

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH NORMAN BRANDT

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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DOMINGO DUARTE

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins an interview with Mr. Norman Brandt on June 29, 1999, in Arlington, Virginia, with Sandra Stewart Holyoak. Mr. Brandt, to begin, I would like to thank you for taking the time to be a part of the oral history project. Before we discuss your family, can you tell me where and when you were born?

Norman Brandt: I was born on July 4th, 1921, in the Bronx, New York. I grew up mostly in New Jersey. ...

SH: Can you tell me about your father?

NB: My father was born in Hrubeshow, Poland; ... now, Poland, then, Russia. He was the son of a very wealthy merchant, grain merchant whose business was supplying wheat to the Russian Army, on contracts, and he had a manager who would also pick up sub-contracts from peasants, I guess. My father was sent here just before World War I to, in effect, avoid the draft. Jewish men who got in the Russian Army, in those days, usually stayed for thirty years, ... were kept for thirty years, as an enlisted man of some sort. He came here, and was enrolled at ... Brooklyn Polytech, and was going there. He didn't like it after awhile, and he quit, but, the checks were still coming from home. He lived on that until they stopped coming, by which time, it turned out that just about everybody else in his family had been killed during the revolution, 'cause they were wealthy. ... You have his statistics there, right? when he was born, etc.

SH: Could you tell me again, for the record?

NB: ... He was born Herman L., "L" for Lazarus, Brandt, ... in Hrubeshow, Poland, on a day he selected, November 11th, ... 1885, but, like so many people of his heritage, he knew his birthday only in terms of the Jewish calendar, which is a thirteen-month ... lunar calendar. As a result, he and many others had to select what they thought was the kind of date, back then. In any event, ... he selected Armistice Day for his citizenship application. ... He died in 1970 in Newark. He became a naturalized US citizen while enlisted in the US Army and serving at Camp Upton, New York, and he ... had some college.

SH: Did any of his family members emigrate to the United States before the Russian Revolution?

NB: Not his family. They had no reason to leave, too. [laughter] No. He did have some relatives, only one, I think, that emigrated to Israel, which is an interesting side bit. Would you like me to tell you a little bit about that? Our cousin, his name is Shlomo Brandt, I met him only once, he's ten years older than I was, and he looks like my twin brother, the only one who had a nose like mine. ... He ended up in the Warsaw ghetto, because, before he was going to take the exam for college, I guess, he and some friends played a trick on some Christian boys, and tied up their clothing that they left on the river bank where they had been swimming. When he reported on Saturday morning to take the entrance exam to the, what do they call it? "Gymnasium," one of the boys that had been swimming in the river was giving the exams, so, he ... left. He ended up in Warsaw. He was ... a member of the group that broke out of the ghetto, was a friend of Menachem Begin. ... They formed a partisan group, at first, and then, they linked up with the Russian Army, and, afterwards, he was sent to Moscow, and he was given the task of filling out

applications from Jewish people who wanted to go to Palestine, and his conclusion was, you know, so many people want to go, it must be worthwhile, so, he applied. That's how he got there. ... As I said, he was a friend of Begin, he was in all of the wars that took place, in the army, and so on. ... He has a younger son who is almost the spitting image of my younger son. They were born almost precisely at the same day and time, same age. His younger son had trouble, first with the college, and he got through it anyway, so, he became an officer in their air force, and, finally, this last year, I understand, he was retired as a Major General, or equivalent, in the Israeli Army, had been in charge of their Air Logistics Command, and, now, he's working as a pilot for El Al. That's a sort of interesting sidelight.

SH: Was he the only relative to leave Russia or Poland?

NB: Well, yeah, yeah. There was another ... nephew who was a doctor in Palestine, in Israel, and, before World War II, he went back to his hometown to ... bring his father to Israel. They knew there was a lot of trouble getting around anywhere, and, as a consequence, they had an agreed situation that, if they were confronted by the Gestapo, the father would create a diversion, and the son would leave the train and get off, and it did happen. The father did create a diversion. He swallowed some poison that his son had left with him to use. ... That's the only other one I know. I have since met a third cousin who lives in Baltimore. Her father was a nephew of my father, but, I didn't know him.

SH: Your father came here as a student.

NB: Yes, yeah. He came here as a student, among other things. I guess I might as well put it in here, as an aside; he didn't come steerage, as most immigrants were coming. He came third class or second class. When it came time for him to qualify for Social Security here, he had made himself younger than he was when he was looking, during the Depression, for jobs; (being Jewish was bad enough, but, getting jobs was tough.) So, my wife did some research down in what is now the Department of Transportation, and he had the name of the ship and the day he thought he arrived, and she found that in the records, and, as a result, he got two years back pay in Social Security, because he was two years older than he had been saying. ... From that, he primarily became a salesman in retail situations. He did work in the garment district for awhile, as a cutter, and he owned a business for awhile during the Depression, but, then, there's a very interesting situation as to how he met my mother, but, that's different.

SH: Please tell me that story.

NB: Well, let me tell you about the Ox's.

SH: Okay.

NB: Where did that come from? I found, in working on my family's history, a surprise. ... The main information we always had was, he was Mr. Wulf Ox, and, as you know, the immigrants in Ellis Island, ... if the Irish agents couldn't understand it, they would assign a name, so, it was spelled O-X, "Wulf," for "William," O-X. That's the name I knew him by, that's how his business knew him. I found, in working up the history, that his younger son, ... who was a

lawyer, had taken care of getting the name changed, officially, legally, to Ochs, O-C-H-S, instead of O-X, and he had my grandfather's passport, which, ... my cousin indicates, was issued in Hungary, I don't know why, because he went from Europe to England, and became a tailor in England, and then, came to the States, and then, had his wife and one daughter come. Well, now, his son had legally, then, changed the name to O-C-H-S, and some of my cousins and uncles ... used that name, and I thought they just adopted it. (Some of them still retain O-X.) Well, the uncle that did all the work, the lawyer, the only one left in the small town of Westfield, where they grew up, he still was O-X, but, apparently, as I saw now, my grandfather really had traveled here with Ochs, O-C-H-S. That tells that. How did he meet my mother?

SH: Can you tell me about your mother? Where was your mother born?

NB: My mother was born in New York. ... She would have been a hundred this past week. She died seven years ago.

SH: You said that you do not know why your grandfather's passport was from Hungary. Could it be that he had to get a Hungarian passport to go to England?

NB: That's possible. I don't know. ...

SH: Do you know what year he arrived in America?

NB: Well, ... he came shortly before my mother was born. She was the first child born in the States. She was born in '99, ... but, he would have been born in, I don't know. ... I have to figure it backwards. I don't remember. What he did was, ... he came to the States from England and he worked for Roger's Peat, at the time they hand-tailored custom-made clothes, and then, sent for his wife and the one daughter. ... My aunt was about three years old when she came. My mother has written a wonderful piece about all of this, really historical. I have a file on it. My grandmother and their oldest child were met at Ellis Island by my grandfather, who was a redhead, and my aunt, his daughter, asked in Yiddish, because that's all she knew as a language, "Who is that red man?" [laughter] That was her father. They ended, eventually, with seven children, six more born in the States. He came here, then, in '98, 1898. I can travel on from there and get that out of the way, in a sense. ... Actually, until I was thirteen, most of the time, ... we were living with my grandparents in Westfield, New Jersey.

SH: Are we talking about your mother's parents?

NB: My mother's parents. My grandmother had become sort of infirmed and the Depression was on. We didn't have any place else to go, in a way, so, my mother was keeping house for my grandmother, and she had some wonderful stories she had told, but, the interesting thing is, how did they ever get to Westfield? My grandfather was looking for more work, and, not having it, he and a friend had traveled from New York City to Plainfield, New Jersey, to see if they could find a job. They found a place, ... a tailor shop. The man had just died, and the wife wanted to hire them, so, that's where they worked, and, from there, shortly thereafter, he moved to Westfield. I think he was one of the first, well, one of two or three Jewish families in Westfield; now, it is quite a bit different. He stopped at a shop, (I saw it recently), and asked the owner if

he had work, and guy said, “No. I don’t want to hire anybody. I want to get back to Germany. ... I’d like to sell you my business.” He said, “I don’t have any money.” So, he said, “Let’s go talk to the bank anyway.” So, he went over to the bank, and the banker asked what collateral he had. He didn’t understand the word, so, he defined it for him. He said, “I have seven lovely children and everyone of them is worth a million dollars.” [laughter] So, the last of his million dollar children died recently. My mother was the last to die. I thought that was precious. He, then, became quite well-to-do there, mostly by buying and renting homes, and then, the Depression hit, and the stock market broke. It got to be bad. The house that I spent most of the time living in, where my mother grew up with her brothers and sisters, is now a Charlie Brown’s Restaurant in, I say Westfield, but, officially, it’s Scotch Plains. It’s just over the line. Are you familiar with the area? Well, it’s just over the line. There used to be a big water tank, and the first thing next to it was a kennel managed by some Scotch people, then, my grandfather’s property was about five acres, ... and we always think of it as Westfield, but, actually, ... now, where that tower used to be is where the Westfield City Hall is. It was always their property, and so, just past that was Scotch Plains.

SH: How did your mother and father meet?

NB: My grandfather and mother went to New York to attend the wedding. At the wedding, they met somebody, and they got talking, and [laughter] the first people they met had one, two, three, ... four, had four sons of marriageable age, and my grandfather and grandmother had one, two, two daughters of marriageable age. So, they agreed that they’d have his sons come visit and it was as a result of that that my mother met my father in Westfield. For a couple of years, they were courting. One of the men in the other family also married my mother’s sister, so, you had a brother and sister married to a brother and a sister, and they had a double wedding. My grandfather saved money by having one wedding for both, [laughter] and, just as an aside, because, ... while I think of it now, when Reagan went to Germany, he planned to visit a military cemetery and Elie Wiesel ... went to Washington and tried to persuade him not to go. There was a TV clip that about the precise time that ... Reagan was at the German military cemetery, Elie Wiesel spoke to the children at the religious school in the synagogue in Westfield, New Jersey, which then had 300 children. My grandfather was one of the founders of the original congregation. There were maybe ten children at the most, coming from Westfield and Cranford when I lived there.

SH: How did your father get involved with the man who had four sons of marrying age?

NB: My oldest aunt, her ... husband was a manager or superintendent in the garment district, ... and he had hired my father to work as a cutter, and that’s how he got involved in this other thing. There’s some very interesting side points, but, I don’t know that it’ll interest you enough. One of the things is my birthday. The family got together on religious and civic holidays, on the Fourth of July. I was, what? three or four years old. That picture there, that’s Passover. The Fourth of July, everybody’s at my birthday, and I’ve never yet had any birthday parties like that. [laughter] My wife tried to keep it up, but, it doesn’t mean anything, and I found out, much to my surprise, later on, my grandfather, after he was a widower, and the mother of those boys got married, but, my step-grandmother was also, I found, born on the Fourth of July, so, for all I know, they were celebrating her birthday and not mine. [laughter] This was taken just before

Passover in 1924. I'm three years old. That's me. The uncle was the shop superintendent, that's he, and what he had done, he had hand-made the coat for his wife, ... (how proud my aunt is, showing the gold braid there), ... and this is her daughter, and that's me, and a cousin who's eight months younger, and he made all of these clothes by hand, and, for years thereafter, as we grew, he always either made or had us come to the shop and furnished us for the Easter vacation, new clothes, and this was the rest of them.

SH: Who is your mother?

NB: That's my mother.

SH: Beautiful.

NB: This is the whole family, except two people. My father wasn't there, because he and this uncle owned ... a diner, lunch diner, in New Brunswick, and they shifted. ... Since my uncle drove, my father didn't; my father wasn't here. We lived in Highland Park, then, ... and this woman's husband, who was one of the sons of the other family, he had a business in New York State, so, he didn't come. Otherwise, it's everybody. That was the youngest son, the lawyer, and many others, so, this is, oh, so precious.

SH: Yes, the clothes are beautiful.

NB: ... They had the photographer come out before the *seder*. Everybody's dressed up. That's on the front stairs of this big, six bedroom house in Scotch Plains, now the Charlie Brown restaurant.

SH: Were your family celebrations held mostly in Scotch Plains?

NB: Yeah.

SH: Is that where you lived while you were growing up?

NB: ... Well, when I was born in the Bronx, when I was about two years old or three years old, I guess, we moved to New Brunswick, because my father and my uncle, my grandfather financed it, my father and uncle bought the lunch wagon. They didn't do too well on that, ... and then, from there, we moved to Orange, where my father owned a delicatessen, ... you know, having a rough time, but, other than that time, almost all my schooling, up to the age of thirteen, was in Westfield. ...

SH: How important was religion to your family? Did your mother keep a kosher household?

NB: All right, we'll hit that. I, frankly, and I don't mean this derogatorily, ... believe what Marx said, "Religion is the opiate of ... the proletariat." As I said, there were just a few of us, two or three families were Jewish in Westfield. My grandfather and others, along with some people from Cranford, formed a new congregation. Now, I know we used to go there and I knew they had services there. I don't know whether they ever had it during the week, 'cause I can't

imagine it, but, they would have a guest rabbi, a guest during the High Holidays. When I was about ten or eleven, my grandfather would take me along for the Holiday Services, or else I would drive with ... my grandmother, who couldn't walk then, would be driven by one of my uncles, and it was an Orthodox congregation, with the women up in the balcony and so on. Well, obviously, it was about that time that I should be trained for my *bar mitzvah*. (I was thirteen in 1934.) Well, to be trained, I would have to go to Plainfield, to a Cantor at the synagogue there, who would train me, and that would have been five days a week at ten cents by trolley, round trip, that's fifty cents; then, they got fifty cents a week. Well, one dollar was a lot of money then. A dollar bought a tank full of gas, ten loaves of bread, what have you, and so, I wasn't involved in that. My grandfather said he would teach me, and I thought that was strange, because he spoke very little English, basically, and I couldn't see how he could, I thought, translate the Hebrew into anything I would understand. When my grandfather or my uncle would read from *Seder Hagannah*, I would ask them to translate and they replied, "This is a story about a march through the desert." They had learned to read Hebrew in *yeshivas* in Poland, but only by rote. My father could read, write and translate Hebrew, Yiddish, German and Polish and he said he would prepare me for my *bar mitzvah*, but he never did. Although he surely had all the religious items, prayer books, prayer shawls, etc., he did not bring them to America. He was not religious and only attended services when they were for family events, such as weddings or *bar mitzvahs*. My strongest feeling, basically, about organized religion was colored by that, I think, just like Stalin was told about the Pope being displeased, and he said, "How many divisions does the Pope have?" You see all the elaborate and various, except maybe Unitarian, ... facilities for people that are starving, and ... my feeling for organized religion is that it has its place in society. My wife was very, very devout. ... Her grandparents were German Jews. She was raised in the Reformed tradition, ... in fact, wanted to be a rabbi, and ... her mother took her to see the rabbi in Youngstown, Ohio, to explain that women are not rabbis. [laughter] (Today, a congregation that we helped found is probably the largest one, served by, now, a woman rabbi.) I felt that my children should be exposed and make their own decisions, and so, ... from a civic standpoint, I supported my wife's interests. We were active members early in one congregation. We broke away from that and built another. Some prayers or some hymns I know only because I've heard them so often. One surprising thing that I put in here, ... you know, in those days, Rutgers had a compulsive ... chapel on Sunday and you were allowed, I think, two cuts a year. Those boys who were Jewish, ... they would go to Friday night services at a synagogue in town and bring back a chit to ... show that they'd been there. The Catholic boys made arrangements to go to Mass on Sunday morning and they'd bring back a chit. Once, the first time I ever went to a Reformed service, (I was home in Newark on a holiday weekend, I guess), I went with my wife and I got a chit to turn back. I didn't need it, but, I got a chit to turn back, but, the thing here, again, this is something that's always stuck me, when I went to this first Reformed Jewish service, it was the same ceremony. They read out of the Old Testament, they sang *Rock of Ages*. The only difference was at the very end; when the rabbi gave the threefold blessing, he didn't finish with, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, may the Lord bless thee and keep you," etc. It was, basically, the same as the services I attended at Kirkpatrick Chapel, but, as I say, I did support and was active, but, when my wife died, I stopped my membership. I thought it would be hypocritical.

SH: You grew up in Westfield, and then, in Highland Park. What memories do you have of growing up? What was your neighborhood like? What did you do for fun? Did you have any jobs?

NB: ... My first memories are that, of the family gatherings, when I was not yet three years old, and then, we were living there, then, we moved.

[Mr. Brandt's Addendum: The first visual evidence of my membership is a photograph in which I am sitting on the lap of "Grandpa Hyman." He's in a rocking chair on the front lawn of the old house on North Avenue. He is in his shirt sleeves and I am wearing a romper. This was probably taken at the time of my first birthday, July, 1922, since it was the practice for the families to get together in Westfield for such holidays as the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, and Passover.

One of the early anecdotes that I had been told by my mother involves the time that she and Aunt Min were sitting on the bench of a buggy with Frank and me in their arms. Aunt Min was driving and the horse was a Pinto named Buck. This was a one-horse shay which could be used to carry passengers. On the incident in question, Aunt Min had forgotten to secure the tailgate properly. Consequently, when Buck started forward, the tailgate fell down and the bench that we were on fell back. (Although we landed on the ground and there was no unfortunate consequence, I used to tease Frank that he had fallen on his head at an early age and that accounted for his erratic action ever after.)

Another horse story that I do remember involves Penny. She was a beautiful brown horse that Grandpa had bought to replace Buck. Aunt Min and Uncle Ben used to ride her. I first lived at Grandpa's when I was about two years old. During that time, whenever Uncle Ben went down to the stable to saddle up Penny before his ride, my mother would sit me on the backstairs post. Uncle Ben would come up from the stable, pick me up from the post, and sit me in front of him on the horse. He would then trot all around and bring me back to the backstairs post before he went off for his cantor.

When we gathered together for the holidays, it always was a weekend. The house had six bedrooms, but, they were not enough for all of us, so, Frank, Paul, Herb and I, being relatively close in age, would sleep up in the attic. I don't remember whether we slept on any mattress. I think we slept on a large featherbed that Grandma had brought with her from Europe.]

The first one I remember is that big one on North Avenue. My grandfather had bought it at a reasonable price, and, when Prohibition was repealed, for the first year I think it was, they could only sell 3.2 beer or something like that, but, that became the era to build "roadhouses," they were called, ... and somebody bought the house from my grandfather at a good price, and it became a "roadhouse." ... I visited that one and, from then on, it's always been used in that context. We moved, and so, when I was living there, initially, there were five acres, and the nearest house was about a block or two away. There was a family whose son was in first grade and I was starting kindergarten. My mother arranged for me to have him walk me to school, 'cause we had to cross over, (or sometimes we crossed) the tracks, we shouldn't have, but, I had to cross over a bridge to get to school on the other side, and then, later, ... I was in Orange, I

went, I think, only to about fourth grade. ... When I was back in Westfield, there were two different homes, one on Carlton Road, which was very large, also, and then, one on, I think, ... Myrtle Avenue, and I went to elementary school, when we were living on Carlton Road, and I went to Westfield Junior High, and then, on Columbus Day, October of 1939, we moved to Newark. My father had found another job, which was getting some good income, and he had rented an apartment in Newark, and we moved there, and it really was a trauma for my mother, because, the next day, after we moved, her mother died, and she felt guilty. I graduated from ... elementary school in '35. ... I was in the Class of '35 in elementary school, and I graduated from high school, in South Side High School in Newark, ... in 1939, and then, from there, I went to LIU, and then, Rutgers. So, my service, during the high school years, my life, ... was in Newark.

SH: What was it like to go to high school in Newark? What were your interests at the time?

NB: Well, we had moved from Westfield, as I said. ... I was in the ... eighth grade then. In October, we moved. So, I came to ... Newark, Charlton Street Elementary School. Mr. Schrieber, who was the principal of the school, was also the teacher for the eighth grade, and Jesse Owens's brother was the coach at ... that school. After about three days, I can't remember, the teacher said to me, "You don't belong here, but, there's nothing I can do about it now. ... You should be in high school now. You've passed what we're doing here, but, I can't do anything about that, so, I'll move you up into the class that graduates twice a year," and, therefore, in January '35, ... I went from the higher eighth grade to South Side. My interests were more academic. ... I volunteered for the high school band, because, then, I would be able to go to away football ... games with the band. I was lousy at the clarinet. I was a member of what was called the Library Staff, which was ... a secret, in a way. It was a group of students selected by certain teachers, senior teachers, and recommended to be on there, for us to get a little "couth," ... and the librarian, and her sister, who ... was head of the math department, my homeroom teacher (I can't remember her name), and students who had flourished their first year at school were named and selected. Today, it'd be illegal, yeah, gonna be lawsuits, but, that's the way we were, and it was all lily-white as well, although about a third of the school ... and a third of my class were colored people. None of them were ever ... picked for the staff, the Library Staff. ... Then, one of the things she fostered was an interest in books and, as new books came in, we'd sort of, you know, check them out. She would select particular books for some of us to read and give a synopsis, so that ... she'd know the background of it. ... [laughter] I'll never forget this either. If there was some task that you wanted to avoid because it was onerous, she'd say, "You have to do it for the good of your soul," [laughter] and I have done many things since ... "for the good of my soul" and not necessarily because I would have wanted to do it. ... Well, I guess they were all instrumental in having me take the exam required to get a scholarship to Rutgers. ... I went to New Brunswick and I took the test for State Scholarships, which was really an aptitude test. ... In those days, the only colleges that required college board exams were the Ivy League schools. We didn't require them at Rutgers. I received offers for two scholarships. One was called the County Scholarship, the other was called ... the State Scholarship. Well, the difference was that the County Scholarship only covered tuition, which, in those days, was 200 dollars, and the ... other scholarship covered tuition and fees, including the general fee. Well, that was 343 dollars, so, there was no choice. The following Monday, when I got to school, my homeroom teacher was all upset, "Mr. Belcher wants to see you, right

away.” He was the principal. I think I’d never met him, personally, in all the time I was in school. [laughter] ... I was one of the valedictorians (I’d always see him at weekly auditorium stuff and, maybe, pass in the hall). He was livid. ... “I proposed you to get a scholarship and you refused it. How come?” I said, “Oh, there were two scholarships, County and ... State, and one was 200 dollars for four years and the other was, total, \$343.” He said, “Do you realize that this is one of twenty-one scholarships given to Rutgers ... elected by principals in twenty-one counties? and, with all of the high schools in Newark, this has been my one and only chance, and I’ll never get a chance again,” and all that stuff, “You refused it!” I thought, frankly, “Cut this out. You fool. How can you expect anybody in my circumstances to do that?” I said, “Although mine is a State Scholarship, I had one of the five highest scores. My scholarship is designated a Governor’s Scholarships, so, I am one of five, not one of twenty-one, if you’re thinking about the numbers.” Now, the sequel to this is, as a result, he awarded that scholarship to a classmate of mine, Harry Hazelwood. Harry came as a commuter in ... the Class of ’43, went on to get a law degree. I think he was the General Counsel for the New Jersey NAACP for awhile and was the first black elected judge in Newark, and could well have been the first black mayor. So, it gave me, later on, the thought ... of a lesson, and I mixed the metaphor, “The closer you get to the seat of the almighty, the more you find their feet are made of clay,” [laughter] and I found a few like that in my lifetime, when I worked, and the other was that, unbeknownst to you, decisions you make that involve your own personal well being can have a very, very strong effect on somebody else completely. I mean, to think, it’s nice to know, really, that because of that situation, Harry was able to get his scholarship but, I didn’t know anything of that, and he didn’t either.

SH: How integrated was the school?

NB: Well, in Newark, it was completely integrated, and, in fact, since I lived on the borderline, ... there was a Jewish ghetto, a Negro ghetto; another thing, I’ve always said, (incidentally, our rabbi never believed it), one facet of a ghetto is the determination to remain a ghetto. They don’t want to leave or, in the Jewish ghettos, they’re within walking distance of a synagogue. There are other reasons that people don’t leave ghettos and, unless that exists, I don’t consider it a true ghetto. Well, my class at Charlton Street School, I think half of them were Negro. ... In high school, about a third of my class, I believe, were Negroes, ... and many of them, as soon as they became sixteen, I think it was, and got what were called “working papers,” ... they would leave school, so that my graduating class may have been less than a third. It meant, when I think of it, it was just a sort of natural evolution. Going to ... a desegregated school, in that way, was acceptable. In Westfield, I’d never been to a desegregated school. In Westfield, there were no young black children ... but, Harry Hazelwood was a good friend of mine. I was ... co-manager of the basketball team ... and they were all Polish guys who learned to play basketball on the playground under the tutelage of Jesse Owens’s ... brother. ... It gets to be synergistic. What surprised me, ... let me try to continue this, I didn’t think of black any further, but, you see, from there, when I got to Rutgers, there were only four at any one time, and, if there were two in one class, there was none in the other, and I was on the fencing team with one, friendly, but, that was no different, and then, I found, ... I’ll get this out of order, but, as you mentioned, I transferred to Rutgers from LIU, so, this is an aside. There were two schools. I graduated in 1935, in January. There were two colleges in the area, Long Island University, which, then, was in downtown Brooklyn, in a loft, and CCNY, which, to accommodate the situation in New York and in

Newark, too, where you had graduations in mid-year, they had what they ... referred to as February-September courses. Now, I would have applied at CCNY, except that, having finished a year of courses, I would have been short one semester, one course, or something, whereas at LIU, they structured the classes, so that in a course one semester, you might have only two credits, and then, the next semester, you'd have four, so that when I finished freshman year at LIU, I was fully capable of being accepted as a sophomore at Rutgers, and so, I think I was the only transfer student in my class, and that has other connotations, but, back to segregation. As a ... sophomore, I was assigned to the freshman dormitory, Hegeman, on the Quad, and my roommate and his friends were from South Jersey, and also, apparently, basketball players, and they'd have bull sessions, and I was surprised to hear that they were so upset, because, I didn't know it, but, one-third of New Jersey is below the Mason-Dixon Line, and, [in] the southern part of New Jersey, there were segregated schools, just like in the South, and these guys were upset, because they had played against Negroes on teams, regional teams, but, they'd never been a teammate of one of them, and they were upset that they might have to. It didn't happen, 'cause there wasn't anybody to play. ... It was a revelation to me. A good friend [of mine] was Ernie Baxter, ... he was in the class ahead and on the fencing team. Segregation at Rutgers had been oppressive, even some [time] later. They never ... permitted Paul Robeson to sing in the choir and I see something there. He was the third black student ever to come to Rutgers. ... He was all-American, but, he's never been in the All-American, Phi Beta Kappa in his junior year, ... Hall of Fame. I think they have renamed the gymnasium after him.

SH: When did you become aware of discrimination, either anti-Semitism or some other form?

NB: Oh, as I was growing up in Westfield. It was very rare; you see, there were only a few Jewish and Negro families and there was nothing that I felt otherwise. I mean, my friends were all tolerant. My mother followed through the same tenets that she had been living by. My grandmother always insisted that her children should wear good clothes on Sunday, so that they don't stand out from all ... the other kids that were going to Sunday school and couldn't play, to, you know, be supportive, ... and so, my friends were all, three or four, on the block in Carlton Street, and they were Christians, and my mother insisted that I wear my school clothes. Now, some of them, when they got back from church, were changing into play clothes, and then, I could also, but, there was one guy, he was a stinker, ... I don't know how to describe him, but, he didn't live on our block. He was a couple of blocks away, and he had no other friends, and he'd come, every once in awhile, with his bicycle, and he started calling me names. It's the only time I've ever been called that, but, I have been, you know, "Kikey," or something, and he would make cracks about Jewish people, ... and my decision then, I would just laugh and felt that, if he thinks he's not getting under my skin, he'll go, and that would happen. My reaction was ... that he wasn't hurting me and I'd laugh. Now, therefore, when I got to Newark, these were other Jewish and Negro students ... and, throughout my life, I have not ... overtly suffered from discrimination for my religious affiliation, but, I know that I have been covertly. ... There were situations, for example, where government-wide searches for people to be promoted, I found, much later, that I had been recommended quite often, but, not selected, and I knew full well that was why. My name didn't necessarily give it, but, I never disguised the affiliation, ... and it wasn't that much of a handicap. I didn't feel discriminated against, personally, except for this character back in my childhood. ... My grandfather, I mean, his customers were ... the mayor. ... Another aside, that oldest uncle, ... he was born and named Isodore. When he was fourteen

years old, (and you didn't need a driver's license, and my grandfather had a car then) he worked weekends as a chauffeur for the mayor of Westfield, who was a broker on Wall Street, and he changed his name to Harry, because, he said, "It doesn't sound right to say, 'Isodore go get the car.' 'Harry get the car.'" ... He was the one who used Ochs, O-C-H-S, and he didn't need a driver's license then. There was, ... I think, only one black family, rather large, and their name was Booth, but, I know that my grandfather called them all "Booty," he didn't say "Booth," ... and the handyman that we had was Booty. Do you mind if we keep flowing this way? because, [laughter] when I think of Booty, when I would come home, we're living on Carlton Road then, ... from school, elementary school, I'd go back down to the garage, where there was a workshop, and I'd go down and see Booty, and, suddenly, I began to hear things like, "Oh, here comes the General," "General Nuisance!" It was the last time I ever bothered him. [laughter] ...

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

NB: One of the two doctors in Westfield (Dr. Savoy and Dr. Salvati) was a ... Negro, and so, ... all his patients had to be pretty much white, and the other was a homeopathic physician, and my mother has told stories that I remember. When Dr. Salvati was treating my grandmother, he would bring his case, and they didn't have capsules or pills then, powder was used for prescription, ... and he would compound his own powders and put them in what really looked like chewing gum papers, and then, you would put the powder in the water, and there were different colors, and my mother said that she and her siblings always said, "The colors maybe different, but, I bet they're all the same medicine."

SH: What are some of your memories of the Great Depression from the different areas that you lived in?

NB: Well, ... I didn't feel it, as many others did. We lived well. My grandfather still had a decent income. We lived in a big home. He had two cars. When we moved to Orange, we had a nice apartment on Main Street, near High Street. My father had a business. We didn't know what "Depression" meant, basically. ... I never felt it. Now, I would have the feeling, as I mentioned, that money meant something, and, to preclude you from getting *bar mitzvahed*, for example, that was significant, but, ... actually, my family could have afforded the dough to send me there, but, ... religion never meant anything to my father. My mother ... grew up that way, but, my grandmother kept a kosher home, and she kept it kosher for as long as she was alive and things like that, but, my mother was not particularly religious. I think the only ceremonies ... she went to were memorial ceremonies. So, the Depression, *per se*, I was not ignorant of some of the things. Reading *Grapes of Wrath* really was an eye-opener, and then, the movie, fantastic, but, I didn't see any of that. ... There were, obviously, ... people on relief, but, I didn't know what that was, I didn't know who they were, and so, really, in those terms, the only effect ... may have been less funding, but, gee, I remember, ... when I was about five or six, ... my grandfather was religious, but, he couldn't live in a circumstance where he'd be closed on Saturday, because that's when all his customers came, 'cause they were Wall Street people, and, Saturday night, he'd bring home all the proceeds ... that he'd collected during the week, and my grandmother would count the bills while my grandfather was eating dinner, which was the end of the Sabbath, anyway, and I would pile up the silver dollars and all the coins, and there were times they had fifty dollars worth of silver alone. So, as I said, he had two cars. Only one son

went to college, went to law school, Newark Law, his others didn't, but, I didn't know it, the Depression, from a personal standpoint.

SH: Were the events taking place in Europe and around the world discussed in your home? What about politics? What were your family's political leanings?

NB: ... Primarily, they became New Deal Democrats, they were Democratic. ... In Westfield, I did observe this during the Depression, all the clerks in the banks, there weren't that many banks, but, the clerks were men, no women, and I always said, "Just because they wear a white shirt and tie like the president of the bank, they vote like he does, and that's not their interest. They're still poor," they were rock-bound Republicans. Politically, there wasn't much in the way of political discussions, that I can recall, although one of the things, my sainted grandmother ... was quite, well, I always said, my wife didn't agree with me, that it was amazing that she took her religion, brought it thousands of miles from home, and she still maintained all the parts of her religion. ... My wife would say, "Well, that's not religion," but, the woman's religion in the Orthodox situation is providing the food, and being ready after the evening services at synagogue, and so on. ... There was a butcher in Plainfield who was a "surket," and she would call up on Friday mornings, and ... tell him what meats she wanted, and then, when he came out, she had to select three or four of her chickens for him to slaughter. I watched that. She kept all that in going through and that was there. One thing I remember this, (we had wet cell batteries then) which she had for her radio, an Atwater-Kent, wet cell, beautiful case. ... I don't really give her as much credit as I probably should for her understanding of English, because she would listen to the news, ... and the Joe Louis-Max Schmelling ... fight, you know. Her axiom was, "Is it good for the Jews?" One day, my mother said to her, "Did you hear that? Norma Shearer's husband died," ... and I remember my grandmother saying, "So? That's another Christian." My mother said, "No, his name was Norman Thallury and he was Jewish." "Oh, what a shame!" The only thing that I mentioned [was] my grandfather's Saturday night dinner, but, the only thing that my grandmother acceded to that was not in accordance with the religion was, as she became less firm, she would ride in a car to go to the synagogue. It was too far for her to walk. My grandfather would walk for miles, but, the other thing was, one of my uncles, he wasn't married then, ... would drive my grandfather into Hester Street ... in New York, where he would go to the jobbers. These were people who sold clothes. ... They were called job lots. They were either returned ... to the factories by people that had bought them, or they were an overrun, or stuff like that, and you'd pick up the same thing at a much less cost. ... When this customer wanted a pair of gray, flannel slacks, he came in on Saturday. My grandfather would say, "Next Saturday, I'll have it for you." So, he knew what he was picking up. While that happened, my uncle would go over to a Hungarian butcher shop and he would bring home, buy, a juicy, cured steak (you know, kosher meat is not tender). When he got home, my grandmother permitted him to keep a set of dishes down in the laundry room. There was a huge hot air furnace, coal furnace, that heated the building, not with forced air, we had just risers, and he would lay that steak over the coals, and, if I didn't pester him too much, he'd give me a taste, and that's where I learned to eat rare beef. [laughter] ...

SH: You basically choose Rutgers because you received a scholarship. Did you consider going anywhere else?

NB: No. ... I couldn't consider anywhere else and I didn't even try. It wasn't until I was told about the scholarship that I felt I could go, and, of course, it did cover everything, but my food and dorm. ... My mother would give me, every week I guess, ... seven dollars. I had a dollar a day to spend, which meant that I bought a meal ticket in the cafeteria for five dollars and I had two dollars left over for whatever, which later became the fare to get ... back to Newark to be with my future wife.

SH: During high school, did you work during the summers? What were your activities in high school?

NB: ... I guess it was in my sophomore year, ... we were not quite sixteen, when I met my wife. Her father was ... the manager of the Sanford Theater on Sanford Avenue in Irvington. We started going together ...

SH: Did you meet her through the theater?

NB: In a way it was because of the theater. I'll tell you how I met her. I had a good friend and his father was the manager of the Branford Theater in downtown Newark. That's how he knew Hilda (I'd never dated anybody). One day, he goofed, and he made a date with Hilda and Rita Gould for the same night, and, as a result, he pleaded with me to come along on a blind date. ... I think we went to the Branford, on passes, and my wife told me, later, that both she and Rita agreed that, they didn't know who I was, but, they were going to hurt him for what he did. Well, that's how we met, we weren't sixteen. She had dated, I couldn't afford to go out on dates in high school. I didn't have the money for it. So, she convinced her father to hire me. He had a vacancy, as an usher on the weekends. So, on weekends, Saturday and Sunday, I worked twelve hours in the Sanford Theater, which meant that, now, I had the money, but, I didn't have the time to take her out. [laughter] Well, that was very funny and her father knew it would keep us from going out on dates. Now, in college, I can't remember how, well, I guess, it was just axiomatic, [for] the people I knew, ... to try to work for Bamberger's during the summer, and you worked as a stock clerk, friends of mine did, for twenty-five cents an hour, but, they also hired helpers on the delivery trucks, and that, they restricted to college students, people already in college. ... Between my sophomore year and my junior year I worked as a helper on Bamberger's delivery trucks and got a lot to learn from that, too.

SH: Did you work at the Bamberger's in Newark?

NB: Yeah, Bamberger's in Newark. ... The drivers, they were members of the ... Teamsters Union, they were not ... avid conservatives. It was a closed shop, but, they permitted the company to hire, in the summertime, college people, which they did, because it wasn't until three months were over that you would be required to join the union. So, I was not a union member, but, the union had taken care of that situation, and it was a good experience, learned certain things there.

SH: You went through the basics at Long Island University.

NB: Freshman courses, yes.

SH: Did you have a major when you transferred to Rutgers?

NB: Well, no. ... When I went to LIU, my objective, then, was to go to law school and become a lawyer, and so, I was taking history and poli-sci as a ... preparation for that, and, when I got to Rutgers, I was in the courses in history and poli-sci, majored in those. Again, I'll interject here, it had a profound effect on me, because, intending to go on to law school, and being an excellent student, and so on, I was considering taking an extra course. At that time, ... in your junior and senior years, we were permitted to take an extra course, but, you had to pay an "extra course" fee. Well, within ... the history and political science department, they had just created what they called the Government Service School. Everything was the same, but, you had five majors, ... instead of four, so, I'd get them for free. ... Therefore, I took five, and I became a member of the Government Service School, as a result of which some of that course open my eyes to a lot of governmental services, and a professor had told the class, I think it was the first year it happened, that the federal government was giving, they called it the JPA, Junior Professional Assistant Exam, where they would be hiring college graduates, in not just engineering and science, to start ... a career in government, and so, I took that test. The things that came from that, and that was probably one of the biggest events that affected my life, because war broke out and I was then engaged, I gave up the concept of going on to law school. ... Having taken that exam, I had two offers. One was an offer to start at 1800 bucks a month, which sounded good (in those days, you didn't have recruiters coming to campus, except from some of the engineering or scientific business). Nobody bothered with accountants, and personnel, and so on. Later on, I ran a program which included, among other things, hiring 2000 college graduates in all fields, when I was in the Army. The problem with the \$1800 was that I would have to come to work then, not finish college, and I thought that didn't make sense, because, with the war on, I could not afford to lose my college education. Then, I had another offer from the Navy Department, which was contingent on my completing my last course, so that after graduation, I could start to work, and I did, on May 5th. I came back to the commencement exercises on May 12th. Well, the thing that it meant to me, (which is difficult, perhaps, for most people to understand) as the big build up took place in the war, the Civil Service appointments were changed from permanent to probationary appointments. They instituted what they called a "War Service Appointment." It had all of the retirement and other benefits, except it did not give you any tenure, and, somehow, the man that hired me, (there were seven of us) got the word that that thing was going to go into effect, so, our offers were made, and we were selected before that regulation applied, so that once I went off in the service, when I came back, I had the protection of of permanent status, getting my job back. After the war ended, there were people, many of them, ... lawyers and accountants, who would take jobs as file clerks in order to get status. Once they got the status, they could go back. So, I wasn't faced with that.

SH: What are your memories of Rutgers?

NB: Okay. ... Well, I came as a transfer student.

SH: What was it like to be a transfer student in your day?

NB: At that time, Rutgers had plebes, and it had freshman initiation, and so on, and they also had a requirement, then, that every freshman enter into some type of sport, either intramural, I guess, or junior varsity and so on. Well, my physical stuff was beans. ... In the first place, 'cause of my intelligence, but physical immaturity, my friends were all older than I was. They were proficient in throwing balls and so on. My father, who never ... knew what a baseball was, unlike other fathers, he wasn't teaching me, like I did later for my sons, to catch a ball or to bat, and so, if I played at all, I'd be the last guy chosen to go way out in the outfield, but, I thought, "Well, you know, here, since I'm not a freshman, but, it is my first year, I wanted to accede to that requirement. One day, the coach of the crew came to our weekly class meeting in the chapel and said he was forming a 150-pound crew, and he wanted people, anybody, you know, to come apply. Well, I heard that and I thought, "Well, gee, you know, unless you've been to prep school, nobody ever did any rowing then," and Rutgers was one of the few colleges that had good teams, too, "so, you'd start from scratch," and I was under one hundred thirty-five pounds. As we progressed into getting in a shell and pulling "crabs," what had happened was, (there were four of us who were neophytes, and there were four others who were surplus from the JV team) ... and down comes this guy in his launch and a megaphone, and he yells, "Weigh enough! Don't you guys know enough to weigh enough when I say, 'Weigh enough?'" ... I thought, "You dumb son of a bitch" (one of the new people couldn't even swim, and we were out in the middle of the river). Well, as a result, my roommate (he became my roommate next year), ... Larry Alexander, who I met, ... he had fenced in high school, and he was on the fencing team, and they were looking for new recruits, and he convinced me to come and join the group, which I did. So, the end result was, and here, again, there weren't that many people who learned to fence in high school, we only had eight on the squad, because Rusty Rudolf was first foil and first saber. After one year of training and education, I became a member of the squad and ... was third epee, and then, the last year, was first epee, and, both those years, won EIFC trophies for, well, third place the first year, and the second year, it was a three-way tie for first place. So, then, again, what it proved to me was that I should not shy away. I met a challenge for something that I completely had no experience with. Well, forget it; I mean, one of five for the Governor's Scholarship, that's different, that's mental, but, in this situation, as for my membership in Phi Beta Kappa, I couldn't be elected in my junior year, because there was a two-year residency requirement. You should have had two years at school and I didn't. I only had one year at Rutgers, so, I was elected in the final year. We didn't have *Magna Cum Laude*. As I remember it, we had the Honors School, and there were ten of us named in the Honors School. I was told, subrosa, that we could tell who was number one, (the guy had all "A"s, and about thirty years old), but, I was told I was about number three, so, scholastically, that was one thing, ... but, the fencing and the influence that my roommate had on me, in that respect, was a lasting ... lesson.

SH: Were you the valedictorian of your high school class?

NB: There were four of us, four straight "A" students, ... and, as a theme, we picked the World's Fair, it was the 1939 World's Fair, and my part was to discuss the world of the future or something, but, there were four of us ... who were always on the honor roll. Oh, another activity in school, which, ... in high school, I was involved in, ... I was editor of our quarterly magazine, I guess, and editor of our yearbook, my yearbook, and, as a result, I was the South Side correspondent for the *Newark Evening News*. Every Friday or Saturday, they published a "High

School” page and you dealt with the editor of that page (my fiancée was also a correspondent for Westside High). I think ten cents an inch was what we were paid, and I [would] think of more ways to pile up a longer thing, and to make sure that the more names I put in it, the better the editor would like it, and so, I made maybe two, three, four dollars a week, but, made more money than anybody else, and I had a larger space than anybody else, ‘cause I figured out the system. Why fight it?

SH: Were you involved with the *Targum* at all?

NB: No, no. I have a *Targum* story. Shall I insert it here?

SH: Please.

NB: There was a radio program on Friday evenings, it was a quiz program of some type, and it was a team situation. I don’t remember the name of it, and the teams had to define names, words that were given to them, and Dr. George Mason Gross was working with the studio as the official arbiter. If there was a disagreement to it, a dispute about a word meaning, he became the final say. The *Targum* was put to work on Friday night and delivered Saturday morning. A particular Friday night, a contestant was given the word, “Rutgers,” and he said, “What are Rutgers?” They tore apart the front page, and, on Saturday morning, in the largest font they could find, the headline of the *Targum* read, “What are Rutgers?” [laughter] ... I found later, when I grew tomatoes, Rutgers tomatoes were terrific, and I couldn’t get them anymore, and I found out that there was some ... kind of growth that had taken them when I was living down here. So, they were ... better than anything else, but, “What are Rutgers?” Some of my friends were on *Targum*. ... Later, in at the Rutgers Club of Washington, Martin Agrumsky, ...

SH: Were you involved in any other activities, besides fencing? Did you have to take ROTC?

NB: ... Yeah, that’s another thing. I want to put it in here then. ... Yeah, my other activities, I was a member of the Scarlet Barbs. When I came, nobody was looking for me, as a sophomore, to pledge. There was only one Jewish fraternity, I think, ... and I was in my junior year, I was somehow appointed to the Scarlet Key Society, which was used as a welcoming committee for visiting athletic teams or what have you, and there would always be a member of the Scarlet Key Club who would, you know, meet the bus, and show them where to stay, and so on, and so forth. ... ROTC, I can’t remember, it must have been compulsory. I think there was no choice, ... and so, as a sophomore, I started ROTC. In my second year, as a junior, I was still in ROTC. Well, I was not able to go into Advanced ROTC, because I didn’t have two full years left. However, it turned out that the New Brunswick Post of the American Legion had an award they would give to the junior types, ... enlisted levels of ROTC students, sophomores, second year, as the Cadet of the Year. The way it was awarded was, ... you had to have ... a “B” average or above, and then, one Saturday morning, about fifty of us wind up out on Neilson Field, where the Captain of ROTC, put us through the manual of arms, and, each time someone goofed, they were out. We were lined up alphabetically, and so, I was up near the right side. When you dress right, I had no idea what was here, until, one time, I stuck my hand out and didn’t touch anybody, so, there were two or three of us this way. ... Unfortunately, the last guy beside me had practiced a different type of maneuver, and he goofed, and so, I was left standing alone, and I became the “Cadet of

the Year,” and I got a medal from the American Legion. ... I found out, also, you could be pretty tops in another field, first, you know, one percent of the class or three percent of the class, and I never pushed it. Well, okay, I’ll put another one in here. This is an aside for people that I remember who may have influenced me. ... I’m told I was the first one in the class to get married. When Pearl Harbor occurred, my wife and I decided, “We’re not gonna wait,” and so, we got married, had a weekend in New York, on January 17th, for the honeymoon. I came back to school on Monday morning, because I had a statistics examination in the afternoon. [laughter] ... One of my friends, good friends came to me and pleaded to let him copy my exam, because he was running with a “C,” and, if he didn’t get anything better than that on his final, he would flunk. Well, in my euphoria, I’d never done it, ... we didn’t have an honor code, a formal honor code, at Rutgers, but, it was just axiomatic; you didn’t cheat, you didn’t do certain things. The schools that had it, tied in with compulsory ROTC, but, we had an informal one. I’d never been party to any of this kind of stuff, but, in my euphoria over a two-day honeymoon, I thought, “What the hell?” ... My friend sat next to me, and I carefully placed my paper, so he could copy everything, word for word, and we turned them in, and ... Professor Sundelson was his name, I know, Economics. Mine came back as an “A,” and his came back as a “B.” He gave him a final “C” for the course, but, the point is, as I was saying, we had identical wording.

SH: What other professors do you remember?

NB: Well, let me hit ... one or two more of my classmates. My roommate, of course, and we kept up with each other afterwards, and it was fine, Larry Alexander. ... He didn’t go into the service during the war, because he had a heart murmur, I believe, but, he ended up getting a doctorate, working in the Rand Corporation, and, later, was a professor at a Mid-West university.

SH: Do you know what ever happened to your other friend?

NB: The last I ever heard, I wrote to him once, he had moved, I think, to the West Coast, was in business or something on the West Coast. One individual I remember, ... Vinnie Utz, have you run across him? ... I guess he was in our class, I’m not sure. He was an excellent football player and he was from the Pennsylvania coal mines, I believe. ... Rutgers had a very small type of scholarship program, [which] was really handled by the alumni, but, he was a formidable player, and he’d always get up out of a pile. His helmet usually fell off and he was laughing at it. We would yell from the stands, “Utz is nuts, and so are we.” [laughter] ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

... Burt Rockliff, I think he went on to become a doctor and so on, I remember him. On Halloween in 1939 or ‘40, I don’t remember which it is now, Orson Welles produced a radio show, I forget the name of the players, ... of *War of the Worlds* on Halloween, and although they had disclaimers, as I mentioned, Friday nights, we were listening to the other stuff. Though they had disclaimers, people got really affected, and Rockliff was one. He got dressed into the scene. ... The space ship was supposed to have landed around Freehold or something like that, and I had good friends, they were coming home from New York, and they got trepidation, until they were riding on the Pulaski Highway, and they’re told that it’s been destroyed, and then, they realized it was a hoax. So, it was so realistic, but Burt got his clothes, he was gonna walk home,

about twenty miles to get home, because, you know, he wanted to be with his family when this happened. That was that.

SH: You came in as a sophomore, so, you missed the freshman initiation.

NB: Yes.

SH: As a sophomore, did you help to initiate the incoming freshman class?

NB: No, no.

SH: Did you live in Hegeman Hall for all three of your years at Rutgers?

NB: ... No, no. ... That was my first year there. ... The second and third years as a student, I lived with Larry Alexander, 211 Wessels on the Quad also. Yeah, ... I was a Scarlet Barb, but, I was on the Quad.

SH: Can you tell me about the Scarlet Barbs?

NB: Well, I thought I just mentioned it.

SH: You mentioned it.

NB: The Scarlet Barbs was just an affiliation of ... non-fraternity people. That's how their voice was heard in the campus, because anybody ... who wasn't in a fraternity would be eligible to be a Scarlet Barb, and, as I said, I was just a member of that. ... We had, I don't know, not many people and they were all, I think, living on the Quad.

SH: Through your political science classes, how aware were you of what was going on in Europe?

NB: Very much. ... One of our classmates, I don't remember what his name was, ... was a nephew of Admiral Donitz. We, of course, followed what was happening. I majored in poli-sci. This is where I interject a professor who was ... influential, Professor George, who was a New Deal Democrat. Professor George would present the courses in a very interesting fashion. We'd play a game. Every day, ... he'd start with an item that was on the front page of the *New York Times* and tell us, you know, quote the motto, "All the news that's fit to print, and some what n'aint," and he'd talk about, ... "The people's choice," but, he kept the course rather alive, and, once, he got a bad shot. He decided, I guess, to put his money where his mouth was and he ran for freeholder in Highland Township and got soundly beaten. Also, with respect to his course, the engineers and scientists, I think, again, were required to take one liberal arts course in their junior and senior year, and Prof. George became a popular course, because it was easy, and it was humorous at times, (and Paul Rork could bring his cocker spaniel into the classroom) but, these guys, ... these engineers who took it, they called it a "bullshit" course, 'cause there's no right answer! Well, actually, he got the message across anyway. [laughter] They didn't realize it, but, he got his message across. There's no right answer. Now, related to the politics, I didn't

become active. I remember, later, somebody saying, at one time, at school, before we got into the war, there would be one group marching up College Avenue, proposing that we enter the war, and another group marching down, proposing that we stay out of the war. ... There was a convocation, I guess it was in 1940, it could have been, Wendell Willkie, ... you can check this, I'm sure, ... was given an honorary degree. We had the convocation in the new gym. The students were all downstairs on chairs. The guests and so on were up in the balcony; all of the Republican big wheels from New Brunswick and the county and the state were there, and Dr. Demarest, who was the President *Emeritus*, got up to give the invocation. Dr. Demarest had a problem with his teeth, false teeth, and he was called "Whistling Willie," even by professors. [laughter] As he started the invocation, ... about a half a dozen guys in different parts of the audience began to whistle, and, through the whole invocation, you heard this whistling. Now, the rest of us, with our heads down, were laughing like hell, ... but, they kept it up. As a result, everybody had to attend, at least, I think, for a week, ... a special session down at the chapel where we were given lectures by different members of the teaching staff about how bad this was. Now, of course, ... in one sense, 'cause this ain't no Kent State, I mean, it ain't what happened later, it was a protest, it was a political protest. It wasn't done by a lot of guys, but, it also indicated, I learned from that, that you could get in trouble, because a lot of guys, you know, ... you're just attached to them; you get tarred from the same rush. I mean, certainly, the whole class wasn't responsible, but, they couldn't figure out which ones were, and that's the way the penalty worked. There was another political aspect, I mentioned, aside from the courses. I mentioned the chapel earlier, compulsory chapel service. There were some guest ministers that were invited by Dr. Clothier to take ... his pulpit for certain days, and one, I guess both years, but, one year, Norman Thomas, who was a perennial candidate for President on the Socialist Party ticket, was an ordained minister, and here, with a very conservative base, Dr. Clothier had invited him to speak on that particular Sunday, and it drew so many visitors from the surrounding area that we students were placed over in Bishop with a loud speaker system. We weren't even sitting in the chapel. A lot of, you know, city people were there, and I thought ... that was learning, in a way, again, that, although you can have, obviously, fundamental differences in one area, there could also be areas in which you have a common ground, ... and I remember, later, when I was working, one of my ... colleagues told me, I guess I was a New Deal Democrat by then, I don't know, but, he told me he had been listening to a convention speech, ... (and this guy was ultra-conservative), he was agreeing with almost everything he heard. Then he found out that he was listening to Norman Thomas. [laughter] ...

SH: Were there any discussions about Lend-Lease and Franklin Roosevelt's policies?

NB: Actually, as students, I don't think we talked as much about that, although, as I said, there were activists, as you would call them now, who did demonstrate by marching and say, "Keep us in the war." "Get us out of the war," which runs into another thing, the ROTC situation. There was several of the seniors, when the war broke out, had already been set to get Reserve commissions and report to active duty, and I think about a handful, six or more, left before the semester was over. They went in, maybe, January or February, were called to active duty as officers in the Army. Some others had volunteered. ... I know one fellow Bill Berglund was his name, he had ... gone through the Platoon Leaders course in the Marine Corps. Some of them came back to the graduation, but, the point I wanted to make was that the school, and I thought [that] this was very magnanimous, ... said that they would be credited with their last semester of

schooling, despite the fact that they were not there, and so, they all got a valid degree, and I say, one or two of them came back in uniform to accept their degrees on May 12th, I guess it was. ... I know I had more discussions with my roommate ... in different areas. In terms of influential courses, I mentioned Prof. George's situation. Another thing that always influenced me, the course in constitutional law where we had to analyze cases and I was quite influenced by that and the thought of how, over all the years, our constitution has remained fairly, fairly stable. The separation of government into three branches has been very strong (the Fourth Estate got to be too strong recently). In "Constitutional Law," I learned soon, too, whenever I sent in ... a paper that had analysis of the decision, and we were really making legal briefs, I always added at the end, "Fear of the opposite decision," and Prof. George would write, "Great, 'A,'" but, so many of our decisions were to avoid something else, but, the other thing I think back at that reminded me, too, about how we ... really, unbeknownst to us, can be affected by the Constitution and the Supreme Court decisions, ... any citizen. ... The NRA, which was the National Recovery Administration, that Roosevelt had established was declared unconstitutional because a kosher butcher in Brooklyn, Schlecter, filed a suit that the federal government had no business controlling his little localized operation, and the Supreme Court agreed, and the thing was knocked out. Later, actually, I was, financially, the beneficiary of two different Supreme Court decisions that had to do with pay and retirement pay for Federal Civil Service and I had money in my pocket. So, that course became [influential]. Another course that was a great influence on me was ... Professor Marden's sociology course in "Marriage and the Family." I worked as an NYA (National Youth Administration) student for him. He was working on a book, ... *America, the Family*. I used it, practically, later, as a guide, by the way, and another course of great influence was a course in "the Psychology of Personality." ... I often thought, afterwards, that my work in personnel management was really applied psychology. You motivate people to come, to stay, they'd be rewarded, and all of it is working on their psyche. ... Whenever I was losing an argument with Larry, I would quote the psychology professor who said, "It's the little men who strut. Tall men bend over, but, little men strut." ... and he'd get furious. The other thing was, ... I observed this, too, in the course, that (it was only a men's school) said he could take all the professors and march them down one side of College Avenue, have their sons march down the other side, he would match up the fathers and sons, and, if you look at it, you will find that it's true, quite true, not only for men, but, for women, by looking at their strides.

SH: Did you ever interact with Dean Metzger?

NB: Dean Metzger? He was the Dean of Men, wasn't he?

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

SH: This continues an interview with Mr. Norman Brandt in Arlington, Virginia, on June 29, 1999. We were talking about Dean Metzger and some of the other University administrators. I know that President Clothier had a son at Rutgers at that time. Do you remember him?

NB: No, I don't remember that. George Mason Gross, not because I ever had him as a professor, but, he was, hell, I guess, what? a celebrity in a way, I mean, known; Dr. Martin, perhaps, not as much. One of the things, actually, though, I guess this goes back to the beginning, coming out of high school, and coming out of school in New Jersey itself, I didn't

realize until I got to college that, like, freshman year is a debugging. ... I found out, hell, the ... kids that went to segregated schools down here learned about a different Civil War than we did up in Newark. ... When we moved here, my family, we didn't have a car and there was an outfit called the Virginia Garden Market that delivered groceries. They were down on Lee Highway, and my wife would call them about twice a week and give her order, and then, he'd bring it out. Well, one day, he came out, and he said, "I'll see you Monday," and she said, "Monday? Are you open Monday?" and he said, "Why?" "Oh, Monday is Lincoln's Birthday." He said, "I didn't think Lincoln had a birthday." [laughter] We learned something about that. When our second son was born, we had a little girl that had just graduated from a segregated high school that lived out near Merrsfield and I'd pick her up in the morning. ... She knew we were from New York, and she asked us (when she was bold enough), she was told that a friend had gone to New York to visit, and she thought the girl was funning her, because she said, "Colored people and white people sit together in the same subway," and she thought this was a joke. I said, "Yes, they did. We went to school with them," and so on.

SH: When did you propose? Was your wife going to college at the time?

NB: No. She ... went to Newark U for the first year and then to a secretarial school for six months. When her father died, her mother said she couldn't afford to go back, so, she was working then. I proposed after Pearl Harbor Day, I mean, that night, I guess. We took a walk and I said, "Well, in that sense, let's not wait," ... and January 17th was our wedding day, so, I decided I'm not going to mess around with going to law school or anything.

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

NB: I guess at school. It was a Sunday, wasn't it. Well, it was Sunday afternoon. I would have been back at school, as far as I know, December 7th. There was an interesting (bi-play?) around here, Arlington, Virginia. The Chief of Staff of the Army George S. Marshall was riding through Rock Creek Park the park on horseback, and they couldn't get him for two ... hours to let him know. ... Also, there was a football game going on, the Washington Redskins. What happened was, people suddenly discovered there were calls coming over the loud speaker and they were being called by their military title, "Major Jones, report to your office. Commander So-and-So." Up until then, they prepared the Military Departments, worked in civilian clothes, and so, you would be working next to someone you didn't realize was in the military, but about ... one hundred people were called out of the stands to report, in uniform, for their new assignments.

SH: Did you decide to enlist right away?

NB: No, no. I decided to ... get married, but, also, I decided to wait 'til I finished college, and was deferred ... 1-C; anyway, as long as I was in college, ... deferred from being called. Then, having done that, waiting for the call, and I was reassigned to 1-A about ... two months after I graduated. I decided, when I had this offer to work in the federal government, that I would protect my future. ... I wasn't thinking of much then, but, I knew, by then, about the Veterans' Preference Act. ... It meant that you could go and, while you're away on active duty, you must be considered for promotions, even while you're away, and you must be given credit for any promotions you might have received, and hired back. I had been ... promoted once, and so, I

was no longer a neophyte. My boss tried to get me deferred, that was useless, but, anyway, when I went into the service, I left at a certain grade level. When I came back, I was ... reinstated at the next level, and then, immediately promoted to another level, so, that paid off. How did I get in the Coast Guard? There were seven of us ... who were selected from the Junior Professional Assistant examination the Navy Department latched on to, two from Rutgers and five from UCLA. ... We were involved in making determinations as to pay or ... job classification. It was then that I learned Dr. Clothier was co-author of a text on the subject.

SH: What was the name of the other Rutgers man?

NB: Mel Fromkin. You got him? He died. He was from Trenton, I think. ... I'm the only one in my class that ever continued, and pursued a government service career, and ended up in ... what is now called the Senior Executive Service, so, in that sense, I'm also unique, I guess. We were all, then, all of us, concerned about what was going to happen shortly after our deferments, ... college education deferments, were up ... and we each thought, "I don't want to get in the Army and have to go through the mud and muck before you're selected for Officer Candidate School." So, I wouldn't choose the Army, because I didn't want it, and I'd considered the Marine Corps, which didn't care whether you were married or not. I considered that. My concept, then, was that ... the Marines had always been the ... international policeman, and the chances are, you would stay in longer when the war is over, which did happen (and, incidentally, during the Vietnam War, the Army and Navy people had a twelve-month tour and the Marines had a sixteen-month tour, some, second tours). So, this fellow came back, one day, from Coast Guard Headquarters and he said, "The Coast Guard has a program that you could be married and they tell you they accept you to be a Coast Guard Reserve cadet." ... Harry Graham was the guy's name. So, I applied, and Mel Fromkin applied, and two others in ... that group. They said that they would take married people, but, they had another catch-22. You had to have a college degree and one semester of freshman math. Well, Mel and I and others, I never had freshman math in college, because I had four years of it in high school. I had already enrolled at ... GW University for a Masters course in personnel management, so, I just changed that, and I spent a night course of mathematics, simple, which, in effect, gave me a six-month deferment. When my boss was arguing for a draft deferment I said, "You're not gonna do anything better than this," and, now that I'm signing up with the Coast Guard, I'll be on inactive duty for ... five months, until I complete the requirement, and then, I'll leave for the Coast Guard Academy, which is what happened, and that's how I got into the Coast Guard.

SH: Had you brought Mrs. Brandt down to Washington before you went into the Coast Guard Academy?

NB: Yeah. ... She came down a week ahead ... and stopped, to look for a job, ... at an employment office down on F Street, Washington, and she was referred out to the Soviet Purchasing Commission, which was located in an apartment building. ... It the old lend-lease, ... Purchasing Commission. When she got there to be interviewed, the woman wanted her to start work right away. I came on the 5th of May, ... and then, the 12th of May, went back for graduation. We moved to DC then, had, first, a room, and then, an apartment. That was another different story and our second son was born, here, in Washington, after the war.

SH: The Coast Guard Academy is in New London.

NB: New London, Connecticut.

SH: Was your wife able to follow you there?

NB: Oh, no, not as a cadet, but, you're able to go if you're married, ... and, in my class, which entered in February of '43, about a dozen or two of the candidates were married cadets. Their wives would get together. First, we weren't allowed off the post, so, my wife and others would come up for a weekend, and they'd stay at either the Norwich Inn or the Mohegan Hotel in New London, and we could get there during the day, but, at night, we had to go back. ... We couldn't stay out overnight until we had our cadet uniforms, because, before that, ... we were wearing whites. ... For one thing, the course at the Coast Guard Academy for Reserve cadets was a four-month course and we were not "ninety-day wonders," as you were called if you got your commission in the Navy or whatever. We had a fourth month, ... so that was primarily to teach you sailing, and, ... during that month, that particular month, we had a scarlet fever epidemic, and we were tested, and then, isolated, and, if your arm had a red mark as big as a half-dollar or something, ... and mine just did, so, I was fearful, because I was put in with guys who were really susceptible, and so, I didn't learn to sail. I learned to pull boats ... and other things, and I ended up, after my commission, being in command of an eighty-three foot cutter and helped guard New York Harbor, and there wasn't a single U-boat ever got in there while I was there! I often wonder how come they didn't try it. I was part of the harbor entrance control post. Now, I want to bring up something else then, ... the influences that may have been. ... What was the most memorable incident ... that I remember from school? It was, I guess, 1939, I mentioned Wendell Willkie and that ... incident, and Utz in football, but, Paul Robeson's concert in 1939, 1940, have you had that? and, to attend that concert, it was fabulous with this genius. ... He signed up in the Rutgers concert series, all students went to that. I think, for that and for your athletic pass, you had no choice, you had to pay it. ... The week before, he had given a concert at Carnegie Hall and the *New York Times* music critic just raved and raved about it. The following Friday, he gave this concert at Rutgers. The critic said he couldn't say what to say. It ... even surpassed what he had done at Carnegie. ... The influence, and to see him, and hear him, and hearing what he was saying about ... ten encores, and, at the end, he stopped singing and he spoke. He gave a ... "curtain speech," in a way, and he said, among other things, that being "On the Banks" were the most memorable years of his life. He had been living abroad, but, his son is now, I think, sixteen, he wanted his son to get into American type schooling. ... to learn what his country was really like, and he said, "You've been asking for me to sing, *Old Man River*." He said, "It has some passages which I consider degrading to my race, but, my accompanist, Dr. French, has made some changes in those passages, and, for the first time in public, I will sing the new lyrics that he has prepared," which didn't have, of course, "Get a little drunk, and you land in jail" and had "I'm still laughing and I'm not crying" or something. It was quite an event and a memorable one.

SH: You knew then that this was memorable.

NB: Oh, yes.

SH: Was his son in the audience?

NB: No, no, I don't think. His wife may have been there. I think his wife was and appeared at their curtain call, but, then, of course, he went on to many other things. ... No, I was conscious of it then, especially since one of my friends, well, Harry Hazelwood was a Negro, Ernie Baxter, who was one of the four on campus, at the time, was on the fencing team. He was a four-letter man, ... 150-pound football, and track, and then, fenced, and boxing, and, since they were at the same time, he'd skip a year at one of them, and he was not allowed to live ... in the dormitory. The ... two members of the next class that were Negroes, they were in the other, the dorm that had been built on College Avenue. Anyway, they were in a suite, the two of them. One was a son of a dentist in Newark, who came in a brand-new Packard, every year, to pick him up (his mother looked like Lena Horne), and the other was the son ... of the Chairman of the Republican National Committee in Atlantic County, and so, he was there, too, but, they were not permitted to live with white people on campus, and so, these two roomed together. ...

SH: Do you remember their names?

NB: No, I don't. ... I can't tell you how to find them. ... They were not in my class, they were Class of '43, and Harry Hazelwood was a commuter, so, he wasn't involved in that, but, Ernie Baxter lived off campus with a couple of Ag students, ... and they had a room in a private home. That was all right.

SH: Was one of them named Simeon Moss?

NB: I'm not sure. It doesn't ring a bell. ... There's one thing that you learned, I guess, you don't horse around, you don't pay attention to any of these other guys. It's enough to know your friends. That's another thing, ... like I mentioned, Paul Rork and his dog, things like that, you had a feeling of, I suppose, maybe, you'd call it extended families, almost. We were ... about 300 students in the class. You saw most of them at one time or another. Even the engineering and Ag students, you got to see their last years, because they had to take the course, had to take the course in public speaking as well. ... So, dealing with anybody else, it was only through what had been intramurals or something of that type. On the fencing team, when I started, the others were a year or two ahead of me, and I associated with Ernie Baxter, who was the next year, ... and I ... don't think I ever spoke to him, but, I knew ... these two guys, and, as I said, on Sunday, I'd see the parents come to visit in a brand-new Packard every time. So, I don't really know their names.

SH: I know that you had a girlfriend back in Newark, but, did you have any interaction with the NJC campus?

NB: ... No. Actually, as I said, my wife had gone to work after she finished her freshman year at Newark U. ... NJC, there are a couple of incidents. ... This picture was taken at the Senior Prom for ... the NJC Class of '41. Her very close friend, a friend of mine, that later became the wife of this man, we were invited to attend the prom, and Hilda roomed with her while we're there, so, that was that.

SH: What was her name?

NB: Rita Gould ... and David Jameson. Now, he was the Class of '40, I believe. ... When he graduated, it was before the war and he was in the first draft. Soon as he finished college, he was a chemical engineer, ... he was called to active duty and spent a year as an enlisted man on active duty before the war broke out, and then, was released, and then, on December 7th, he was recalled immediately. He later became an officer and an instructor pilot, but, he'd already put in a year. ... That's taken, it must have been while I was there for graduation. ... It could have been for the tenth reunion, which I did attend, but, that's that one, and this was before; this is taken at the New York World's Fair, that and this. That was '39. You see, she's wearing the same dress here and here. ... I think this was taken by Larry Alexander, my roommate, who was an amateur photographer, but, I will now conclude with this and ask you something. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: You got married shortly after Pearl Harbor, and then, entered the Coast Guard Academy. Can you tell me a little bit about your family?

NB: Well, ... after the war, I went back to work in the Navy Department, where I had this right to a job. While I was gone, the operation had been decentralized, and there were eleven area offices established to conduct the work, which was still controlled centrally under the Office of the Secretary of the Navy, and so, my old job, in effect, had been transferred, and I was given a choice. Mel went to Philadelphia, I took Brooklyn. ... In April '46, when I completed my actual CG service, I was working in the office located in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and, within a year, I was offered a job down back in Washington in the staff set up, and my first son was born in Brooklyn, on December 17th. ... Well, that was when I was still in the Coast Guard. ... That's when I was assigned to ... district headquarters, so, I lived at home, and the second son was born after we moved back ... to Washington. Stephen, the older one, ... he's an aerospace engineer of some sort, now with Lockheed-Martin, but, he went to VPI as a co-op student and later got his MS in OR/SA, and became an engineer, and worked for one firm, and then, finally, went to work for them. He just received some sort of award, I don't know. He's fifty-three now, or will be. It was an interesting side point, ... the one I didn't recognize. As an engineer, Steven took the same attitude as my classmates, you know, it's a BS course, and ... anything that was not directly related to his interest in engineering, he would give the back of his hand, just fluff. He wouldn't study, he'd just take the test without it, see. That's what I did in high school. When he was in high school, here, in his English class, ... we had advanced courses here in the high schools, he was in an advanced placement course for English, ... and he had to read a book. ... The teacher said, "Now, I don't want any trash. ... You're not going to get anything more than a "C," if you read trash. ... I'll grade you both on what you did and what your level of performance is." Well, he turned in a report, and he was given a "C," and the teacher said, "That's a "C" book. It's science fiction," and my son said, "But, it's the best of science fiction." When my son showed me the book, I was surprised to find that it was a collection of short stories edited by James Blish, who was a classmate. The credits indicated that Blish had been president of the Science Fiction Writers' Association and had also received their Obie Award. I have since read some of his works as a result. I believe Jim was residing in England when he died. He majored in English Literature and minored in biology and combined those knowledges in his

science fiction works. I believe he had already decided on that pursuit while still in college and may have had some short stories published even before he graduated. James Blish was always a familiar figure on campus, always wearing a sash tied around his camel's-hair coat and an Italian Fedora with a wide brim snapped down! So, the teacher raised it to a "B," because it was the best of science fiction. ... My younger one, he went to Rutgers and he busted himself out. The reason he was going to Rutgers, ... he, at the time, planned to go ... into the rabbinate. He wanted to be a rabbi and he had applied, well, the University of Virginia's always a kicker, he applied at Pennsylvania, UP, and Rutgers, and Johns Hopkins, been accepted to all of them. I'd influenced him about Rutgers, and I didn't know, ... you know, there were very few out-of-state students, and I called Crosby, then, who was the Dean of Men, and I said, "Do you give any credit to out-of-state applicants who are sons of alumni?" He said, "Well, don't discourage him from applying." Of course, he applied. It was one of the larger classes in the '60s, but, it had only a handful from out-of-state.

[TAPE PAUSED]

When he broke himself out, I asked him, most recently (because I've avoided it), why he did leave, and he said, "It was too hard." Now, Richard, ... (his brother was an underachiever), Richard was an overachiever, and he got all the grades, and he studied like hell. ... Freshman year at Rutgers, ... he was coxswain of his freshman crew, playing the viol in the Hillel meetings, Friday nights, whatever else he was doing. ... I guess it was too hard, and, as I say, one thing you learn when you come as a freshman to any college, I guess, you've got to unlearn a lot of things you were taught. You've got to unlearn them and that was it. ... Later, he was a medic with the 101st Airborne in Vietnam. ... He got married to and later divorced from a woman from Iceland, who was here as an *au pair* and has a daughter who will be thirty ... next month. ... She lives back in Iceland. He has a son who was born here is also in Iceland. I was just there to his wedding ... this August, Richard my son, recently, he retired on disability as a Major in the Air Force and is studying for a second Bachelor's degree in computer science.

SH: Can you tell me about being in the Coast Guard and being in charge of antisubmarine activity in New York Harbor?

NB: Well, ... when I got my commission, I was not in the group that had been training for the fourth month with eighty-three footers. They were being pre-selected ... to take command of these eighty-three footers as they came off the weighs, I think it was four a month, or something, that were being built. So, I wasn't in that for whatever reason, it doesn't make a difference, some screw up of a guy on a fitness report, but, I won't put that in, but, I was sent to the Third Coast Guard District, ... and they assigned me to the eighty-three foot pool at Fort Hancock, ... at the lifeboat station. In New York and other large harbors, there was a harbor entrance control organization. In New York, it was run by the Army, ... sitting up on a hill at Staten Island, where they can observe a lot. It contained the coast artillery, which was at Fort Hancock, which was never used, but, they practiced, Army Coast Artillery, and the Navy was responsible for the local protection. There was an antisubmarine net, which hung down, and an anti-torpedo boat boom and, below the net, there were magnetic coils, two large coils, that were tied up with the center, up in Staten Island. Any metal ship, not wood, ... any metal ship that passed over that would produce a signature, and, you'd know whether it was in-going or out-going. The booms

were kept to prevent torpedo boats from getting in. When the convoys were formed up, this was all ... open, to let them out or in, so, there was that protection, there. As a result, there were four eighty-three foot sub chasers, ... two stationed on a buoy, so that you knew the exact location, and two that were patrolling back and forth at slow speeds, and, every time a signature occurred that was registered at Staten Island, we were called to identify the signature. It was either a freighter or the Queens, the *Queen Mary* and the *Queen Elizabeth*, etc. The Queens were the only ones that didn't have an escort. If it was a whole convoy, we didn't have to answer at all. When I was promoted, after a nine months to Lieutenant JG I was assigned to the District Coast Guard Office.

SH: Where was that located?

NB: That was at 42 Broadway. ... I was assigned to what was then called the Marine Inspector Office. It was a part of something that had been with the Department of Commerce, but, in wartime, was assigned to the Coast Guard, which, incidentally, in wartime, is assigned to the Navy, but, at the time before the war, they were operating on their own, as part of ... what [is] now Transportation Corps. Before we entered the war, the Coast Guard manned the troop ships that were bringing troops from New Zealand and Australia to England.

SH: When you were at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, did you get to sail on the *Eagle*?

NB: It wasn't the *Eagle*. You don't know that? It was the *Danmark*. The *Danmark* was ... a training ship for the ... Danish Merchant Marine. ... When Denmark was invaded, and you know their feeling, ... I think the King wore a Star of David on his clothes, the ship was at sea, so, it came to America ... to be interned. The students on the ship, I guess, went back somewhere. The Captain and the Sailing Master stayed. They were put in the Coast Guard as temporary people, and they managed the *Danmark*, and that was called the "bilge ship." That was the one where, if you were down low in courses and not doing too well, to prove that you ... really can make it, you had to live for your fourth month on that *Danmark* and climb up the mast every day. Now, when the war ended, the Danes commissioned an identical ship, practically, the *Eagle* and the *Eagle* is the sister ship of the *Danmark*. The *Danmark* went back to Denmark and the *Eagle* is almost the same, led the tall ships [in 1976] and so on. It is a sister ship, in a sense, to the Danish ship, and, ... just about a couple of years ago, I read, the Captain in charge and the Sailing Master, who had become citizens, I guess, they both finally retired. Now, you see, it travels around the world, as they did then. ... During the war they didn't use it for the regular cadets, because they wouldn't have traveled around the world. After the war, the *Danmark* was used to travel, and, now, the *Eagle* has done that. The cadets learned, a lot of women on it, too, but, it's a little different, but, that's interesting.

SH: Thank you very much for taking the time to do this.

[TAPE PAUSED]

NB: ... I retired, actually, in the Naval Reserve. The Coast Guard, before World War II, did not have a Reserve force. It was created then, and it was assigned, then, the Coast Guard, ... to the

Navy. My commission was signed by the acting Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal. ... After the war, you then had Reservists in the Coast Guard with ... no program for them. It took awhile to get it going. Some of them were allowed to drill with Navy units, but, when I came back to civilian duty in the Navy, my office, was the sponsor for a Naval Reserve training group, and so, I applied for a commission in the Naval Reserve, and separated from my commission in the Coast Guard Reserve, and, doing that, I ended up with twenty years of Satisfactory Federal Service, which resulted in my retirement in the Naval Reserve with pay. ...

SH: Thank you very much.

NB: You're welcome. ...

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Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 12/19/01
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