am I not?" and so, I did that until my clearances were up to date, and then, I got back into the technical side of things, and then, moved the family down.

JF: Mother was shocked when he got called back up, with a three-month-old, three kids in diapers. [laughter]

GHF: I don't think Roxanne was in diapers anymore, but, anyway, we lived in a couple of places, and ended up down in Fort Meyer, and then, up came an opportunity to go to the University of Illinois as an ROTC instructor. Well, that was a hell of a lot better than going to Korea.

SSH: Given the choice. [laughter]

GHF: ... I said, "Great," and so, we, eventually, ended up at the University of Illinois and stayed there for several years.

JF: How long did you drive back and forth?

SSH: That is a heck of a commute, Mr. Fralley.

GHF: Yes, it was. Once, I did it in snow, ... behind a trailer, and, I don't know, I forget, quite a few hours. ... If the family was there, then, we'd just go, like, part way, and then, finish it up, and then, I had to come back to headquarters once in the while. ... Summertime, we took the kids to ROTC training camp at Fort Devins, Massachusetts. ...

SSH: You were with the ROTC program. Were you only there during the school year or was it a twelve month appointment?

GHF: Well, we had a twelve month appointment, but, ... I went to Massachusetts, to run the program up there, and I guess I made it three times, and the family came twice, I guess. Once, I came by myself and left them in Illinois.

SSH: They made the move from Virginia to Illinois.

GHF: Oh, yes.

SSH: When you were in Massachusetts, was this a huge conclave of ROTC cadets from all over the country?

GHF: No, this was the summer camp for Army Security Agency students and the University of Illinois had some, Texas A&M had some, University of Massachusetts had some. ... There were only three sources, and then, their instructors would come, too. ...

SSH: Was the ROTC program that you were instructing similar to the one that you had gone through at Rutgers or was it completely different?

GHF: It was quite different. In terms of subject matter, you know, the standard marching, and this, that, and the other thing was no different, but, ... we taught some cryptography, so they'd get used to that kind of thing, simple stuff, the use of some of the equipment and code books. I taught a course ... in Army legal matters, which I had to get really primed up on. I forget what the whole kit and caboodle covered, but, there were two of us there at the university, teaching Army Security Agency tactics.

SSH: Were your students drafted out of the program and sent to Korea or were they allowed to finish up?

GHF: ... No, they were able to complete the program, and then, they were commissioned, and some of them ... were called to active duty, and, actually, ... I think three or four of them worked for the National Security Agency.

SSH: Were you there for three years or four years?

GHF: Three years.

SSH: Then, you came back to Maryland.

GHF: Well, then, I retired, [laughter] and I was on leave of absence from the telephone company, but, I elected to see what else was available, and I was given a couple of job offers here in Washington, and I eventually accepted one with, ... well, let's see, when was the timing? the Army Security Agency, and then, it turned into the National Security Agency.

SSH: Okay.

GHF: So, I went to work for the National Security Agency. I really just took off my uniform and continued working.

SSH: You were working as a civilian for the National Security Agency.

GHF: Yes.

[Here is a summary of my civilian employment. I was employed by the National Security Agency in April 1954. My career included a wide variety of COMSEC (Communications Security) planning, policy, management and liaison assignments. After being involved in the United States Communications Security Board and foreign COMSEC assistance activities for a number of years, I was selected to be the first NSA liaison officer to the Defense Communications Agency. In that assignment, I was also accredited to the manager of the National Communications System and participated in the development of the AUTODIN, AUTOVON and AUTOSEVOCOM systems. From 1967 to 1970, I served as the Chief, Management Staff, Office of Communications Security, NSA, and was primarily responsible for the development and justification of the Department of Defense Communications Security Program. From August 1958 to February 1959, I attended the Armed Forces Staff College; I

was the only civilian in the program. In July 1970, I was assigned as the Senior COMSEC Representative, NSA Europe and worked for three years providing COMSEC assistance to Headquarters European Command and other activities in the theater. From 1974 to 1978, I was back at NSA Headquarters, involved with the planning activities associated with the research and development of the new generation COMSEC equipment. In June 1978, I was assigned as the Senior COMSEC Representative, NSA/CSS Pacific. In this capacity, I provided direct support to CINCPAC, COMUS Japan and COMUS Korea on all aspects of communications security. I returned to Headquarters NSA in late 1981 and retired in January 1982.]

SSH: I read in your pre-interview survey that Mrs. Fralley taught in a German school. Were you transferred to Germany?

GHF: Yes. Well, I first worked at ... the Arlington Hall Station, and then, Nebraska Avenue, at the Navy Security site there, as an National Security guy, and then, Fort Meade.

SSH: Okay.

GHF: Okay, so, then, when I was at Fort Meade, I had a variety of jobs, and they needed a technical man to go to Europe, to support the Army, to support the European Command, and so, ... I went over there. We had one guy there, and I was the second one, and so, while we were there, Mrs. Fralley taught school for the Army.

SSH: How long were you in Germany?

GHF: About four years.

SSH: What happened to your children while you were in Germany? This was in the 1970s, so, they must have been young adults.

JF: They went over there in 1970 and came back in '73, so, my sister married just before they left and I was going to my last year of college.

GHF: Wait a minute, Germany or Hawaii?

JF: Germany. My last year of college was their first year over there, '70, '71, and my younger sister went with you and went to study in Berlin for that year.

SSH: I am reading about Mrs. Fralley teaching from 1972 to 1974.

GHF: Yes, in Germany, '72 to '74. I was over there before '72.

JF: Yes, they went over in the summer of ...

GHF: We went over in '70, I think.

JF: Yes, Roxanne got married and graduated in June, 'cause you guys were there by the time I came over to see you that August. ...

SSH: You probably did go over sooner. She started teaching in 1970.

GHF: Well, we all went together.

SSH: She was probably getting up to speed on the language.

GHF: She did. She went to school and she studied German.

SSH: Did you have to study German?

GHF: I didn't have to, but, I learned enough street German that it was no problem, if we were traveling and I wanted a place to stay or we were going to eat. ... Between the two of us, we did quite well. [laughter]

SSH: Where did you live when you were there?

GHF: We lived at Patch Barracks, a US military base in Stuttgart, Germany, was the headquarters for the European Command.

SSH: Okay. Did you travel around Europe a lot?

GHF: Oh, yes. My job ... got me to England, France, Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey. ...

SSH: Were you aware of the reconstruction that took place after the war, even that many years later?

GHF: Yes, particularly in Germany. They were rebuilding the roads and they did a much better job with the road base and the whole, total road than we were doing over here on new stuff. ...

SSH: [laughter] This is where your Route 1 experience comes in, right?

GHF: Yes, right, ... with the high speed, no speed limit, on the Autobahn, and I remember the first time I had the car shipped over, and I picked it up in Holland and drove about twenty miles, I guess, to get to the freeway. The next thing I know, I'm looking at the speedometer, and I'm doing eighty miles an hour, and I'm just sort of hanging in there with most of the people, and another guy, he's just going right past me.

SSH: Were there a lot of American cars on the road at that time?

GHF: Not really. No, they were, you know, mostly German, and those cars didn't meet the American specifications, so, you couldn't bring them back. I mean, if you bought one over there,

you just couldn't bring it home without going through a high cost of updating it, that kind of stuff.

SSH: Did you travel by air in and out of Berlin or did you drive across?

GHF: No, there was no restrictions. I had to go by air, and I was limited on what I could do, because of my occupation, but, ... I flew out of someplace down near where I was living. Yes, I guess just outside of Stuttgart most of the time, sometimes up in Frankfurt, depending on where I was going, and with whom, and this kind of stuff.

SSH: Your youngest daughter was in school in Germany.

GHF: Yes, she went to Schiller College in Berlin. She had done one year at Swathmore and one year at Colgate. Then, she came to Europe with us.

JF: I was at Wellsley for three years, and then, my last year, I had a fellowship to Hampshire, the first year of Hampshire College. So, I was at Hampshire.

GHF: ... One of sixteen advanced students at Hampshire.

JF: They started with a small class, you know, 250 freshpersons, and so, they brought in eighteen students who would have been seniors wherever, to have a few older students. So, I got to visit. I visited them in December and August of their first year there, but, Denise came back and forth. In fact, we had restrictions on where we could go. We weren't to go behind the Iron Curtain, but, ... Denise got down to see them a handful of times. Did you ever go see her in Berlin?

GHF: Yes, but, only when I was up there on business.

SSH: When you were sent to another country, how long would you be there? If Mrs. Fralley was teaching, did she get to travel with you?

GHF: Not for those kinds of trips. If we took a vacation or something, we got off. She did come to England with me. ...

JF: They'd take leave time.

GHF: ... I took some leave while I was there and we got a chance to see most of Scotland.

JF: She went on a couple of trips on her own, on the bus.

GHF: ... We had a good ... travel program out of Stuttgart, and, with the car, I could do a lot of stuff myself, and we used our weekends ... to see the country, spent a lot of time in France. Many times, we'd finish work on Friday afternoon, and drive to the border, get on the train, be in Paris in a couple of hours, and I'd stay at the Circle de Militaire, the French would let ... us stay there, and come home Sunday night and get home in time to go to work. ...

JF: ... They took my younger sister and me to Barcelona for that first Christmas, and, ... in the car, we got snow in the south of France, the biggest snow in forty years, and then, ... I went with you and Mom to Munich. So, there were bus trips that they took advantage of.

GHF: Yes. We used every opportunity we could to get around and, you know, see Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey.

SSH: How did the Europeans treat you, as Americans?

GHF: I had no problem, whether it was my language skills, I don't know. In Germany, ... we used to go to the rural places, and, in France, we'd stay at the restaurant that had a couple of rooms, and her French was good. She'd studied it for four years and had no problem ... with French. I had no problem with street French either. I'd taken two years of French. So, we were accepted and not shunned. We had a good time.

SSH: How did you see the National Security Agency change during your career there?

GHF: Well, having been ... out of the country, like, when I came back from Germany, it wasn't too long after that where they needed somebody to take care of the Pacific Command, and so, I went out there, and that ... was quite a bit different, in that we lived on Oahu, and I worked out of Pearl Harbor, but, I was responsible for Japan, and Korea, and Thailand, and the Philippines, and in Australia, and so, I was flying a lot of the time, and it was constantly on the move, and it was one of these things where, you know, the time difference was such that you could talk to the people in Washington when you first got there, because they'd been there for four or five hours, and then, ... they were gone home, and, you know, you still had things to do, and, if you were out further, it was entirely different, but, ... it was a no problem kind of relationship, whether it was business or visiting.

SSH: When did you go back to Hawaii?

GHF: Went back to Hawaii and I don't know whether I got any dates in here or not.

JF: You went to Hawaii in '78, back here in '81.

GHF: Okay, I went to Hawaii in '78, and then, I stayed there until early '81, I believe, and then, I came home and ... asked to be retired, and they had no problem with that. Normally, you're supposed to spend a full year back here before you can retire, and so, I asked and they said, "Okay."

SSH: Are there any projects that you worked on or things you would like to tell us about concerning the National Security Agency?

GHF: Well, I worked on the SEATO program with the Department of Defense people, and made several trips out to the Pacific earlier on, this is like 1960, '62, or 1963, and SEATO eventually

folded up, but, we were providing direct support to the European Command and the Pacific Command ... on communication security matters. We were able to do quite a bit.

SSH: Did you have any interaction with political appointees to the National Security Agency?

GHF: There are very few political appointments. Now, what's happened since I retired, I'm not sure, okay. I do try to get to lunch with some of my colleagues. We go down, like, two or three times a year to Annapolis, to a restaurant, and, ... generally, it's all the guys that I worked with.

...

[Tape Paused]

SSH: You were saying that you go down to Annapolis to join up with your colleagues for lunch. Do you talk about the political situation and about the NSA at this lunch?

GHF: Not too much, really, mostly what's going on with the individuals involved, and some of the people still go out there, working on histories and that kind of thing, but, ... there's not too much discussion on what's going on. I get a publication, a monthly publication, because I'm a member of what's called the Phoenix Society.

SSH: What is that?

GHF: Oh, that's retired NSA people, and this group that we have lunch with, ... we all worked together. We don't have people from here, and here, and here. So, it's ... a nice opportunity to see what's going on, and to see who we lost, and this kind of stuff.

SSH: Did you have favorites during your service with the NSA among the heads of the agency, or non-favorites, or are you going to remain politically neutral? [laughter]

GHF: I'm not sure I understand the question. ...

JF: Favorites among the directors?

SSH: Among the directors, were there men that you thought were very competent?

GHF: Oh, yes, absolutely.

SSH: Incompetent?

GHF: No, I didn't. There was no incompetence, and, most of the time, Lou Tordella was the deputy, and he was a civilian, and so, Lou and I, we're friends, and he did a hell of a job. He had more to worry about than just my interests, but, you know, they were the people that ran all the computers, and were ... handling the intercepted traffic, and trying to break it down, making the correct distributions to the State Department, or CIA, or whoever.

SSH: Did you encounter any interesting intercepted traffic?

GHF: I was not that deeply involved in intercept or ... the breaking down of the traffic. I saw the results depending upon the subject matter, and, you know, appreciated that kind of input, rather than influenced my job, but, in terms of actually being involved in the breaking of communications, not really.

SSH: Did any agency or administration policy changes influence your job at all?

GHF: I don't know. They seem to be having trouble now ... with minorities. Most of the people, when I was there, were really technically competent, educated people who were mathematicians, and so forth, and, you know, did their job, and, now, they're saying, "Well, we've got to have two percent of this and three percent of that," and I don't know where you get some of these people, and having been ... out almost twenty years now, I'm ... just not that close.

SSH: We know that Jacqueline lives close by. Where does the rest of your family live now?

GHF: Roxanne is the oldest one, and she's living in New Brunswick, and Denise is the youngest one, and she's living in Italy.

SSH: Do you have grandchildren?

GHF: Two grandchildren in New Brunswick.

SSH: Do you come up to New Brunswick often?

GHF: No, I have not been traveling. I haven't been to New Brunswick in probably three years.

JF: My Mom had a long illness before her death a year ago, and then, he had the surgery, ... that was April, and then, his back was so bad for those next series of months that surgery became necessary in September, and so, they've been coming here from New Jersey, and we just met them on Easter. ... Well, he's had two trips now, from here to Ocean City, where his brother has moved recently, twice since September, and, on Easter, we drove up to meet my sister, and her kids, and aunt and uncle, just at the edge of the Delaware, at the other side of the bridge.

GHF: Across the bridge. ...

SSH: We thank you for taking the time to be interviewed. When you get your transcript back, if there are things that you want to add, please do. We thank you very much.

GHF: Okay, you can shut it off.

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 5/22/00

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 5/26/00  
Reviewed by George Harry Fralley 8/01