Kathryn Tracy: This begins an interview with Mr. Reece Haines on October 18, 2000 in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Kathryn Tracy and …

Shaun Illingworth: Shaun Illingworth.

KT: Let’s begin by discussing your family. Where and when was your father born?

Reece Haines: My father was born in 1886.

KT: Where was he born?

RH: In Chester County, Pennsylvania.

KT: How did your family end up in Pennsylvania?

RH: Well, back up a little bit. The Haines’ landed in Burlington in 1682. … My dad was brought up in New Jersey, but his father bought a farm in Pennsylvania, so my dad was raised in Pennsylvania. … He went to Westtown School, met my mother, and she’s from New Jersey, also, so they wound up in New Jersey. … It just happens I was born during a flu epidemic, so I [my mother] went to my uncle’s house in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, so I was born in Pennsylvania, also. … Then the family came back to New Jersey, or I came back with the family to New Jersey.

SI: Do you have any idea why your father’s father immigrated to Burlington?

RH: You mean in 1682?

SI: Oh, I’m sorry. I mean, your father’s family.

RH: I’m the seventh generation of the Haines’ that landed in Burlington City in 1682. … The reason I’m only the seventh is because two of my grandfathers fathered children when they were over forty years old, so it’s like skipping a whole generation. I have lots of cousins that are in the twelfth generation. I’m not familiar with them, but I have books that show.

KT: You said your father went to the Westtown School.

RH: Yes.

KT: What kind of school was that?

RH: It’s a Quaker School and it’s actually co-ed, and it’s the oldest co-ed school in the country, I believe.

KT: What was that education like?
RH: The same as high school, but you lived there. The teachers lived there. The idea was that you could get more attention.

KT: What was your father’s occupation?

RH: Well, he had several jobs. He was one of the first persons trained to pasteurize milk, so he had several jobs in dairies. … I believe lifting heavy milk cans, I don’t know whether you remember how big they used to be, they say that he hurt his back. Then he started working in a delicatessen and was half-owner of that for a long time. I think he retired at sixty-five and then he did house painting for anybody that called him. Oh, he was janitor of a small post office, so he only had to work about … two hours a day.

KT: What year were you born?

RH: 1918.

KT: While you were growing up, your dad was the half-owner of the store?

RH: For the later part of it, yes, yeah.

KT: What about your mother, did your mother work?

RH: No.

KT: Do you have siblings?

RH: I have one brother.

KT: When was he born?

RH: Nineteen hundred and twenty-two, four years younger.

KT: When you were growing up, what town did you live in?

RH: Marlton.

KT: Marlton, okay. How was your family affected by the Great Depression?

RH: Well, I can remember my dad saying that we were eating insurance policies. I guess, he cashed in the cash value of an insurance policy or something like that. The owner of the store was also in trouble and that’s when Dad got into half of it. I don’t know whether that was another cashed-in insurance policy or not. [laughter] But it was still called (Lidel’s?) Delicatessen. Nobody knew my dad was part-owner. … In the summertime he would leave there, because so many of the customers went to Atlantic City or the Shore, and we ran a roadside market on Kings Highway. The address now would be Vorhees Township. At that time, it was Delaware Township.
SI: In interviews of other people whose parents owned delicatessens and food stores, we get the impression that during the real depths of the Depression, they were almost feeding the town on credit. Do you have any idea if your father was?

RH: Well, because of the financial situation with (Lidel’s?) Delicatessen, they just couldn’t afford to. … I’m sure Dad brought things home and gave it to people occasionally, but that was one thing that reduced their business. They just were not able to give credit. This was in Haddonfield, New Jersey, that’s where he worked. There’s a bank right where that store used to be, Kings Highway and (Tanner?) Street in Haddonfield.

SI: What was your community like, growing up?

RH: Marlton had one small school, eight grades. They sent the high school students to Moorestown. I would walk to school. I was only about four blocks from the school. … When I got out of eighth grade, I went to Moorestown High School for two years, and Evesham Township, which is where Marlton is, had to send their students somewhere. They didn’t have a high school. Moorestown couldn’t take them anymore, so they were going to go to Haddonfield. … That was when my parents thought it was a good time for me to go to Westtown, since I was a Quaker, “Why there’s usually some scholarship money available,” and I’m sure, I don’t remember and don’t know a thing about it, but I’m sure that’s what I went on. It was a very modest scholarship, of course, but that's … the … way I got there.

SI: Could we ask you about your faith and what role that played in your childhood and your family life?

RH: Faith?

SI: Yes.

RH: Yes. I was raised a pacifist. I got beat up a few times, and then, all of a sudden, when I was in eighth grade, I got tired of it, so I beat up on a few others. [laughter] The principal said, “What happened to you today?” I said, “I don’t know.” But after I told one off and beat him up, you can tell when you’re ahead of somebody, you know, [laughter] and so I went to the next guy. [laughter] … Even though I was a pacifist at that time, I wasn’t practicing it very well.

SI: What about your parents? How involved were your parents in the …

RH: Quaker Meetings?

SI: Yeah.
RH: Yeah. Well, Dad was always on some committee in the Quaker Meeting, and Mother attended regularly and helped with the socials and things like that. Actually, the Cropwell Meeting was a very small meeting and that was just outside Marlton. It was a very old meeting that started in the 1700s, and they didn’t have a Sunday school when I was growing up, so literally I went to the Methodist’s Sunday School. A funny thing [is that] after the war, somebody from the Methodist church called and said, “Do you still want to be a member of this church?” I didn’t know I was a member. [laughter] I just imagined that when they had some sort of a drive to get membership, when I was there in Sunday School, they put me in, [laughter] put my name in. So I said, “No, I’m now trying to do my duties to the Quaker Meeting.” [laughter] … Medford is an old Quaker Meeting and that’s where I went after the war.

KT: What activities did you participate in when you were in high school at the Westtown School?

RH: Soccer, basketball and track and baseball.

KT: Did you work while you were in high school? Did you have a job?

RH: There was just a little bit of work in the woods. I kind of liked it. You’d get out after school and saw or chop wood or clean up an area or something like that.

SI: Were there any New Deal programs enacted in your area like the CCC camps or NYA to get people to work?

RH: Yeah. I can remember when the CCC was around and I know a couple of guys that were in it, but I can’t think of anything that were right around our towns.

SI: Were there any New Deal programs that affected you and your family?

RH: When I got to Rutgers, I was in the National Youth Administration program and received maybe ten dollars a month or something like that. … I was in Ag, so I lived in what’s now the New Jersey Garden Club building, across Route 1, and I was a janitor in that with one roommate. We took turns keeping the fire going. In that time, it was wood and then coal. You had to start it with wood and then you fired it with coal.

SI: We want to get into your Rutgers career, but we want to ask a few more questions about your pre-Rutgers life.

RH: Sure.

KT: While you were in high school were the events in Europe leading up to World War II being discussed at all?

RH: No, I don’t think so. I was there from ’34 to ’36 in Westtown School, which is equal to the high school education.
SI: In terms of the Nazi persecution of religious groups, we hear a lot about Jehovah’s Witnesses and people of Jewish faith, but Quakers were also persecuted. Did you hear about any of that in your community? Did you have any refugees in your community?

RH: No, I think the Quakers that suffered were back in the Revolutionary time and before. … Most of us, because of the American Friend’s Service Committee, which is a little like a Red Cross, our reputation was such that goodies and baddies would leave us alone. That’s the way I look at it.

SI: I was talking about the Nazis in Germany persecuting German Quakers.

RH: I’m sure they had to go, I know a few names that went to the Netherlands, first, and then England and then got over here, before the big trouble came. I’m sure there were some there, but I’m not familiar with anyone that lived through it over there.

SI: Did your parents ever discuss with you their views towards World War I?

RH: No, I can’t remember any of it.

SI: Oh.

KT: When you were in high school, what were your goals for the future?

RH: Well, I thought I’d be a farmer, but I didn’t think too seriously about it and my dad didn’t own a farm. But I had two uncles that owned farms, and when I would come home at Easter, I would usually work on that and I worked on one a full summer when I was about fourteen on my uncle’s farm. I guess that was the first, that was between my junior and senior year in Westtown School.

SI: I have one last question about this. We’ve heard in a lot of interviews that in South Jersey there was a lot of Klan activity organizing against Jews and Roman Catholics and other religious minorities. Did you ever hear about that or hear about marches or that sort of thing?

RH: All I can remember was the first political contest I was involved in, not as running, but I was pushing one side, after the war. They used the fact that this one man was a Catholic. They didn’t want him in there, [laughter] and that was unfair, but, of course, the guy turned out to be a good guy later on as a volunteer in the township. But that’s how some people react. But I didn’t know any Jewish people in Marlton or Medford. Oh, wait a minute, the pharmacist was Jewish in Marlton.

KT: Why did you choose Rutgers?

RH: Well … let’s see, I got out of Westtown and immediately went to the Poconos. I worked at Pocono Manor for four years. Right out of Westtown, I went to the Poconos
and worked in Pocono Manor for that year. … I didn’t have enough money to go to Rutgers or any other school, but I had … sort of a feeling maybe I’d like to be in the hotel business, so for awhile I was looking to get into Cornell, ’cause that’s where they had a hotel school. But the second year I was working at Pocono Manor, a Professor [Augustine] Blair from Rutgers was a guest, and he got to know me pretty well. He knew I wanted to go to college, but my parents weren’t able to foot the bill, so to speak. So it was about the 1st of September, he was back here in New Brunswick, and he called the hotel. He said, “I got you a job and a place to get one meal a day, in the cafeteria,” NJC’s daytime cafeteria, believe it or not, “and I’ve also got you a room and the only thing you have to do is take care of this laboratory.” So that’s how I got to Rutgers and that’s how I switched back to agriculture. But there were some programs that the federal government was running at that time that it looked very good to be in agricultural regulation of some sort. We’ve had too much of it, but I was going to go into it at that time. [laughter] … As I said, my dad didn’t have a farm and I couldn’t get into farming really, so that’s what I was choosing to do.

KT: Did your parents want you to go to college?

RH: Oh, yes, oh, yes. They wanted it and Dad helped some, no question.

SI: During your freshman year, did you have to go through any hazing, like wearing a dink or anything else like that?

RH: Yes, I wore the dink. Got a couple of pictures of it, not with me, but I remember where they are at home. Living clear out there and riding a bicycle in, the seniors didn’t get too much chance to bother me, because, I mean, they had all the fraternity boys to work on. … There was an agriculture fraternity. The Phelps House was where they lived. It was a farmhouse that several of them lived in. Did you interview George Luke or anybody from that?

SI: Oh, we’ve interviewed a few people from the Phelps House. Your living arrangement above the lab, was that all part of the same program under Professor Helyar to get people in school, like cooperative living?

RH: Yes.

SI: Yeah. Could you tell us a little bit more about that and your opinion of the whole program?

RH: Well, I was very grateful for it, but I was sort of a loner along with my roommate. I didn’t know too much about what was going on as a group. I got to know George Luke in the later part of my time here, so whatever I know about the Phelps House really is what he told me, I guess. [laughter]

SI: Besides cleaning up the lab, what were your other duties?
RH: Well, under that NYA program, I was in charge of the greenhouse that’s out there, across the highway, for about, I don’t know, maybe a month or maybe only two weeks. But this was in the spring. … I had to take half of the strawberry blossoms off so that they could not reproduce, and I wore one of those jeweler’s things. It was rather tedious work, but I got paid quite well for that time. That was really an NYA program, but it was separate from my monthly check of ten dollars. [laughter]

KT: What activities did you participate in at Rutgers?

RH: Cross-country and track was the only thing I could get into. I attended meetings that, I guess, really involved the commuters in the old student union building, down closer to Winants there, was my hangout in between classes.

SI: Did you travel with the track team? What kinds of meets did you go to? Where did you go?

RH: Well, the cross-country team went three years to Van Cortland Park and ran against all eastern colleges. I ran the freshman year as a freshman class. In other words, they didn’t compete against seniors then, and then Bob Owen and I both were in the varsity for two years.

SI: Was that the first time you had really traveled outside of say New Jersey or outside your immediate area?

RH: As a student, you mean?

SI: Or up to that point in your life?

RH: Oh, I’d been to the Poconos and I’d been to the University of Michigan to see my cousin graduate. Two other fellows and I had a Model T, but they were seventeen and I was sixteen. … When the Chicago World’s Fair was on, we lettered the thing “Chicago or bust,” and my mother wouldn’t let me go. So that was the year, I think, I was working on the farm, and I probably was pretty contrary for all that. [laughter]

SI: Did you make it to the World’s Fair in New York when it came by?

RH: Yeah, ’39 and ’40.

KT: Back to the cross-country, do you remember your best time in cross-country?

RH: No. I have no, I never came in first. There was one fellow that smoked all the time and the coach told us not to smoke, and he and I would come in about fourth or fifth every time, [so] I thought, “Well, I might as well smoke,” [laughter] but I didn’t. Dick McDade, he worked on a dairy farm. He worked on a very fancy one up around Morristown. It was owned by, I think, somebody in the Kraft organization or corporation.
KT: In your later years at Rutgers, when the war fast approaching, what was the atmosphere in the University amongst the students?

RH: Well, now it comes that I left school as a junior and got married and went to the West Coast, so ’39 was my last year on campus until ’46. So I don’t think that was too prevalent. We knew Hitler was a bad guy and we felt sorry for the English and so on, but it, nothing was hitting home very much, at that time, for me.

SI: Were there a lot of discussions of either the war or even domestic politics among the students about Franklin Roosevelt, socialism, or anything like that?

RH: No, not to my memory. As I say, I was kind of a loner being out away from the campus, like a commuter.

SI: A lot of people have commented on that. Do you think it was just your personality or was there a split between the Ag College and Rutgers College?

RH: I didn’t feel that at all, no. They didn’t, number one, I was a commuter, I guess, mostly. I had some good friends in fraternities, though. One of the dances, they allowed me to bring a date up and stay over, Beta Theta Pi, I think it was. [laughter]

KT: When you moved to the West Coast, where did you work?

RH: Well, I first worked for (Ridgefield?) Oil Company. It was a small distributorship in northern California. I went out there because … my cousin was looking for somebody he could trust handling things, and I never got very far in that, because they lost the state contracts. Modock County is a northeastern county in California and that’s where he was, and we served four service stations, but the bulk of the business was the contractors that were building highways and so on. … All of a sudden, the State of California just pulled the money right out from under that. I can’t remember whether that was blamed on the approaching war or not, but I know there was a big political battle about it, because there was a strong push by Chambers of Commerce. … I happened to belong to the 20/30 Club, which is like a junior Rotary Club or something like that, and we were pushing to divide California and Oregon and make a forty-ninth state back then. Looking back on it, I know financial things and you just can’t do that, because there’s huge bond issues in both states and you can’t just back out and not pay your share, so to speak. But I don’t know how we figured that we could do it, but, gee, they were sure trying. So then I was cashing these checks for people working on the railroad, and they were about four times what I was making. … I went to one fellow that I got to know, he was a fireman, and I said, “What do I have to do to work for the railroad?” So I left my cousin’s business and spent a month learning all the routes. An engine goes uphill, the water runs off of the firebox, it goes downhill, runs off the firebox. The big thing you have to do is keep enough water in there, so that you don’t blow the engine up, and so you have to learn every little hill and dale, so to speak. So in that month, I learned it, and the firemen I worked with were good to me and they gave me passing grades, and the engineers, as
far as I know, I never saw their marks, but I got on without even taking a final exam. They were so desperate for people to work at that time. This was 1940. And I was working on the railroad when Pearl Harbor hit.

SI: Did you have to join a union when you were on the railroad?

RH: Yes, you had to. I was amazed how powerful that union was. I mean, there were rules that a hundred miles equals an eight-hour day, so if you ran a hundred miles in three hours, got paid for eight. They didn’t usually let you do that. What they would do is make you catch another route in another direction, maybe to work another three hours. But then if you went over eight hours, it was overtime right away. … You probably have heard about Shasta Dam in northern California, Shasta Lake. It’s a huge lake now. The railroad used to run down the Sacramento River Valley right along the water, and sometimes the river would get high and wash out the foundation of the track. So when I first went there, that’s what we did. We went from Dunsmuir, California down towards Sacramento, but not all the way, and we ran the old track. In the meantime, they’re building a road to come to a bridge that goes over this lake that will be made by this Shasta Dam. Henry Kaiser was the engineer or businessman that saw how they could build this dam, and it was done very rapidly and with immense equipment that he put together. … Then when they had the bridge built, [it] was railroad underneath and highway on top. I was called on a trip where we pushed the rails out. We’d have an engine and maybe two or three cars with rails on it, and we’d push them out and they’d take the rails off and put it down and back out and bring in more rails and so on. I just spent one eight-hour day on that job. Then when it opened, I was on one of the early trains that went over that bridge. I never knew exactly, I know they started out running nothing but a light engine, no railroad cars at all, and it was two or three of them. … The first time that I went over, we had a … probably, a hundred car freight train. But it’s oil fired, so you sit there and you push gages and turn valves and so on. It can get your nerves pretty good sometimes. [laughter] If that engineer wants to kill you, all he has to do is pull back and then you can’t keep the steam up. … I look back on that experience as great. Shall I go on with that, or do you want to go back again?

SI: We should probably talk about how you got married.

RH: Okay. I worked four years at Pocono Manor. … The fourth year, she came up, had girlfriends from Westchester Teacher’s College, it was [called] then, and I had known the girlfriends the year before, but I’d never gone out with them. I was introduced to her with three other guys and three other girls, and I get kidded about it to this day, I said, “I’ll take the short one.” [laughter] That was because when I dance I want to look over her head. [laughter] … There were two other girls in that group that I had dated the year before, they were as tall as I was, I think. … One of them [was] named Nancy, and so we named our oldest daughter Nancy June, because we were introduced in June and Nancy did the job.

KT: What’s your wife’s name?
RH: Mary.

KT: Mary. When were you married?

RH: June 1, ’40.

SI: Was that unique among the student body, at that point, for somebody to get married?

RH: Well, I guess there was a lot of them. … I had this job offer and we used to dream about going to California to make our fortune and all this kind of stuff. Mary was one year ahead of me; she graduated. … At one time, we were thinking we’d get married and I was looking into a day school for … children under school age, I guess. I know right where it was on Route 130. But then I found out what my cousin was doing, and so, “Well, maybe that fits in with our dreams.” [laughter] I don’t know. [laughter] I often say that, “Love and the registrar made me leave Rutgers.” But I only failed one course, so I shouldn’t blame it on that. Did you ever take organic chemistry?

SI: No.

RH: Without a lab. My roommate took it with a lab, and you get to understand things [that] I could never understand … with just lecture series. But the next year, I started remembering things and … you have to just do that. You have to memorize the thing, so I passed it the second time. [laughter]

SI: I meant to ask you before, who was your roommate? What was his name?

RH: Al Meiss. He’ll be up here today. He lives in Cranbury. … I’m pretty sure he wasn’t involved in the war, and I don’t know what he worked under, but it was an agriculture job. … We kid him, he grew potatoes while we were in the Army. [laughter] Well, he was 4-F to begin with. I knew that. He had a heart problem and he wasn’t going to go. Now, see, I didn’t take ROTC, because I was, in my mind, I was a pacifist. … Then when the draft came along, I know I told them my feelings about it. I don’t know what my first draft card said, but I know when I was on the West Coast and Pearl Harbor hit, I changed my draft so that I was eligible. I just couldn’t see turning the other cheek to those mean people. [laughter] And I’m glad I was very positive about it, because a lot of Quaker friends of mine went into the conscientious objectors’ camps, and in their minds, it was just back and forth that they didn’t know what to do. … One fellow [is] still living, but he’ll say it ruined his life to have that feeling that he belonged to both sides somehow. His parents worked at Westtown School. It’s kind of like a community. It was a very big campus, it was a fruit farm on one end and a dairy farm on the other, which are both operated separately now. They’re not, they may feed the school a little bit, but they don’t belong to the school and operation. The ground does. That’ll keep the developments from coming close, hopefully.
SI: While you were still at Rutgers, did you get any criticism because you weren’t in the ROTC and the draft, your status?

RH: I can’t remember a bit of it. I honestly can’t remember. I could easily see where being in one of the fraternities, that might have really cropped up. … My Quaker friend was in the Beta Theta Pi, and I can’t remember what he did in service. He was an engineer, I know that, Bill Llewellyn. I just read the other day that he was a well-known soccer player at Rutgers, and there was a list of them and the oldest one on there was this Bill Llewellyn, Class of ’41. … Westtown played soccer and they didn’t play football, and so he got a good grounding in soccer. … I played right outside, and when we would switch in practice and the left outside on the varsity would play against me, I got really beat up. I just didn’t know how to handle a football on the ground, a big soccer ball on the ground, as well as he did. He’d gone to Moorestown Friend’s School and grew up on soccer. That’s the way with Bill Llewellyn. He grew up in a Friend’s school and he came to Westtown. He was automatically on the varsity and then, I guess, when he came to Rutgers, he was automatically on. Bill Scattergood was the Class of ’40 up here, and he was the goalie on our team and he got his leg broken in the goal. Because I was playing basketball, I was the goalie for a little while, until they brought the junior varsity guy up, and then I went back to the outside right.

SI: At Rutgers, did you have to go to mandatory chapel?

RH: It seemed to me there was a compulsory thing about once a month, and my roommate was very likely to go to that. We went together. I’m pretty sure my freshman year I had two roommates, before this Al Meiss. But Al Meiss’ dad was getting rid of an old car, so Al got the car. … So part of the year, we didn’t have to ride our bicycles. Then after I worked one year in the Poconos, I had a car. Here we are out there, two poor boys with, we’re running cars. But it was awful good, because our classes didn’t correspond much. … The base of that building was a cold storage. Well, even though it’s a cold storage, the temperature's ten or fifteen, we put our cars in cold storage. When the prof in charge of that found out about it, “No more of that.” [laughter] … Some man out there on the farm was supposed to check up on us. [laughter]

KT: After Pearl Harbor, while you were in California, did you hear about any of your friends from Rutgers enlisting or getting drafted?

RH: I must have, but I can’t remember anyone of them now, particularly.

SI: Where were you when you heard the news about Pearl Harbor?

RH: I was in a very remote spot in northern California, and the train had stopped where the crew could eat. This was a full eight-hour trip. So that’s where I heard it, from the person that was running that restaurant, which was almost like a farmhouse. They contracted with Southern Pacific to …

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RH: … The engineer and I just still didn’t believe it, and then wherever we stayed overnight, we then began to hear some more of it, so we had to believe it.

KT: What did your wife think about Pearl Harbor? Did she know that you were going to change your classification?

RH: I know she was rather worried when I was away in the railroad job. I mean, you’d go or get called in the middle of the night or anytime, and when the pressure's on, they really frown on you for taking time off. So I was working long hours and then I would stay at the end of the line and then come back, so it was like two or three days. I know she was worried, but that's about all I can say. Very fortunately, we had a family there, the (Tinsmans?), and after our daughter was born, why Mrs. Tinsman was Nana Tinsman. … My cousin and his wife were so busy, I mean, we would see him once in awhile but that’s all.

KT: How did your wife feel when you changed your classification after Pearl Harbor?

RH: I don’t know. I don’t know that I discussed, I really don’t know, well, she knew my feeling. I was ready to fight, so to speak.

SI: When you went to change your classification, was it a gut reaction to Pearl Harbor or was it hearing the news about say, Wake Island? Did you change your classification right away?

RH: It was probably the first time I got back around the draft board town, and, oddly enough, I registered in Alturas and that was a ranching area. The man that ran the ranch draft board was trying to keep the ranch-help on the ranches, and so I was working on the railroad and I knew that I would be called. I didn’t know that right at first, but after awhile. I was training, after I worked there about a year, I was training guys thirty-five and forty-years-old to be firemen, and so I went to the road foreman of engines and said, “Will I be protected on this job or not?” He says, “No, we can’t protect you.” … Then knowing what the draft board personality was, I figured I better be prepared, so I resigned from the railroad and drove back here, ’cause both parents were back here. We had this one daughter then, and she was considered pre-Pearl Harbor, which meant I wouldn’t be taken for a little longer than a single person would. I would stay a civilian. When I came to the Philadelphia area, I just can’t remember exactly where that draft board was, but I know I had to report and say, “I’m no longer in California.” … They heard my story, which I’ve just told you, and they said, “Well, you better go get a defense job.” If I had a defense job, I would be deferred a lot longer. So I went to work first for Brewster Aircraft, 'cause my brother was working there and we rode together. … I don’t know whether you have heard anything before about it, but Brewster had very bad, serious labor problems. … The government, or somebody, just forced them out of taking any more contracts. They were making dive bombers for the Navy and also for England, and Kaiser came in and took it over. During that switch-over, my job was out near the end, well, I think it was called “final assembly,” but it was where we put them together and
shoved it to the flight line. So they didn’t have anything for us to do in that department, and General Motors in Trenton was hiring people. So I went there and I got to actually fly on about a hundred planes, fifty of them, for the very first time they were off the ground. … What I would do was check everything in the back, in-flight, and we’d write up anything that we knew was wrong. The pilot would do the same thing. We’d get it back on the ground, and as a flight crew, we would work on it and get it ready. General Motors was making what they called the Grumman TBM. TBF was made by Grumman in Long Island. So I was happy with that experience, but looking back on it, after I started selling insurance and so on, it looked like I was doing a very dangerous job with a wife and a young baby. [laughter]

SI: Just to step back a minute to California, was there any sort of hysteria due to fear of a Japanese invasion?

RH: Yes, there was. … They would have bridges and tunnels, the railroad ran north and south in California, and there was Army personnel twenty-four hours a day on each end of the tunnel, at each end of the bridge. The Japanese did bomb Santa Barbara, you know, they had a submarine that came in, and that caused hysteria. … Then, of course, Roosevelt did the job that he’s condemned for many times and signed a paper to take all the Japanese civilians back off of the coast. So the railroad had Japanese cooks on their dining cars. They had to go to someplace in Idaho, I think it was. … Mary’s hairdresser was a Japanese and that business was just wiped out. They went somewhere. … I felt sorry for them, but, then again, you’re afraid of the Trojan horse activity and "you can’t tell a good one from a bad one," so that's what the mentality was.

SI: Did you see any of these Japanese-Americans that you knew, were they attacked at all after Pearl Harbor? Were there crowds going around looking for people?

RH: No, I didn’t see any of that. I was in mostly small towns. I wouldn't even get to Sacramento unless I was what they called “deadheaded,” I had extra time off. I could take a passenger train into Sacramento, and one time I even went to San Francisco that way. I guess there’s only two trips where I would get into a big town. Klamath Falls, Oregon was a sawmill town then, and Dunsmuir was a railroad town. That’s all there was to it. Dunsmuir was the center of the division I worked on. … You’d go almost to Klamath Falls on freight. … If you got a passenger job, and I never did, you had to have more experience to be head end of a passenger, those passenger trains did go to Portland, but that was only experienced people on passenger trains. … The freight stopped at Klamath Falls.

SI: Did the volume of your trips and what you were hauling increase after Pearl Harbor?

RH: Oh, very, very much, yeah. The steam engine I worked on mostly had the cab forward and the stack was in the back, 'cause it went through tunnels and under snowsheds, and you don’t want to eat smoke, so that's why they made the engines out there. But they were still some of the old ones. I mean, I fired an engine that was built in the 1800s one time. They had to put these little helper engines behind the big trains to go
up the hill. Just one time, in fact, I think I caught pneumonia from that. One time, we were breathing out of the air tank, and that was the stales air I ever smelled. But most of the time, I was so lucky. I got on and the seniority just brought me right up, so I could bid in the best job. I could go to Sacramento. It was Gerber, which is outside of Sacramento, I could bid on the Gerber job and hold it when the bids came up. I couldn’t be pushed off of it. Just before I quit, I was given the air, Westinghouse air brakes manual, and I was supposed to learn that, but I never did much more than crack and look at some of the front end of it. So I’d have been an engineer, if I didn’t have to come back East. In my mind, I had to.

SI: When you were working at Brewster and then General Motors, were there a lot of women working the plant at that point?

RH: Yes, yes. Yeah. [laughter] … They got teased. They were good, but they got teased. We had one girl believing that there was a horn on the aircraft so that we could blow at the plane ahead of us. [laughter] Poor girl. … This horn would warn you, these were folding wing planes, the horn would warn you when you activated the wings to fold, and it would also warn you if the wings went out and didn’t lock in place. So that horn would get out of whack, and the two men on the crew would tell this girl, “That guy behind me is blowing at me again.” [laughter] She swallowed it for awhile, and then she got wise. Good worker, she cleaned up the planes and she handled tools sometimes.

SI: Most of the women that worked in these factories, were they older women or volunteers from some local colleges?

RH: The one that was on our crew, I think, was about twenty or twenty-one. There was one on another crew that was married and she came from Medford, commuted up, and so I got to know her after the war, even.

[tape paused]

KT: When did you get drafted?

RH: October sometime. … I went in with guys that were single from General Motors. Seventeenth of October, ’44, I went in from Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. That was my address then.

SI: That’s off of your honorable discharge papers, the standard paper.

[tape paused]

SI: Did you report to a …

RH: A Philadelphia induction station and wound up going to Camp Wheeler in Macon, Georgia for three months. I believe my group of trainees was the first one that was split
up, and half was sent West and half was sent to the Battle of the Bulge, which was actually over then, but they still needed men in Europe.

SI: You went in as infantry, correct?

RH: Yes.

SI: Did you have any idea that maybe you wanted to go into a specialty like engineering?

RH: Well, a fellow that was working with me was drafted about a month before me. He got a letter from the Navy inspection officer and he went right to Willow Grove Naval Air Station and went to work on the same kind of thing we were doing. That's exactly what I wanted to do. I got an identical letter, but when I got to the induction station, everything was infantry. They just stamped it. You didn’t get, there wasn’t anybody went in the Navy, wasn’t anybody went into the Air Force. That was probably right when the Bulge was building up, you see, that particular month. The bad part of the Bulge was in December of ’44.

KT: While you were at Wheeler, if you had had a choice of where you would have been stationed after basic training, would you have picked Pacific or would you have picked Europe?

RH: I wouldn’t have a choice, I knew that, and I was very happy to go West, because at least I’d be back in California for a little while.

SI: Well, let’s talk a little bit about your training. First of all, what was it like to go South? Was this your first time going to the South?

RH: Yes. I had been to Washington, but, no, I don’t think …

SI: But the deep South …

RH: I’d been to Richmond, Virginia, too. Mary’s brother was there. But we were just railroaded, I mean, we were in a railroad car and didn’t mix with civilians until your first leave, which is about a month after you started your training. … I took to the training very well. I liked athletic things and my body was young and I was ready to do things. I was twenty-six, though, and I went in mostly with eighteen-year-olds. I remember that we were all sitting in Philadelphia there, and they had just taken our blood and everybody was like this, and an old fellow, who was about ten years older than me, “They ain’t going to take me.” He says, “I got flat feet.” And a young kid said, “You walked in here, didn’t you?” [laughter] Sure enough, he was taken, in the infantry, too.

SI: You were probably the only married person in most of your groups.

RH: Yeah, pretty near it. … I don’t know whether I got the name “Father Haines” in basic training or not, but I was known as Father Haines, even overseas.
SI: Could you tell us a little bit about your training itself? Was it difficult?

RH: Well, I think everybody had to go through that. I went with the philosophy "if everybody else went through it, I can do it." … You had that situation where they were firing guns over you and you’d crawl underneath and all, and there were some guys got real worried about that thing. I don’t know, they’re certainly not going to allow us to be hit, you know, so I stayed down like they told me and I didn’t get hit. [laughter] … I’m going back a little bit. When I was a kid, I always wanted a shotgun. I got a .410 when I was about twelve years old. Now, that's a small, not a rifle, it’s a shotgun, a small shotgun. … One of my buddies got shot by his own father, so my mother never wanted me to have that gun and I sold it and that was it. I didn’t like guns, but I got to be a sharpshooter in basic training. I think it’s all in here somewhere, and so I was real proud of that.

SI: You just kind of grew up in a rural area and you spent a lot of time outside. Did that give you an edge in basic training over, say, somebody who had grown up in a city? Did you notice any of that? Were you able bivouac easier than city dwellers?

RH: I went through that with getting as much enjoyment out of it as I could, but I would gripe as much as anybody else, too, probably. [laughter]

SI: Did you notice any of that, like people would have trouble because they hadn’t been raised that way?

RH: The only thing I can remember, we had a couple of guys that were too heavy, and they didn’t lose weight fast enough to feel real good. I think they came from Boston. The young guys I knew from Philadelphia were athletic. One of them was a good soccer player. I didn’t notice anything along that line that I could say that there was division of people. I do know one Jewish fellow, didn’t want to take a bath when he should, and the sergeant said, “Take him in there and rub him.” You know, he had about four guys working on him. He got clean that day. [laughter] Later on, when we had to take the M-1 rifle apart, this fellow was a klutz and didn’t have any common sense. [He was] smart as heck, he went on to be an interpreter, but mechanical things was impossible. So we had this session, where we’re all in the barracks, and we’d been taking the M-1 apart and putting it back together several times. “Okay,” the sergeant says, “take it apart and I’m going to turn out the lights and you put it back together by touching it.” … So twenty-nine out of thirty did it, and poor “Klutzy,” he couldn’t even get near doing it, you know, ‘cause his fingers just didn’t tell his eyes or his head what was what, I guess. … Then we got liberty, but I started writing a letter, and I was the only one left in the barracks with this poor klutz. The sergeant came out and he took the screen door spring, and it’s almost the same length as the recoil spring in the rifle, took the screen door screen spring and walked by me and showed me. He slapped it on the bed and said, “Is that out of your rifle?” … This guy took his rifle apart. He was going to try to put it in. [laughter] I don’t know how dumb a guy can be. [laughter]
SI: What do you remember about your field instructors and sergeants in basic training?

RH: Well, one of them had been in North Africa and he was wounded and we respected him. He was the staff sergeant. The next sergeant up, it wasn’t the master sergeant, I forget what you call him, well, we called that particular guy some bad names. He wasn’t very nice. … Well, I had a real disaster happen down there. The platoons were going out on a night project, and when we were going to get instructed, a platoon of four squads would march up. … We’d be told, “UN-shoulder arms and sit down,” and they would lecture to us, tell us about some night project. So I was on the first squad on the right, and I was actually squad leader, so I was the first one, and A Company, I guess, was next. We were B Company. … Anyhow, the sergeant told A Company to "UN-shoulder arms" and the guy’s stuck the butt of his rifle right in my face, so I had a puffed lip and I showed that to the sergeant the next morning. “That’ll go away.” I was hoping it would, too. Then I went to the next sergeant up. He says, “You know what we do with cry babies here?” He wasn’t even going to look at it, you know. So it went on and it got infected, so then I did get to sick call and they sent me to a dentist. When he saw it and I told him the story, he called the captain of our battalion, and that poor captain got the blame for all of it, and, yet, it was these two sergeants that really. They’re probably told, “Don’t listen to anybody about sick call. Make them be tough.” That’s what they’re trying to do, so I just fell victim of it. I went home, I had three teeth on a plate, and I never told Mary and she never knew it until after I got out of service, believe it or not. Then I got out of basic training and I got a delay en route. I came back to my in-laws house in Kennen Square, Pennsylvania, and I had so much time to get to the West Coast to report to Camp Stoneman, I believe it was. I tried so hard to go up to Trenton. I knew they were delivering planes out there, but I didn’t dare, ‘cause a plane would make it in two days maybe. I didn’t dare wait until the last part of my delay en route, because if the plane got stuck in the weather somewhere, then I’d be late. So I boarded the train for a five-day [trip] across. It wasn’t a troop train. It was a passenger train and so on. There was a lot of guys on there with barracks bags and so on, and so it wasn’t too bad a trip across, except when we changed in Chicago. They call it the “Windy City.” I agreed with them. That was so windy, I could hardly hold that barracks bag and me going towards the place I wanted to go. [laughter]

SI: Were you trained and shipped out as a unit, or were you a replacement?

RH: Oh, I was a replacement, yeah. So went I went overseas, I was on the General Pope, which was a rather new ship meant just for transporting troops. I believe they said there was five thousand of us, and we had no escort at all. The ship would go up how far, a quarter mile or three miles maybe, and then make a sharp left. We’d go like that, and that was to avoid submarines, we were told. … We saw Hawaii in the distance, but we didn’t land, and the same way with another island down, they told us it was Tahiti, but I don’t think it was. It wouldn’t matter anyhow, we weren’t [stopping]. We landed in Hollandia, New Guinea, which is a nice big harbor. It looked like it was just a harbor, but it was natural. … There was some commotion and we were delayed there for awhile, and they asked for volunteers to go ashore and be guards at a hospital. So we had no idea that there were any Japanese around Hollandia, so the idea, at that time, was that that was
a clean island. I went there and I got this guard duty, and then I found out that I was on guard to keep the guys in the hospital. These were people that got mentally sick from, and they were being shipped back from all the other islands, and they were given, I could see that they were giving them those baths that supposed to straighten them out. I've read about it since. They don’t do it anymore, but they did it back then. Well, I only spent eight hours at that and back on the ship. … Then they put us on LSTs, I’m not sure of those initials, but anyhow this boat was mostly open. It was big, but it was mostly open, and we went to Morotai in the Dutch East Indies. I didn’t go ashore, but some of the other troops went ashore, and they re-established a radio station on Morotai. Then back on the ship and we went to the Philippines. We were in a convoy then, and they had corvettes, which are ships smaller than a destroyer, that went along side us, and they would detect mines. … All of a sudden, the convoy would stop, and you’d see these corvettes go out there and there’d be this big explosion when they blew up a mine. … Then we went into the Philippines at White Beach, which was one of several invasion beaches, but I was, our replacement company was just shoveled off to one side into a place just below Manila. Then I had the most luckiest day of my life, apparently, because on the roster there was a Grant ahead of me and a Hogan behind me, and we were assigned to the Thirty-third Division. I went into Company C of the 36th Regiment and Grant went into another company in the same regiment and Hogan went into another one, and they were both killed before they got to the area, so, you know, I could have been one. I guess that really is the closest call I had. When I did join C Company, we got up near Baguio, that’s the summer capital of the Philippines, and we were like the third battalion, after the first two battalions of the division, [which] went ahead of us. Anyhow, Baguio was secured, and our regimental commander was a Colonel (Cabbine?) and he was one of MacArthur’s favorite boys. So we were told to put on clean, possibly, brand new uniforms, and we marched into Baguio and faked taking the town, and we were on Pathe News, and all that, “This is how it was taken.” It was, like the devil. These people ahead of us did it all. So I stayed on the campground, on the golf course, at Baguio, where Colonel Cabbine and MacArthur had played before the war. … I didn’t like it very much, but I look back on it and I know it was very safe. … We had a couple of scares, where Japanese filtered in and stole food from our mess area. … Then an awful lot of troops got jaundice, and I can remember one nice warm day. The hillside was just covered with guys with intravenous fluid going into them. I wasn’t in the medics then, but I saw it. Then we left there. I’m trying to think the timing of it, probably June of ’45. … We went down to a beach where we were to take amphibious training and go to Japan. In the meantime, they were bringing prisoners out of northern Luzon Island, this was, maybe, twenty or twenty-five miles out of Baguio, and I got a job as a guard on a truck and we’d have maybe twenty or thirty Japanese prisoners. When we came down off the hill, Baguio was at least four thousand feet above, it might have been more. Some of those trips were a little scary, because the road had been destroyed a couple of times and then repaired. I had no trouble with the Japanese that I was involved with; they were behaving. … Then … we were taking amphibious training and the first bomb hit in Hiroshima and, “Well, you still got to take amphibious training.” Well, this made C Company pretty mad, you know, to go out on a ship in the morning, climb down off the ship, get on a landing boat, go ashore, crawl through a rice paddy and then be told "you can go home now," and they would do the same thing backwards. Then the next
day, you did it again. Well, one day, I volunteered for handling supplies, and we were handling large tins of mixed fruit. It’s very sweet if you’re ever, at that time, that’s what we had. I don’t know how you reduce that if you use it in the mess hall. But we’d crack it open and take some of that, and it wasn’t a bit good when temperatures were a hundred. [laughter] We didn’t get in trouble, but we were probably misbehaving a lot. After that was over, they did give us leave in various ways. Officers would say, “Get out of here, don’t get in trouble and don’t be seen,” and all this kind of stuff. I finally got permission to go to Manila. That beach where we were taking the training was forty or fifty miles north of Manila, so I went to Manila and went to the Red Cross building. I was going to look for the injured people that I had come overseas with. I tried to locate them and I couldn’t get anywhere near them. So I went in the Red Cross building, and I met George Ritter and [Gilbert] Goodman, both classmates in the Class of ’41. It’s hard to believe, I was standing there with George Ritter and the other guy walked up, the three of us. We had our picture taken and it was put in the RAM [Rutgers Alumni Magazine] sometime in, I don’t know, ’45, ’46, ’47, somewhere along there. I never kept that particular issue. But then my entire company left for Japan, and I was left with the surplus goods. It was like extra stuff for the kitchen, an extra vehicle, and I don’t know what it all was … I didn’t go over with the company that went into Japan. A ship came along later and they were supposed to pick up all the scraps from the 136th Battalion, and so I went with it. I got off in Kobe and watched the excess stuff get put on a train, and then I was told that I could ride in the passenger car on that train. So, apparently, always the Japanese could speak English. I was a little scared. I had my .45 on the top of the barracks bag. We were told "not to show your weapons," and MacArthur and Hirohito, they had gotten together and it was safe. When we landed, there was no hostility with any Japanese, and you look back on it and you see, here’s all these civilians. If the same thing happened to us here, we wouldn’t be hostile. There was no reason to. You take your licking and look, get the best side of it. That's all.

SI: Since you worked for supply for a little while, did you ever have any encounters with African American troops?

RH: While we were waiting for … amphibious training, we were right next to a camp that had, they were all black, and they, as I remember, they were a laundry company. … They had come from Europe and they were really angry with the world. We had a couple of guys, I can remember they were from Tennessee, and they got in a fight with them. Then the officers of the two groups got it all straightened out. I think the blacks were restricted. When we were in the Philippines, we could affiliate with the civilians there. As a matter-of-fact, that's another place where I was Father Haines. Two young guys, well, first of all, the Filipino families wouldn’t allow the GIs to go with any of the girls, unless the whole family went along. So when the GIs would have movies on the beach or something like that, the guys would want to have a date with one of these girls. They could take them down there, but little kids, so high, would be following right along with them. So near the end of the time we were there, these two guys said, “We want you to go over to a party in the barrio,” that’s the village. Well, I had known a couple people who were there, ‘cause I had taken shirts over to have them sewed differently, you know. You could get away with that at that time. So I knew a couple of families in the barrio,
and so I went over willingly. They introduced me as Father Haines. They wanted me to marry them, ’cause apparently solitary dates were legal after they were married. Well, of course, I backed out of that. The next day, I went over there with some sewing or something and out comes a grandmother with a three or four-day old baby, wants me to bless it. Here I am a Quaker and I don’t even know how to cross myself. [laughter] So then I went to a couple of marriages there. They had this very large church with a tin roof, and, I guess, it would hold three or four hundred people, and they married several Filipinos while we were there …

KT: This continues an interview with Reece Haines on October 18, 2000 in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

RH: The priest would come down to the first four rows and marry a couple, move right on to the next eight rows and marry four more rows of people. … I was in the wedding party of some family, and I saw this couple get married. Before that, though, I had gone to a party on like Thursday night, and all the women had made a boxed lunch, but all the men would bid on it. Well, the GIs had an advantage, we had more bucks than they had pesos, you know. So, I don’t know, for maybe two dollars, I was going to get this chicken dinner, and this housewife, it was, it was a mother of kids, and she came up … and sat right with me and I ate it. … My buddy had the same thing happen to him, and we stayed in their house that night. The chickens were right underneath the house, and the bamboo slats were about that wide, but then there was cracks in between them, and if you swept it, the dirt went right down with the chickens. … It was a soft bed, I can remember that, but I really can’t remember what it was. That first night, the whole town said how great a guy the groom was. The next night the bride's family bragged about what a nice girl she was and how bold their brothers were when the Japs were there and so on. … Then the next day was Sunday and we went to the wedding. You know, I enjoyed that.

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: Were these two Filipinos marrying?

RH: Yeah, yeah. … I did observe some funerals there, and they have, I guess, it’s called “the dirge.” They have a band going along. It sounds worse than, well, maybe you like bagpipes, but [it was] that kind of a sound, you know, very sorry sound. [laughter] They’d go through town with a little cart towed by a couple horses, small horses.

SI: It sounds like you had a lot of interaction with the Filipinos. Did you notice how the war affected the population and also the land itself, like the cities and Manila, particularly?

RH: Manila was pretty well shot. Even the Red Cross building, I don’t know what that was before, but it had a lot of damage. The Japanese, apparently, were great at re-infiltrating. … They would, the GIs would take the town, but then overnight, there’d be these non-uniformed Japanese coming back in and doing as they pleased. I remember
that. … They said that they would have people in some low store building, the GIs, and they could tell by the way a Japanese walked that he was Japanese. … Most of them, of course, the Filipinos did, too, but the Japanese had a more of a flatfoot walk, I think. When they would see them, they would immediately get a hold of them and arrest them and put them in some camp somewhere. I didn’t spend too long in Manila. This was after the second bomb was dropped, and I went out to Clark Field and, I guess, I could have flown to Okinawa if I wanted to, but I was on a limited leave of some sort. But at that time, an awful lot of GIs went AWOL. They did as they pleased, sort of.

KT: Did the American troops have any interaction with the other Allied troops, the Australians, English?

RH: I didn’t see any of that. No British or anybody that I can think of. Well, the ship that I was on from New Guinea to Morotai, that was an Australian craft manned by Australians.

SI: I meant to ask on your voyage on the General Pope, what did you do? How was the food? Did you get seasickness? Tell us a little bit about the voyage itself.

RH: Yeah, well, I got on it in San Francisco, and as we went under the Golden Gate, there was pretty high seas. They asked for volunteers in the mess hall, and I volunteered. I don’t know why; I usually was reluctant about that. I was able to take the rough weather, even with guys getting their food and not even getting out of the mess hall before they were upchucking. [laughter] Then I went up on deck afterwards, and it was just like an Army drill. They’re out there on the side of the ship, terrible. [laughter] Then the voyage got smooth, probably the next day even. I don’t remember that we had any bad weather on the way over, all the way to New Guinea.

SI: How did you pass the time?

RH: Well, we played cards and we would put a blanket down on deck and play cards and hope the wind didn’t blow, that would mess it all up, or if somebody was loosing badly, I think, they sometimes wished the wind would blow and maybe they lifted the corner of the blanket a couple of times. [laughter] I can’t remember much. We were in what they called “hammocks,” but they were very tightly strung, canvas beds. They were five high, and you just hoped the guys above you weren’t upset. … You took a shower in salt water, and even though we had special soap and so on, I can remember my hair was so stiff from the salt.

SI: How long was it? Was it a very long voyage?

RH: … I just don’t know that date, or they could tell you on here, or that they would tell on here when you got over there.

SI: Did it seem like weeks and weeks?
RH: I would just guess that it was like twelve days, but I’m not sure.

SI: Were there any submarine alerts?

RH: On that trip to Hollandia, we didn’t see a thing, weren’t scared about anything. I imagine the Navy knew about things with their radar, but the troops never got to know it. Funny thing was there’s Marines on there, and they were supposed to be like guard duty. After I got home, I had a little card, which is a miniature of this, and I was in a restaurant talking to this Bill Robinson and, “When did you go overseas?” “I went out of San Francisco in 1944.” We got our little cards out, I think it does show here, and here he was a Marine on the same ship. I didn’t know him before. I got to know him after the war. Well, they manned the defense guns on the troopship, and they were also guards. If we got unruly or something, they would just bring around two or three Marines, and they would say, “You’re limited to this much space. You can’t go out in that area or something.” We called them “seagoing bellhops.” [laughter]

SI: You can sort of take this question for your whole military experience, but particularly in your unit, what was the ratio of regular Army to the draftees?

RH: Oh, I expect that when I joined it in the Philippines, the Thirty-third Division was an Illinois National Guard. … I talked to a lot of people that had gone overseas much earlier and they were mostly Chicago or Illinois people. … It’s a rare guess, but I would say, until our replacement company got there, they were probably eighty or ninety percent National Guard. You know, I don’t know whether they were drafted, or I guess they volunteered and then they drafted the entire division. … Then after the replacements got there, it was kind of hard to find a National Guard. See, the point system would let guys that had been overseas [for] three or four years go home. The minute the first bomb dropped, they were out of there. … We were getting replacements all the time, although when we got to Japan, our company was supposed to be two hundred people, and we were down to a hundred and twenty. We occupied Fukuiken, which is, Ken means county over there. Fukui is on the west coast of Japan. … An interesting story is when I took this surplus stuff over, that was on a freight car. It was open. I could look at it from the passenger car. … Night came and, finally, some guy was shaking me, conductor, Japanese conductor. He bowed and touched the floor, oh, he was so upset about something. He had, the train had gone right by where we were supposed to stop, and he was telling me, you know, he’ll get back where it’s supposed to be by so and so. … I forget whether he could speak English or not, but I understood what happened, and I got to ride in a police car. They took me off at this further point, and took me back to the point where we were supposed to get off. Takefu was where we were supposed to be and I had gone onto another town. … The next day, the goods came back. On that was a GI oven and, I guess, it was brand new, and they were using them in our camp in Japan and this wasn’t really needed. So I don’t know just how it came about, but the cook was probably going to get it going or something, and he opened the door. It was absolutely stocked full of paper money, right to the top, but it was Japanese pesos good in the Philippines while the Japanese were there. That’s all it was. It wasn’t worth a cent to anybody, except to build a fire with. [laughter] That kind of tickled me we
spent all that time herding that stuff to Japan. [laughter] So then when they put a jeep that I thought belonged to my company on the ship in the Philippiines, they said, “We don’t have a jeep listed that is supposed to be part of your company. What do you want us to do with it?” Well, I expect they told me, or were expecting me to say, “Take it back and put it in the Philippines,” ‘cause they were running boats back and forth all the time, and I said, “I don’t care what you do with it.” The next morning, there was no insignia on it and it was painted blue, sitting out on the deck. [laughter] So when the Navy boys got leave, they had a jeep. [laughter] It’s legal to steal from the government, you know. [laughter] Now, we had done that, too. We had had a weasel in our company, and that didn’t belong to us at all, but somehow one of our officers got a hold of it. That’s that little thing that crawls, but also goes in the water. It’s called a weasel. I don’t think they’re very useful, but probably found someplace you could use it.

SI: Was there a lot of souvenir taking and that sort of thing?

RH: Yes, our company occupied an Air Force, a Japanese Air Force … port, really, and we searched all the buildings. … There we found … Japanese swords, brand new rifles. So the captain had his orders that we could send things home, and everybody was given a little ticket, you know, and I could go pick out a rifle, sword and so I did. But then you had to pull the firing pin out of the rifle and destroy it. You could easily bend it up and throw it away. It was a .29 caliber, so GI ammunition didn’t fit it, and I sent that home. I guess, I sent three of them home, actually. … I had a Japanese sword, and I had this one rifle until about four years ago, when a man by the name of Brown has a war materiel museum in Tabernacle, New Jersey, which is outside of Vincentown and also close to Medford, and he has all kinds of German stuff and a lot of Japanese stuff. He has the pickup truck that was used to deliver the ransom money in the Hauptmann-Lindbergh case, where Hauptmann kidnapped the Lindbergh baby and so on. That was Lindbergh’s pickup. … He has all the newspaper articles around that pickup that you can read, and it’s a tremendous thing for just one man to do. … He has British uniforms all the way from the lowest rank, I guess, clear up to admirals, and he had British bobbies’ uniforms. One thing that interested me, that was a three-wheel motorcycle that could lay barbwire. It had like a great big barrel behind it that would be a drum of barbwire, and you could set that thing and ride it across a field, and you’d have barbwire, so high, up all the way across the field. The Germans had that. I never heard about it until I saw it in his museum.

SI: What did you think of the leadership in your unit, the officers, and how they dealt with the unit?

RH: Well, I got feedback from some of the companies that were on Luzon in the Philippines, and there was very good and very poor. In fact, our captain got switched to our company from another company, I can’t remember which one or anything, but he had been under fire up in the Baguio area. They said that a Japanese sniper had hit him up on this shoulder and it came out down just above his beltline and it just looked like somebody had taken a whip and whipped him, and he thought he was going to die right there on the spot. He was very much of a baby, and the medics said, “You’re not hit.
This guy over here, he’s got a bullet right through him, he’s not crying about it.”

[laughter] So our particular, well, that was the captain that we had, and I’m sure that he was the one that made me remain a PFC, because I had this pre-Pearl Harbor child and that gave me points. He knew I was going to go home quickly from Japan and he thought, “Well, there’s no sense giving this guy a raise,” you know. Of course, I was very willing to come home and I didn’t really much care. [laughter] So I rose from private to PFC. [laughter] Incidentally, in basic training, I must have done well, because they sent me up to a board of officers to see if I was eligible to become an officer, because I had three years of college and had done well in basic training, and then the thought was I should go on. Well, here’s where family and pacifism got into my life again. They gave me this plan in Europe and I was supposed to be the second lieutenant to lead this squad into some dangerous situation, and [someone] said, “My God, would the fact that you’re married and have a child have anything to do with the way you had planned to do this?” Of course, I sat back and started to think a bit, and right then, I think that’s when they knew I was not a candidate for officer’s training, because I was not a young, brash kid, and I would think twice about that. Yet, I was told by some of those guys that were in the Illinois National Guard, that had been around a long while, that they thought that they were better soldiers than the replacements they got, and I guess they were. If they had a little experience, they’d know what to do. … The sergeants many times would tell the lieutenant, “We don’t like the way you’re planning this,” and they’d get their way. That’s what they said.

SI: What did you think of MacArthur, being in one of his units?

RH: [laughter] Well, he was pretty much a hero to most of us, and, of course, the Stars and Strips would get to people that were not on the line, and he was quoted and his history was written over and over. He made one mistake. This island we were put on to put the radio station back in operation was supposed to be clear of Japanese, according to the Stars and Strips paper that we got. Morotai was in the hands of the US, and, yet, some of our guys got fired on and injured when they went to put that radio station there, so MacArthur had a bad day after that. [laughter]

KT: I wanted to ask you, what was the atmosphere in the Pacific on V-E Day?

RH: I was in Manila and we cheered. There was an awful lot of guns being fired and so on, but this was, now, I’m trying to think just where I was. I guess, I’d already been assigned to Thirty-third Division, but, yeah, we probably hadn’t gone out yet. It was after that that we went up to Baguio.

SI: What was your reaction to dropping the atomic bomb? Did you realize what they meant?

RH: Yeah, I can remember that an officer in Camp Stoneman or something said that, “You guys are going overseas, but you’re liable to be back in a hurry, because the United States has a weapon that hasn’t been used yet, and it could very well stop the war like that.” That’s the way he said it. … I kind of forgot about it for awhile. I remembered
that I did hear that. He was trying to give us hope, you know, when we were in Camp Stoneman, knowing that we were going to get on a ship and go overseas.

SI: What were your thoughts as you were entering the theater? Did you have any apprehensions about going overseas to the Pacific theater?

RH: Well, just like I said about basic training, I knew an awful lot of guys got through it, so I just figured that I was going to be lucky. [laughter]

KT: Had you heard stories about the American soldiers who were prisoners of war of the Japanese?

RH: Oh, yes, yeah. Believe me, I was a pacifist, but I had a feeling that when I was in the Philippines that there wasn’t many good Japanese, unless they were dead. I mean, they, everyone of them was a bandit, you know, he was bad. [laughter] No, I was glad I didn’t have to go up and actually see one and shoot. … There was one place that, I think, really, it was almost like a practice, but we were above Baguio, and we fired M-1s and the Browning automatic rifles and just cleared an area. If there was a Japanese in a tree that was going to be a sniper or something, the theory was we’d get him even if we didn’t see him. [laughter] It seemed kind of silly to look back on it, when you heard about everybody else having hand-to-hand stuff. We were up there on a perimeter, you know, didn’t have lines then, but we spent nights in foxholes and on a perimeter. … At that time, there was some infiltration. I think somebody in one of the companies had been bayoneted by a Japanese in the middle of the night, so you didn’t sleep very well, half standing up in a foxhole. … Then, I don’t know whether I had jaundice then or what, but my food wasn’t agreeing with me at all [and] I was in misery. … I had the company radio. They were about this big. I carried that on my back and that’s how I got a hold of a .45. The radioman was allowed to have a .45 pistol. … I didn’t give up my M-1. I carried the M-1 on my shoulder and the .45 on my hip. But, anyhow, I’m communicating with, trying to communicate, with A Company or B Company, and I’m having trouble because it’s hilly, like that, and the old radios were not like you have now. A hill or something with a little bit of iron in it would just stop the communication. … My captain grabbed the thing, the mike from me, and said a few swear words, you know, about what he was disappointed about and so on. … In Manila, they’re monitoring us and, “There’ll be no more to that. Keep that off the air.” [laughter] Here we can’t even communicate with A Company, which is real close to us, and Manila is a hundred miles away, by air miles, maybe less than that, and they’re monitoring us. But I did help zero some artillery in, while I was up on the hill. … I’ll never forget the way this one officer was further, much further ahead of us. The, I can’t think of the size cannons that we had behind us, but, anyhow, their shots would go overhead. You could hear them whistling up there. So I was relaying a message from this captain that was way ahead of us. He wanted this (TP?) hut taken out. “There’s a sniper in there.” He says, “That’s over.” Another one goes over. “That’s short.” Another one goes over. “Oh, you hit it right on the window sill,” he says. [laughter] They had little planes over there, you know, Piper Cubs. They were up there directing the artillery. I was sure glad we had that kind that could back us up, because the Japanese, their best weapon was what they called a “(Neimortor?).”
You’d drop the shot in and it explodes and goes up in the air and comes down. They were quite accurate with it. But if you heard it go “plong” somewhere away, you could, at least, duck your head and get flat to the ground, and maybe it would land near you and maybe it wouldn’t. We had this, I can’t think of the caliber of that, it was the smallest cannon that you had. It could be pulled by about two people, I guess. We had Filipino Indians, they’re called Igorots, and most of them weighed less than one hundred pounds. They could carry ammunition on their back more than I would want to carry. The only thing you had to watch out, they fought among themselves. We had one that had a reputation of being a scout. … I don’t know who gave him the, it’s a rapid firing Browning, but it’s a very heavy thing to carry around. He got it somewhere and had the barrel cut off of it, and he was right among us and he was allowed to carry it. We were told he could be trusted. But he got mad at some of these ammunition carriers and used the gun on them, so we had to get rid of him. [laughter]

SI: Were most of these operations considered “mopping-up” operations, or were they against actual Japanese units?

RH: Yes, the Forty-fifth and the Thirty-third, let’s see, 133rd and 138th Infantry Regiments were ahead of us, and they had cleared Manila and pushed the Japanese back into jungle areas that were at least twenty miles beyond Baguio. Yamashita, one of their most famous generals was up there, and he was probably short of food and no great movement was made, but they would try to infiltrate and get food from the GIs. I did see a guy walking out with food one night, and I’ll never forget how big he looked. Next morning, they said, “Oh, a guy came in here and took this and took that.” … They said [that] they had Japanese from the island of Hokkaido, who were actually Russian-Japanese, and they tended to all be big, and, I guess, that’s what I saw.

SI: Did you have anyone come in and surrender, Japanese?

RH: No. We had a pick-up point for these ones I … was guard[ing] on a truck going down to the shore, and everything was controlled and you didn’t have any problems there. We had a Mexican boy that was, he probably was abandoned in Mexico. … He just thought, well, he hadn’t seen any action yet, so he killed one of the prisoners. Of course, they gave him some kind of time somewhere; he was no longer in our company. At one time, there was about three prisoners down at the shore, where we were delivering these people to ships, and I don’t know what the situation was, but a Filipino boy came along and he started giving these Japanese exercise orders, “(?).” He made them do their exercises. He had seen them doing that when the Japanese were there, and here this twelve-year-old boy or so, he was having the time of his life, ‘cause he could make these Japanese do it. [laughter]

KT: Had you ever heard about the more wealthy Filipino families having to go into hiding during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines?

RH: No, I heard, I guess, just the opposite, because, like I said, the preliminary to this wedding, they were all bragging about how brave they were, and I’m sure they had to
cooperate and I don’t know. Up there around Baguio would have been the ideal place for them to hibernate, too, be away from the fighting until it came up there, but I never heard about it.

SI: Some people from the Philippines have commented that they noticed that the Filipinos were kind of stockpiling weapons.

RH: No, I didn’t notice that. Well, I will say this that when I went to Manila, after the second bomb dropped, there was just avenues after avenues of goods ready to invade Japan. I mean, thirty miles out of Manila there were refrigerated cargo boxes, all kinds of vehicles. You could get on something high and it looked like a city of nothing but GI equipment. I understood that practically every jeep that was there was sold to the Filipinos, and we saw pictures of how they would make a ten or twelve passenger taxi out of a jeep. [laughter] They were great for putting fancy colors on them. Of course, we saw that on their donkey carts and their little wagons. Right while we were there, they changed from left-hand side to right-hand side, and the poor Filipinos didn’t get the word and there was an awful lot of injured horses and, I guess, injured people. The trucks that weren’t traveling in caravans, they were on hit-or-miss errands with trucks, and so on, these drivers were a little too nervy and hurt some of the animals and the people I understood.

SI: Did you notice any kind of attitudes on the part of some GIs towards the Filipinos? One man gave an example where somebody ran over a Filipino man and the GIs just sort of said, “Well, he’s just Filipino, don’t worry too much about it.”

RH: I wouldn’t doubt it, but I didn’t actually see it. We called them “gooks” and they never showed any enmity towards us, if we used that word.

KT: Given your Quaker background, you never considered a career in the military, had you?

RH: No, no. I can remember sitting, when I got right next to a fellow, and we were getting a lecture on joining the National Guard, and the guy next to me said, “I can hear my wife saying, ‘Don’t join anything.’” So that was good enough for me, too. [laughter] So we both turned it down.

SI: I forgot to ask, when you were in the Philippines and then Japan, did you encounter black market at all?

RH: Oh, yeah. I didn’t smoke, so I sold all my cigarettes. I wound up, like I said, we had one hundred and twenty people in a company and we had equipment for two hundred. We had surplus blankets and a lot of those Japanese needed it, so I’d sell them [for] a hundred yen, actually ten dollars. Maybe I didn’t sell a blanket for that much, but that was the ratio at that time, and I would get a hundred yen for a carton of cigarettes. I think I sold it mostly to the GIs, as far as cigarettes was concerned. I was a friend of theirs because I didn’t smoke. [laughter]
SI: When did you come back to the United States?

RH: February of ’45, I guess.

SI: ’46.

RH: ’46, it has to be, yeah. Yeah.

SI: Did you come back on a troopship?

RH: Came back on an identical ship. It had a general’s name, but I can’t remember that one. We had a Jewish boy on there. We called him “the Arab,” because he looked like an Arab more than, of course, if their family lineage would come from the Middle East, they could look either way and be either one. So this guy was called the Arab, but he had Jewish intentions because he ran a gambling table on the way back, and the stakes ran pretty high. … Good old Reece Haines would bring him in his food and get a little cut of each pot. … I don’t know how much that guy got home with. He should have had quite a bit. My barracks bag was robbed on the way home. I had a little tiny siren that would clamp on the side of a vehicle like that. You’d twist it up. Boy, that was a wonderful siren. I got a hold of that. I didn’t pay anything. There was something in that airport that we were occupying. … I even had a lock on my barracks bag. When I got back, I didn’t have that siren, and I couldn’t see where the bag was cut. … The lock was a Swedish lock; it said right on it something about Sweden. I don’t know where a guy could get a key to work it and yet a lot of locks you can take a hairpin. So whoever did it, locked it back up. I didn’t even know it was missing until I started unpacking. [laughter] I was going to put my .45 in it, because it really wasn’t assigned to me officially, ’cause I said I’d keep the M-1, but I did get the .45 and the Army really, in effect, didn’t know I had it, you see. So I could have put that in there, but that would have been lifted, too. But being my background, I didn’t think a pistol was necessary.

RH: Do you think Bob Owen was here this long?

SI: Longer.

RH: He’s our present president. We took five-year terms of being president. In this whole group that I’ll meet today, [we] probably had one five-year term somewhere along the line. When I was elected, I owned a fire truck, and I had it in the parade for everybody. … I guess this was our thirty-fifth maybe, and so I said that they didn’t elect Reece Haines, they elected his fire truck. [laughter] ‘Cause most of my classmates really didn’t know much about me, like I said. I was over in the AG school. … Outside of that one fellow in the fraternity, I don’t remember him after we came back at all. He never came back to reunions and did anything for it. I mean, he came back for the day, but he
didn’t prepare. It’s mostly people that live somewhere in New Jersey or very close [in] Pennsylvania that have been on our committee.

SI: We’re wondering if you could tell us the story of how you got the Bronze Star, what action it was for?

RH: I don’t know. I guess it’s like, I was in a combat area. I believe that’s all you had to be, and, like I said, very fortunately, I never saw anybody face-to-face that I had to shoot. … I had the scary nights and cold and so on. It’s hard to believe that Baguio was so cold, even when we were in a tent on the golf course, that was really like super bivouac, but, gosh, you could get cold there with all the blankets you could get.

SI: How would disease and the weather with jungle rot affect your unit?

RH: I can’t remember how many of our guys had jaundice. It seems to me that they were … from other companies that I saw spread around that hillside that time. Jungle rot was not heard of. I had a patch of prickly heat about that big on my back right above my belt line, and that was so annoying. … We had powder that you could use on it, and that’s about all. I thought if anybody gets upset with a baby that’s crying, I know what the poor baby’s thinking about. [laughter]

SI: Was there any malaria in your unit?

RH: Well, see, I took Atabrine all the time and that supposedly stopped malaria. I had hair below this mole when I was over there, and I could see the hair receding when I was there. I thought that had something to do with the Atabrine, because my fingernails yellowed and my hair was receding. I would take the Atabrine. A lot of guys would, like that, throw it right over their shoulder, but I thought, “Well, gosh, they give it to you for a reason,” so I took it.

SI: Were you corresponding with your family and your wife during the war?

RH: Yeah. I got an awful lot of letters off and Mary got them with holes in them. They’d been clipped. I remember getting a large number of letters at one time about twice. But regular mail call, it seemed like I wouldn't get any, and all of a sudden, I’d get about three or four. My cousin was on a Coast Guard ship going up and down along the Philippines. … My mother and my aunt were corresponding, and they could tell me that, and so every time I’d see one of these Coast Guard ships at Lingayen Gulf, which was the port nearest to us, I’d go up and ask if Joe (Whittaker?) was aboard. … I finally even got to know the number, so that I wouldn’t bother going to a Coast Guard ship, unless it had his number, but I can’t remember what it was.

SI: Going back a bit, did your brother feel the same way you did? Did he join the service?
RH: He was 4-F. … He had ear operations when he was a child, and it would be called “mastoid,” if you ever hear it now. Antibiotics would take care of it right away, but that wasn’t available when he was a baby, neither was sulfur, either. So he went through some pretty bad times with ear problems, and when they operated [on] the back of one ear, it affected a nerve in his face, and he doesn’t smile the same on either side. He was 4-F and he worked in the aircraft plant all the time.

KT: Did you decide to go back to Rutgers after the war because of the GI Bill benefits?

RH: It helped, yes, very definitely. Do I go into business at all or …

SI: Well, do you want to talk about Rutgers?

KT: Let’s talk about Rutgers a little and then we’ll talk about your business after. Where did you live while you were at Rutgers?

RH: I lived in Marlton the first three years.

KT: Right.

RH: … Then Medford, and I’m going to have to tell you how I got in business, because it involves the senior year. My dad and I were looking for houses. I had two children then. It was a house for auction in Medford, and a real old insurance agent lived there and he had a business going in and out of that house. So I bid the house and went to the bank to get the mortgage, and the old man says, “You can buy this business with the house.” Well, the figure was worth a lot more than I was paying for the house, but the insurance business was worth, we’ll say, like two thousand or twenty-five hundred dollars. So the Medford banker wouldn’t give it to me, and we went back to Marlton and that banker gave me the mortgage, and I paid off the house and the business at the same time. Meantime, my wife has to be my secretary, ‘cause I’m up here at school. … I’d go home and sign policies on weekends and maybe sell one here and there and even sold some up here to my fellow students, so I was kind of lucky to get that. Now you want to know more about my senior year?

KT: How did you think post-war Rutgers differed from pre-war Rutgers?

RH: Very crowded and I lived in the Raritan Barracks. I don’t know how they allowed me to be a preceptor out there. Of course, I was older than most of the students and I applied to be a preceptor and they let me have it. Here, they knew I was going to go home every weekend, and there was two preceptors in every barracks and never seemed to be a problem. I got away with it.

SI: What kind of interaction did you see between the returning veterans and the younger students who were just getting out of high school?
RH: Well, I can remember one incident where a freshman, who was very large, he tried out for football but probably was a little too soft. He’d been playing high school football, but he dropped right off the squad soon after he got here. … A bunch of GI veterans would be going into the barracks and telling old stories and language would run pretty raw. … This poor freshman, he wanted to join the group, and, of course, he had to swear worse than we did. He wasn’t doing very well, and one day he came into my room … not in tears or anything, but he was sad as heck, you know, “Nobody likes me.” I said, “Well, you’re trying to be somebody you aren’t. If you’ll just listen to these wild stories the veterans are talking about, and if you’ve got anything in your experience that you can talk about, fine, but don’t try to out-do anybody that's been BSing longer than you have.” … Of all things, his father died while he was a freshman, and I don’t know exactly what I did, maybe, probably, went to the funeral. I met his mother and she says, “There’s one thing that his dad would like that maybe you can help me with.” The preceptor was supposed to be an assistant dean, but there was so many of us that we didn’t amount to much. But, anyhow, she said, “My husband would want my son to become a [Free]mason.” Well, I went to a teacher … or one of the professors and asked who was a Mason, and the professors and I found one that was over in Highland Park. So I got him alerted to this wish and it worked out. I talked to that boy. He went on to be a banker. I talked to him quite often. He would have been the Class of ’51, oh, wait a minute, ’50 or ’51, I guess. I finally got out in ’47, after the war.

SI: Did you take an accelerated classes in order to get out as fast as possible?

RH: Fortunately, I had made up all my credits in my junior year, so I didn’t have to take anything extra. Why, my one minor was in education. Otherwise, it was in Ag economics. I took one day of practice teaching at Moorestown High School, and even though I was a lot older than the high school boys, I didn’t get any respect out of them, and I gave up the idea of being a teacher right there. I was offered several jobs when I graduated. Maine, it had something to do with marketing potatoes. Ohio, I forget exactly what that was. … Then the one that came closest to me was being a buyer for the ACME markets on the riverfront. Of course, I had a little experience, because when we ran the roadside market, my dad would go over there and buy, so I wouldn’t have been lost in that job. But I had to let them know by a certain day, and I know I was in the car and Mary said, “You know, this is the deadline. You’re supposed to call and say whether you want to go to work for ACME markets.” By that time, I had learned my first job would be twelve midnight, buying stuff on a whatever market it is down there, the south end of Philly. It’s monstrous after the war, compared to where my dad bought things. I said, “I don’t want to get up and go to work at twelve o'clock midnight.” … There were many times when I thought I could work for an insurance company and get a straight salary, and those jobs looked so good to me. Of course, I would have these guys come in from (?) old company, North America Company, and all, and they’re making real good money, and after they get done talking to agents, why, they don’t have to work at night or anything. But I stayed with insurance, and, of course, you get renewals, so each year it automatically helps, your income increases. … It wasn’t long before I had two secretaries, and then I bought another agency to go with it. I don’t think I would have been a very happy employee, ‘cause I really enjoyed the insurance business and being
free to do what I wanted. On the other hand, if I was short of money, I just had to go out
and sell [laughter] and, apparently, I did it. [laughter]

SI: Have you ever reflected on how your career seems to have been quite different from
what you studied for at Rutgers?

RH: Professor Helyar was a professor and he was in charge of all the Ag students, and
the very first lecture he gave us, he [said], like that, “You’ll be in the insurance business.
You’ll work in a Five and Ten.” Here we are, we think we’re going to be on farms or
working for an agriculture concern. … He was so right, because one in that class,
[Philip] Agisim, I think his name was, I think he’s passed on now, he was way up in
Prudential, way up. I was president of the New Jersey Agents Association for a year, but
I never took in another man to be a partner or high employee. I was very fortunate to get
a hold of women that I got licensed. They had the right to sell and sign policies and
everything, and I just got good ones. [laughter] They were mad when I, my son was in
the business with me in the summertime, ‘cause he’s a schoolteacher, still is. He had a
broker’s license and he’s a fast learner. He could have easily taken over my business, but
when I was about sixty-two, I had a company cancel on me, National Grange cancelled
on me, and I had to transfer an awful lot of business. … I went up to their home office
and I didn’t have a, I just had a bad argument with them. Actually, [laughter] I forget, I
think it was about two years before, they gave me this grand prize for running such a
good agency and everything, it was like silverware. I don’t think we ever got any money
out of it, or anything, but I think it was worth several hundred dollars, and three years
later, they’re canceling my agency. Well, I darn near had a heart attack. … So
somebody else had told me, “Let that be a warning to you and taper down from your
job.” Well, that time the companies were coming in with computers, and they said, “If
you give us so much for this, we’ll give you a computer.” I saw another guy do that, and
a year later, the computer … wouldn’t connect with the type of business that North
America was doing somehow. He had to buy another computer and this time he had to
buy it. … I thought, “Oh, I can see.” … When they came to me, I told the insurance
company, North America, “I will broker the business,” which means I have to share
commissions with another agent. “I will broker the business I have with you, but I won’t
sign any contract where I have to produce so much business and have a computer online.”
… I could see it was that type of thing that was going to continue. … With this close
heart attack, I thought, “Well, I better take social security,” so that’s what I did at age
sixty-three. … My two secretaries were very angry with me that I didn’t let my son come
in and be the owner of the business, but I would have still been in, still under anxiety, you
know, trying to make sure he made out all right. So I went Florida and bought a house,
or a place down there, had a motor home. I sold the business for the highest price,
percentage-wise, of anybody at that time, and a year later, a guy told me, he said, “I’d
never pay it now,” and the bottom just dropped out of it. … You must have heard of the
assigned risk plan in New Jersey, where they assigned people to companies and so on.
Well, I had a lot of that business, although National Grange cancelled on me sometimes, I
didn’t have any other place. So the fellow that bought my business gave me credit for
assigned risk business, which he looks back on it and says he never should have done it,
and I wouldn’t have blamed him. Actually, I’d be sorry, but I wouldn’t have blamed him.
So I was very lucky, and I got a contract that’s spread out, so that the taxes didn’t hurt too much.

KT: Do you want to tell us a little bit about your children?

RH: Well, Nancy, the oldest one, went to Washington College, and we were able to get a state scholarship. Then Mary went back to teaching the very next year, and we earned too much money that year, so had to start paying college tuition myself. … She went … her junior year and met a young fellow that was six years older that was working for the Boeing Aircraft Company, and she wanted to get married. We said, “Go ahead.” He was assigned to a place in Bangor, Maine, and they lived right on the campus of the University of Maine in Orino, so she went there one year … She just took some, excuse me, a few subjects, so she wasn’t able to graduate. … She had children after that, and they’re doing very well. He’s retired from Boeing. She’s fifty-nine, let’s see, April ’41, she was born, and so she’s married to a retired man now. … They had three children. The youngest one’s about thirty-two. The oldest one’s thirty-eight. He’s married. The middle boy is not married. He is a, I don’t know what you call it, he works for Guggenheim Museum and he’s supposed to get money.

SI: Curator?

RH: He was very successful in two smaller museums down South, and he came up here and took a mediocre job, but he wanted to be in New York to see the openings, he said. … Sure enough just about a month ago, he got this job. When he took art in college, I said, “What the heck is he going to have for a life?” [laughter] Well, his first salary was super, as far as I’m concerned. [laughter] Beat the heck out of the old man. [laughter] … Well, the oldest grandson worked for Boeing still. … Then the daughter works for an advertising company in New York and announced her engagement last Sunday. Her husband is in that TV program that you can buy stuff.

SI: QVC?

RH: QVC, yeah, out of Malvern or (Payole’), Pennsylvania. That's his job. I sure hope it works out. They got together because something she was promoting, she’s in the book business, some book that she was promoting got on his TV show, and, of course, they had to go practice to put it on first, and that's how they got together. Then the next one is a daughter and she graduated from the University of New Hampshire and taught autistic children for awhile. Now she’s a teacher of autistic children in a school that’s one to eight and there’s thirty-four students, and so she has the Down Syndrome, all the children that are handicapped. She loves the job, plus she works for the State of New Hampshire in qualifying autistic children for various schools around the state. She worked originally for, I can’t think of the name of it, but all the states send their kids there now. But that's so mind tormenting, that you work with autistic kids. Most of the people that work there can only work five to eight years and then they’re worn out. So she got a teaching job and then this state job, plus her husband’s a lawyer. He turns her name in when a judge
wants to have a family evaluated, where there’s a divorce and there’s children, and each time she’s turned her report in, the judge has taken her word.

SSH: Other children?

RH: Excuse me?

SSH: Do you have other children?

RH: Yeah, I got two boys, neither one married. One’s teaching at Shawnee High School, math department. He went to (Muhlenburg?). I tried to get him at Rutgers, but that was right when they formed this other college over here. What do they call it, Camp Kilmer?

KT: The Busch Campus? Livingston?

RH: Livingston College, yeah. Dick was in the top ten percent of his class and they were filling that school up over there, and even though I knew Dean Crosby, he was my classmate, he says, “We just can’t take them all. There’s a hundred or more just like your son that we can’t take.” So I went to (Muhlenburg?), and that's a smaller school, very good, very good. He did well there. Well, should we wind it up?

SI: Is there anything we forgot to ask or anything you’d like to add to the tape?

RH: Well, I can’t talk forever probably, but I would think that’s enough. … It’s probably good that you heard from one guy with a pacifist background, anyhow. [laughter] There are not many of them in that group, I’m sure, ‘cause I didn’t go to ROTC here. See, I stayed out of it because of my background.

SI: Just one more quick question. How did your family react when you came back from the war and the other members of the community?

RH: Well, everybody was happy to see me as far as I know. [laughter]

SSH: Your Quaker Meeting

SI: Yeah, was there any reaction by the Quaker Meeting?

RH: No. Well, there were two other members of the Medford Quaker Meeting that, in fact, my cousin was killed over on the Burma Airlift, and, no, they were glad to see us back. There’s clashes in thinking as I continued to go to Quaker Meeting, and these people that are devout pacifists, they don’t even believe that we should have beat up on Saddam Hussein. I can’t believe them, but they are so set in their thinking that they can’t quite believe that I did what I did, either. I live at Medford Leas, which was started by Quakers, and there’s an awful lot of guys that were conscientious objectors and they’re proud of their sacrifices in that. They didn’t get any salary and a lot of them were guinea pigs in hospitals for certain things. Somewhere in North Philadelphia, there was a
sanitarium that was turned into a place where they tried out all kinds of drugs on people, and I know, well, there’s two or three people that were in Medford Leas that were in that program. They came out alive, but they lost an income for three or four years.

SI: Thank you very much for sharing your stories with us.

RH: Okay.

SI: They are all great.

RH: Okay.

SI: This concludes an interview with Mr. Reece Haines on October 18, the year 2000 with Shaun Illingworth and Kathryn Tracy.

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

Reviewed by Kathryn Tracy 6/15/01
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 6/20/01