

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH BERNARD LEVINE

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

CECILIA M. NAVAS

Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Dr. Bernard Levine on December 6, 2000, with Shaun Illingworth and ...

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: ... Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

SI: ... In New Brunswick, New Jersey. Dr. Levine, first we'd like to thank you for sitting down for this interview and setting aside time in your schedule. I'd like to begin by asking you about your parents, both of whom emigrated from the same area of Russia.

BL: That's correct. They came from a little town called Paltava in Russia. My father was fourteen when he came here ... and my mother probably was about ten, nine or ten. [They] came on the same boat. They were in steerage. My father said he ... ate pickled herring out of a barrel for the length of the trip. He said it was horrific. When he got off the boat, they were selling bananas on the dock and he had never seen a banana before, and so, he purchased a banana and then proceeded to try to eat it with the skin and all, until somebody showed him how to peel the banana. But, they were a progression of family coming over. Their sisters ... were here and his mother was here. ... He was the youngest of a group of five children and when they got here, they were placed right into school and my father was, ... they had very little education in Russia ... and he was placed in, I guess, second or third grade. But, he was immediately graduated, because he was too big for the desk. So, they moved him up about three grades and they went to school, learned the language, integrated in the society. In those days, they had a society from the area of Russia that people came from and they were incorporated in this society and this society helped them with getting acclimated to the New World. They found them jobs, they had meetings, they had a burial organization for arranging funerals and burials. ... It was very good. It still gave them a sense of family and closeness, even though they were in a new strange country. ... My father went into the building trade. He became a[n] apprentice floor layer and his job was nailing. All day long ... they were putting in the *parque* floors in those days, and he learned the trade that way, then gradually became a master floor layer. And my mother went to work for a shirt company. She was a secretary, a bookkeeper, and that's how we started. My father and mother were not married when they came here. But, the story goes that one day my mother was ill and sort of fainted in the house where they were living, and my father being a big strong fellow, he picked her up and carried her up the stairs and he decided that was the girl. She was the girl for him. So, they were subsequently married and had two children. My brother who is older than I am and myself.

SSH: Did your father talk about what it was like living in Russia until he was fourteen?

BL: Yeah. He used to tell, actually my father lived until [he was] ninety-seven and he was lucid and sharp as a tack until the day he died. Well, he had fallen and injured himself and he just couldn't take the surgery. But, he would recall stories of Russia, living in Russia, going in a covered wagon with the family to a wedding. He would tell of the *pogroms*, or the soldiers would come and raid their towns and they would be hiding up in the attic. Fortunately, my mother's father was a tailor and made the uniforms for the soldiers and the officers in the army and so, generally, they ... left his house alone. But, they ... went through the ... *pogroms* and decided that they would leave Russia.

SSH: So, your father's father and mother also left?

BL: My father's father died in Russia. My ... father's mother left. She was a baker, a well-known baker in Russia, and he would tell the story, they had a great big brick hearth in their ... house and he would sleep above the hearth, because that was the warmest place. But, she had a little kiosk in the village and she would bring her baked goods there, and, often times, she was so well-known that she would bake the pastries for big weddings and occasions. Unfortunately, all her recipes have gone with her. That's a shame. ... But, he would market the products with my mother, go to the booth, and sell the wares, and that was his life in Russia. He was a bad boy. I mean, he got into a lot of trouble. Somebody threw an axe at him one day, hit him in the lip. He had a little scar there where he got hit by the axe. But, then they came over here and settled with the rest of the family in Manhattan, and then later on moved to Brooklyn. My father became an acrobat. At that time, a lot of the boys in Russia [were acrobats], and Russia is still well-known for its acrobatics, and, they would, after work they would go to the ... I think it was the Henry Street Settlement and they'd practiced in the gym. ... They got so good that they, ... my father was hired as an acrobat and they did the Vaudeville circuit in New York. At that time, all the theaters had live Vaudeville and one of the Vaudeville acts would be acrobats. And they were so good that they were booked to go to Europe on a tour, until my mother said, "It's either me or the tour." [laughter] So, it was her and he gave up acrobat[ics] but he was ... had a well-developed body, admired by photographers. He used to pose for photographers for muscle pictures.

SSH: Did your father teach that skill to any of you?

BL: No, he would ... do handstands with us when we were kids and we have pictures of us at the beach. These guys were always showing off at the beach, you know, they were doing handstands and all sorts of ... acrobatics. But none of us inherited his ability. We all were too big. My father is about five foot seven. My brother and I, you know, got to be about six feet and you don't see six foot gymnasts. [laughter] It doesn't lend itself to that. So, then, you know, after the acrobatic thing passed on then my father went into the construction business and became a floor layer and it was a marvel to see him nail. He could ... he was like a ... you know, in those days they didn't have the nailing machines. Everything was done by hand. And he ... could continuously put nails in, turning one nail up and putting it in and at the same time getting the next nail ready and he would just go down like a machine. It was really nice to see him work.

SI: Was he in a union?

BL: No, they didn't have unions in those days. In those days, when you did construction you had to carry your own material up. They didn't have the elevators in the tall buildings and so you had to carry your own material upstairs and he developed a lot of problems from his work, from the acrobatics and from the construction work, he developed a lot of arthritis which really crippled him in later years.

SSH: What about your mother's family? When did they arrive? Did they come as a family unit?

BL: My mother was adopted and her adopted parents came to this country I think at the same time. I'm not quite sure. ... We all lived together in the same building in Brooklyn at that time and, unfortunately, there was a real tragedy. My grandmother went down into the basement of the home we lived in to get some stuff that we stored. Everybody had a little storage bin in the basement. And she had a ... took a candle down with her and placed the candle on a box and inadvertently backed into the candle and set herself on fire. And she succumbed to the injuries. And then my grandfather had a broken heart; two weeks later he died. So, it was a real ... a real tragedy.

SSH: That is terrible. Did your mother have any brothers and sisters?

BL: ... She had a brother and he was killed in the war, in the First World War. And my father had four sisters. They were kind of a very musical family. They were singing. When we had a family get-together we didn't have to hire any entertainment because one would sing and one would play the piano and one would play the cello and [we] had a great time. Families all got together.

SSH: So, basically, you were raised within this very close nucleus of extended family.

BL: Correct, yeah.

SSH: How did your father become involved with the poultry business?

BL: Well, my father always had a desire to be a farmer and he had graduated from the floor laying business into the floor scraping. He would do sanding and finishing of floors, and unbeknownst to us, he was also going to the Jewish Agricultural Society which was a society that was fostering the movement of Jewish people out to farms. And they had a school and you could attend the school and learn the basics of poultry farming. And he would go on some, I guess two or three nights a week, travel to Manhattan, go to school. ... One night [he] brought back a chick which we raised on oatmeal and a few other family things. And, as I said, we took trips every week, it was a ritual, we would bundle up the family and drive up to New York state or New Jersey looking for a farm until finally our egg dealer, who lived in New Jersey, said there was a farm for sale close by, ten acres. And we went out, my father liked it, and it was a dump, let me tell you. But he bought it for twenty-five hundred dollars, ten acres. ... We spent a couple of summers there and he would come out on weekends and work on the house. The house was an old sort of half a barn that had been moved. It had no heat, no running water, no toilets. It was basic. So, we had the outhouse in the back. ... Then we finally decided to make the move to come down permanently, and so my brother and I and my father built the chicken coups, ourselves. Him being the lead carpenter and we did the work. And he would work weekends on fixing up the house and we had Sears Roebuck install the heating system for the entire house for two hundred dollars which included digging out part of the basement to get the unit in. But then we installed heat, the first year, but the first year that we lived there we ... before we had the central heat, we had a wood stove, Kalamazoo wood stove in the kitchen and that was the only source of heat and we all lived in the living room next door to it. And, if you had to take a bath, we had the old bucket, galvanized big bucket that we put in front of the stove and that's how we would take a bath. And if you needed to use the facilities they were out in the

back. We had the outhouse. You didn't tarry very long in the morning when you had to go to school out ... in the outhouse. It was about twenty degrees outside.

SSH: How old were you when you made this move?

BL: I was about fourteen. My brother was about twenty. He's six years older, you know, older than I. I had gone to Lafayette High School for ... into the first part of my sophomore year and then transferred over to Freehold High for the second half of my sophomore year.

SSH: What was it like going to school in Brooklyn at that time? What were some of the things that you were interested in, before you moved to Jersey?

BL: You know I don't have much recollection of school in Brooklyn. All I know is that it was a long way off the school. I'd either have to get a bus or ride my bike there, and when I was ... when I lived in Brooklyn, I worked for a butcher and I delivered the orders for five cents an order, didn't matter how far and then, of course, there was an argument always between the butcher and the poultry man, there were two that shared the same, as to who had more in the order and who was going to pay me the five cents. [laughter] If it was an extremely long trip, I got a quarter but I would make seventy-five cents in the morning and that was pretty good money for those days.

SSH: Was your family involved in the local synagogue services?

BL: Not really. Our family wasn't very religious. My brother was bar mitzvahed but I never was, never. I took violin lessons at the time and that was consuming all my time. ... My family wanted to have a musician and, so, my brother started off on the violin but he wouldn't practice at all. So, he gave it up and then they decided that I was going to be the musician and they made me stick to it. So, I ... starting at age eight, I started to take violin lessons. And I would walk from 77<sup>th</sup> Street to 86<sup>th</sup> Street in Brooklyn and a couple of avenues over and go to my music teacher, who was a hotheaded Italian, and in those days, they didn't talk about excess force. There was no reporting your teacher for cruelty. If you didn't know your lesson, you got whacked over the hand with a heavy thick ruler. Many a time I came home with some numb fingers because I didn't know my lesson. I used to go in fear sometimes of my violin lesson but I stuck with it and I still play.

SSH: Do you?

BL: Yeah. I played with the symphony orchestra in Toms River for thirty years. It's always been ... that's one thing, a musician never gets old. I mean, musicians have longevity. Not like an athlete. [An] athlete fades out when he's thirty years old but a musician can go to seventy, eighty, ninety.

SSH: [laughter] We may have to consider that. What was the difference between going to high school in Brooklyn and going to Freehold High?

BL: It was much more friendly atmosphere than ... When I went to Freehold High the total student enrollment was four hundred and some students. So, you knew everybody in your class. And we recently had our fiftieth reunion and some of these people had gone to school since they were little kids. They all knew each other. They knew where they lived. They knew how many kids they had and it was ... a whole different, you know, different type of atmosphere in a rural school. We got the school bus. We had to travel by school bus. I lived about seven miles from school and, so, you knew everybody on the bus and it was a much more friendly, homey atmosphere.

SSH: Now did your brother have to finish one more year at Freehold?

BL: No, he had finished school and had a year or so of college before we came out to the farm.

SSH: Was college expected? Was it very important for your family?

BL: Not really. The way I got into college, I graduated in 1944 from high school during the war and I was ex ... I had an agricultural exemption because we were running the farm and, so, I worked the farm for three years before I came to Rutgers. I started Rutgers in 1947. I was involved a lot with 4-H club work and I was a 4-H leader and it was actually my 4-H agent who got me to come to Rutgers. He said, "You know," I guess he recognized some inherent quality, he said, "You should go to college." And I said, "Well, I can't afford to go to college. My mother ... my parents don't have the money and I don't have the money for the tuition." And he said, "Well, let me see what we can do." And, so, he spoke to Dr. Heylar, who was the Dean of Residents at the Agricultural School and he said, "Well, I could get you a room on campus that you wouldn't have to pay for," and, so, with that ... in mind, and the tuition was, you know, three hundred dollars or so at the time, I decided I would go to school. That's how I got to Rutgers. When I got here I got the first 4-H scholarship that was given by Esso Corporation, or Exxon, it was Esso at the time but it's Exxon now, of fifty dollars to help me pay expenses. And then I did get a state scholarship after the first semester and that pretty much took care of my tuition. Living in the Poultry Building, you could live for five dollars a week. I had the ... we had three rooms upstairs in the attic of the Poultry Building. When my mother saw where I was going to live, she cried but ... it was not luxury and I don't think I could get my kids to go to school living up there that way. It was the attic, a tin roof, they had partitioned off three rooms with just sheetrock, no insulation, and a catwalk in front of the three rooms. And we had a sink and a refrigerator and the utensils to prepare and each room had a hotplate and that's how we prepared our food on the hotplate. And my roommate and I, who was a very astute shopper, he was half Irish and half Scottish, and I learned a lot ... from shopping from him because he would price everything. We had then a supermarket on George Street and [could] buy our provisions. We got our eggs free from the school. We got our milk at the dairy ... building cheap. And one of our roommate's father worked for Campbell Soup, so, he would provide us with the dents that they got free. So we had plenty of soup and juice and that's how we lived. We'd cook our meals up there.

SSH: Who was your roommate?

BL: Dana McClellan. And his brother was here at Rutgers, too, but they were a very intelligent, talented family. He had a little brother who was a marvelous pianist, sort of a child prodigy. His brother graduated with probably one of the highest academic records here at Rutgers. And Dana was lazy, but smart, and he would study one night for his exam and do it. And we all had extra sort of jobs to supplement our income. Dana was the ... cocoa boy at Douglass. He would get up every morning at five o'clock and he would go down to the cafeteria, or the ... Douglass cafeteria, and he would make the cocoa. Then he'd come back at about seven or seven thirty and go to sleep.

SSH: What was your job?

BL: My job was cleaning the chicken coops at the poultry farm. I got up every ... or every Friday, I would go out and they had a horse and a wagon, and the horse knew more about the job than I did. [laughter] And we'd go down the rows and she would wait a certain length of time and in that length of time I had to get that coop cleaned out because she was going to move down to the next one. So, it was kind of fun hitching up the horse and I'd been used to cleaning chicken coups. I had a lot of experience. Then I graduated. That was ... I did that for a couple of years, and then I sold eggs. Every Friday, the poultry farm would deliver egg crates to the Poultry Building and there were people who had signed up for fresh eggs and I would distribute the eggs and collect the money for that. And then the final year, I ... my job was to tend the furnaces in the basement. They had a big peat coal oven that had to be banked at night. First, in all, we had to keep it going to provide heat for the students upstairs and then when we went to go to bed I would go down and bank the fires for the next ... for the night. We had some other guys who were supposed to do it but they were lazy. They'd go over to the library and study and they wouldn't keep the fire going and we were freezing at night. [laughter] It was, you know, you can do ... when you're young, you don't mind. It had its ... advantages, too, because you would roast in the summer because of the tin roof and you'd freeze in the winter because of the cold, but, we had a balcony that overlooked Douglass campus and that was the redeeming feature of living in the Poultry Building. Because we would get out there, if we had the feeling, and we'd serenade the girls and wake 'em up and then 'course the guards would come and try to tell us to shut up. ... The view was so good that we would have guests come up just to get out on the fire escape to look ... over and peek into the houses at Douglass.

SSH: To back up a little bit, how knowledgeable or how well informed were you about what was going on in Europe, in '38, '39, and '40?

BL: Well, we were ... well aware because at that time, when the war was on, of course, there were blackouts and even in the poultry business you had to have blackouts. You couldn't, you know, normally when you raise birds, chickens, you ... have lights that go on in the evening to stimulate egg production. You try to simulate spring time and fool the birds into thinking that it's spring because the amount of light that strikes the eye is what regulates the production of eggs and we had to have blackout curtains for the ... chicken coops and, when we wanted our senior prom, we had to have blackout curtains for the gym. My ... mother was a spotter during the war. She would go down to a little booth that was set up about a mile or two from our house and she would report airplanes that were passing over and that's how they kept track of ... any flights that were unauthorized. There was always air raid drills. At the time, I was working in a

store and, a little general store in Smithburg, and we had all the food stamps and things were rationed. So, you were ... well aware that a war was going on. You couldn't get tires for the trucks, you know, for the farm trucks. Your gas was rationed. You knew what was going on. And, of course, then there were practice air raids and we would ... And the army would also come down and do maneuvers. You, sometimes ... they would pull up on the farm and hide their trucks and tanks and stuff. ... Fort Monmouth would practice with their carrier pigeons. They had carrier pigeons that they used during the war and they had trained their pigeons to come back to a mobile unit which was unusual. ... So, they could take the mobile unit out into the field and they could use these pigeons and they'd come back to this mobile unit and they would come down to ... in our area to train their pigeons. We also used to get a lot of balloons from Lakehurst. They would train their ... blimp pilots with free ballooning. They had to learn how to free balloon and when the winds were blowing east to west they would practice because then they would drift over ... land and many times they would come over the farm. Scare the devil out of the chickens.

SSH: Really?

BL: Oh, yeah. When they'd see that big shadow coming across the ground, they would just scatter, helter skelter. And we would try to coax the guys to come down. "Oh, why don't you come down, you know, come down here," and, of course, they would be followed with a truck and when they came down they'd pack up with the balloon and the gondola and back to Lakehurst they went. You don't see that anymore.

SSH: You hear about balloonists getting in trouble for messing up the farmland but not this.

BL: Yeah. Well, trying to go around the world now in a balloon. ... Yeah, we were ... well aware and, you know, even some of the boys in our class were leaving for the army in '43. And a lot of our class didn't graduate; they were ... taken into the army.

SSH: Had you ever thought of enlisting?

BL: I thought of enlisting, yeah.

SSH: Did your brother?

BL: No, he had a ... mastoid operation. He had a permanently draining fistula in his ear and they rejected him.

SSH: What did he do during the war years?

BL: What did my brother do? He ran a poultry farm; ran a big farm, 300,000 broilers in Lakehurst and then he sold feed. And he wanted to be an opera singer. That was his big goal. That's what he, actually ... he went off to Europe to study voice in Italy and got all the way over to Italy and they finally discovered that this mastoid operation was producing false vibrations in his ear so that he did not have accurate pitch and he was always just a sort of a half tone off, and because of that he gave up his career in opera.

SSH: When did you get involved with 4-H? Did you suffer any sort of comments or people saying, “Why is a healthy person like you not in the war?”

BL: No, I didn’t have that. I, myself, ... felt that I wasn’t doing everything I should. I really wanted to enlist. You know, mothers have a lot of pressure on their sons. She said, “You’re deferred. I want you home.” So, I deferred to her wishes; stayed on the farm. We lived in a big agricultural area, Monmouth County, and a lot of the young people were deferred. So, there really wasn’t any ... pressure on why you weren’t in the service because everyone knew you were a farmer and farmers were deferred. They did call me up when things were really going bad, and ... at the Battle of the Bulge, I got papers to report for active duty. They canceled out all the agricultural deferments and I had my papers to report for duty in August and then they dropped the bomb in Japan. And then they sent me ... they rescinded the orders. They didn’t need ... you know, they weren’t going to continue drafting at that time. So, I stayed home.

SSH: So, there were a lot of other young men like yourself?

BL: A lot of other [young men] in the Freehold and Monmouth County area. It was a big farming area and there were a lot of agricultural deferments.

SSH: Were your chickens or eggs used by the military at all? What was your market at that point?

BL: No, it just went ... to market. We had a dealer who stopped, maybe twice a week, and picked up the eggs that we produced.

SSH: With the rationing, did you find that there were certain things that you as farmers could get that other people could not?

BL: Yeah. We were ... we got more gasoline. At the time, my father was working at Fort Dix, at McGuire Air Force Base. He was on the crash crew. They had a ... civilian crash department and being on the base and he got to know some of the people there. He was able to get some stuff that we found hard to get like sugar and butter and things like that ‘cause there was plenty of it at Fort Dix and he ... would bring it home with him.

SSH: When did you get involved with 4-H?

BL: When I started, I had always had an interest in gardening. Even as a kid in Brooklyn, I was in charge of the school garden. At ... the grade school that I attended, I established their garden for them and when we came out to the farm, I ... became a 4-H club member; got interested in that. Then became a 4-H leader and then gradually worked up and I was president of the 4-H, ... the state 4-H association here, and it was a ... wonderful experience for kids. It’s a ... great organization. We went out to Chicago. I was one of the state winners and we went out to Chicago to the National 4-H Convention and [it was] the first time I’d been on a train, a Pullman. We went out by Pullman train. I think there were seventeen or nineteen of us and we really had a ball.

SSH: What year was this?

BL: It was 1947. Spike Jones and all the ... the entertainment was fabulous out there. I don't think we got more than three hours of sleep a night for the whole week.

SSH: I can testify to that. [laughter] I, too, got to go to Chicago with the 4-H.

BL: Did you?

SSH: Yes.

BL: Great. Well, you know ... what it's like. It was an experience.

SSH: Have you continued your sponsorship of 4-H since then?

BL: I did teach, for a while, I taught the 4-H veterinary course in Ocean County and I did some work at the fair, checking the animals for them. I'm sort of retired now and ...

SSH: What was it like at Rutgers? You came here in '47?

BL: Right.

SSH: At that point the university was having a big influx of returning veterans. There were eighteen year olds going to school with seasoned veterans and then yourself. What were some of the experiences you saw?

BL: Well, hit your pause ...

[Tape paused.]

BL: Discussing my relations here at Rutgers, I had three years, you know, been out of school so, I was a little older than the average student. Most of the students that lived upstairs in the Poultry Building ... let's see, I think two of them were veterans. ... We ... more or less were just a sort of a social group to ourselves and didn't partake very much in the general activities at school. We didn't belong to fraternities. We didn't matriculate with the rest of the student body. We, more or less, were an isolated unit that made fun for ourselves and we dated the Douglass girls, and I generally went home every weekend because my father expected me to come home and work on the farm. So, I didn't have much of the social life here at Rutgers, the football games and things of that sort. I think, maybe, I attended three or four football games the entire time I was here. I used to play for square dances at Douglass. Henry Stover was the poultry farm ... manager and he was the square dance caller and I'd go over and play the violin for the square dances at Douglass. The other job that I had, we were all scrounging for work, I would ... I worked for Dr. Beaudette, Fred Beaudette, who was a noted poultry pathologist and I worked down in his lab. I would wash the glassware, thirty cents an hour or forty cents an hour.

I think I was so good at it that I finally got up to about seventy-five or eighty cents an hour. I also did Dr. Selman Waksman's glasswork, too, for a while.

SSH: Did you?

BL: Yeah.

SSH: What was that like?

BL: Not much different than washing Dr. Beaudette's. [laughter] I never saw Dr. Waksman. It was always done at night. I worked down in the laboratory at the Poultry Building which was convenient because I'd just go downstairs and it was kind of a messy job because they were doing egg propagation and you were ... had to clean the petrie dishes that they autoclaved the chicks and the egg yolks and everything together. But it was a ... Dr. Beaudette was an interesting character. He was a brilliant man, spoke fluent Russian, Portuguese. The original poultry pathology books were all written in Portuguese so ... He ... knew Portuguese and he knew Russian and his ... lab was a standard for the world, really. Even though it was a crummy little lab in the basement of the Poultry Building, he had visiting scientists from all over the world come to study his methods of egg ... virus propagation in eggs. Had a fiery temper ...

SSH: Really?

BL: ... He was a dyed in the wool Republican, refused to accept a Roosevelt dime, wouldn't carry a Roosevelt dime in his pocket because [laughter] ... wouldn't drive on Roosevelt Boulevard. Those were some of his idiosyncrasies ... but a difficult man to work for, not ... for me but ... for Dr. Tudor and Dr. Hudson and the rest of ... the crew down there. He was a mile above everybody else.

SI: What did you think of the curriculum at the Ag College and how did all this research affect your studies?

BL: The curriculum was excellent. I had no intentions of really going to veterinary school so I wasn't taking any kind of a pre-veterinary course. However, when I did decide, I found that I had all the requirements, in the Agricultural College, to get me into veterinary school. ... Living in the Poultry Building, it was interesting because we were ... we saw the research going on [in] the Physiology Department and I [have] got to tell you this story because you won't believe it. Part of the job we were involved with was taking care of a battery of chickens that were upstairs in the attic and what they were doing ... they had the ... battery hooked up with a bell system so that when a chicken laid an egg, a bell would ring, because, they were trying to ... I've got to go back and tell you that in the physiology of a chicken, once they lay an egg, within an hour, they will ovulate and the next egg travels on down the oviduct to get the shell and the white, the (albumen?). So, that's why they needed the bell because they had to identify the chicken that laid the egg and then they would take the chicken downstairs into the laboratory and anesthetize her. Open her up and wait for the next ovulation. And what they were attempting to do was to substitute ... and what they used was a condom filled with water ... substitute that for the egg yolk and so then they could conceal something in the ... like a message or diamond ring or

whatever they wanted. They would conceal it in this sac and have the chicken pick it up and produce an eggshell around it. So that when you opened up the egg [Dr. Levine simulates the opening] there was a message in it and that was the whole idea of the bell and the chickens. It worked at times but the chicken was very smart. There's a little body called an (infandibulum?) which is a little membrane that picks up the yolk. The yolk is ... deposited free in the abdomen near the ... this (infandibulum?) and then the (infandibulum?) surrounds it and brings it down and passes it into the oviduct. Well, they would put the ... false object in and the (infandibulum?) would grab it but then it would recognize it as being foreign and [Dr. Levine makes a "pwut" sound] would repel it. But sometimes it ... worked but that was ... the experiment they were doing. [laughter]

SI: Do you know if this was just scientific curiosity?

BL: I don't know what the basis of it was but all I know was that's what they were doing and we were ... had these chickens with the bells going off upstairs. 'Course they were accusing us of stealing the eggs and there was a little bit of animosity going on between Dr. Sturkey, who was the physiologist there, and he was complaining to Dr. Thompson, who was the head of [the] department, that he wanted us kicked out because we were stealing the eggs from his chickens and ruining his experiment, which we weren't doing. But Dr. Thompson prevailed. A nicer gentleman you could have never met in all your life; he was most benign and kind.

SSH: This is a great experiment. Whatever became of it?

BL: I don't ... know but you can do it and I think they use it now to try to smuggle diamonds and other stuff, too. It's one of the ... smuggling methods that they try.

SSH: I was wondering if this was maybe military intelligence?

BL: Oh, I don't know. I don't know what it was for.

SSH: [laughter] Well, that's a great story. Are there other anecdotes that we should hear about Rutgers while you were here?

BL: Well, as I told you, Dr. Beaudette was a very high-spirited gentleman that you didn't want to get on the wrong side of and we were in charge, as I said, I was in charge of the boilers. And one night, I was going down to bank the ... furnace in the basement and when I came up I saw this steam coming out from Dr. Beaudette's office, under the doors, into the hall and I opened up the ... his ... we had a passkey to the offices in the building ... opened up his office and the thing was just covered. I mean, it was just like a steam bath and he had a collection of rare books and a collection of rare pictures and everything was crinkled up in the frames. And I figured I better start packing because when Dr. Beaudette comes in tomorrow morning, out I go. Well, I figured I'd face the ... music, went down (and said?), "I want to apologize, you know, for what happened in your office last night." He says, "Oh, no." He says, "Now that's my fault." He said ... which relieved me greatly, he said, "You know ... " He says, "My office was cold so I unscrewed the valve from the radiator and I forgot to put it back." So, of course, when I brought the steam up, the steam was shooting out of the radiator and just ruined his whole office

but, he was great, though. He ... helped me a lot. He helped me get into veterinary school. Now that's another funny story. Because I was a senior, I had anticipated going back to the farm and maybe starting a poultry breeding business and my roommate, Dana, who had graduated a year before, was floating around California. He was sort of a free soul, and he was saying, you know, "Wanted to go out to California see what was doing out there," and came back for a visit and said, "You know, we ought to go to veterinary school. They opened up a new school in California." Says, "You and I, you know, we will work, play our ... help our ... get ourselves through school. So, let's apply." I said, "Well, that sounds like a good idea." Having nothing better to do. So, we ... both applied. We applied to Cornell, California, University of Pennsylvania. California told us they weren't taking any students from the East because they were required to accept their own and the surrounding states. We didn't get much out of Cornell either, but I was accepted at the University of Pennsylvania and Dana wasn't accepted anywhere. So, I went to veterinary school; got in as either the fifty-third or fifty-fourth in a class of fifty-four. I was just lucky and I think Dr. Beaudette helped me with that, too, 'cause he was very influential at the University of Pennsylvania and that's how I got to veterinary school.

SSH: So, it was just a fluke. It wasn't anything you planned to ...

BL: Nothing I planned. It was just a fluke. Dana came ... coming back and saying, "Let's go to veterinary school."

SSH: Have you ever regretted it?

BL: Not at all. It was the greatest move I made.

SSH: What was the differences between the campus at U Penn and Rutgers?

BL: Again, the veterinary school is an isolated unit. We took one course at the medical school or a couple of courses. I [remember] one of the courses was General Pathology which was a great course. It was ... I still remember it from fifty years ago. ... Again, the veterinary school was very small. There were only fifty-some students per class. So, you got to know ... you went with the same students for four years. I can tell you right now, that I can give you the roll call – Atkinson, Beck, Builder, Brewer, you know, (Cresswell, Carr?) And they had a different setup at ... Penn. They had fraternities and most of the students either joined one or two of the fraternities, mostly not as a fraternity but as a living facility. There was Alpha Si and Omega Tau Sigma there. Alpha Si would not take Jewish students. So, and they had ... formed at one time a strictly Jewish fraternity but Omega Tau Sigma then accepted Jewish students so the Jewish fraternity just went by the wayside and I lived at the fraternity house and it was cheap; five dollars a week or so with your linens. ... Again, I washed dishes at the fraternity house for my meals and that was a ... coveted job. It was sort of passed down from dishwasher to dishwasher. [laughter] Because you could ... go down, you could get a breakfast free, you know, it was ... you could eat all you wanted to eat. All you had to do was wash the dishes. Come back at lunchtime. It was a little hectic at lunch because you had to wash all of the dishes and eat your meal and get back to school on time. ... But dinnertime was nice because you washed the dishes and you sat down and had a nice meal and they had ... good food at this fraternity. So, that's ... what we did for ... I did it for two years and then I got married in my

junior year. My wife was a Douglass graduate. I met her in Dr. Beaudette's laboratory. She came in ... she was raised in Germany and was there during the war. I have to say my first wife; I've since remarried. And she of course was very fluent in German and Dr. Beaudette needed a translator. He was looking for someone to translate German articles into English for him. So, she was doing that for him. She was a good-looking girl and we started dating, got married.

SSH: Now she did not come from Germany until after the war?

BL: Yeah. She was there ... they were there through the whole war. And needed an Act of Congress, had to get their Congressman ... Her mother was American. Her father was German. She was born in this country [along] with a younger brother. And her father had a family factory in Germany and returned to Germany to run the factory before the war. He died there. Her mother stayed on with the four children and then ...

[Tape Paused]

BL: ... So, they ... the family couldn't get out. They were in the war. They were occupied by Moroccan troops.

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

BL: They ... she tells us ... my wife used to tell us the story of how they'd scrounge for food. They would go out in the countryside and try to get some potatoes or cabbage or anything that they could get to eat. Food was very scarce. They had some relatives in a ... small town, Meersburg, near the Swiss border and they ... moved there for a while and they had to take a boat to go to school across the lake into Switzerland. And they had some real tough times. My first wife, every time the fire siren rang, it just frightened her because she thought it was an air raid. So, that's how ingrained they were with ... the war. But they did get an Act of Congress. The reason they stayed there was because the two children born in Germany were not allowed to come back to this country. They were aliens and, so, they had to wait for an Act of Congress so that they could all come back as a family, which they did.

SSH: Was she of college age when she came back and went to Douglass?

BL: I think she was about seventeen when she came back. I think [she] went ... on into Douglass, may have been a little younger than that, I'm not quite sure. I don't think she was much ... she must have been in her early teens because she didn't have any accent. You know, when you're over seventeen, you retain your ... foreign accent. She didn't.

SSH: So, she also worked in Beaudette's ...

BL: She worked in Beaudette's lab or she would, you know, come in to do his translating and we started to date.

SSH: Was she taking just a general course at Douglass?

BL: Yeah. She was a, I think, a biology major. Then she went on to, after she graduated, she went to work for Schering Laboratories.

SSH: Was she working while you were in veterinary school?

BL: She supported me for the first year in veterinary school. She worked at Rohme & Hass as a translator there, again, because ... Rohme & Hass ... they ... when the army took over, occupied Germany, they also gathered up all the scientific and experimental data from the various companies and it was her job to translate certain articles from Rohme & Hass, which was from some of the German companies which were interesting to Rohme & Hass and their plastics and ... techniques. And she was very good at the technical aspect of translation. So that's what she did. ... She worked for a year and supported me. I had a couple of little side jobs at the veterinary school. I used to sell instruments, surgical instruments, for a local drugstore and surgical instrument dealer in town. I, also, took care of a battery of experimental puppies that they were using for radiological studies at the school. The dirtiest job in the world. I've done some dirty jobs but that was the worst.

SSH: Really?

BL: Yeah. You had ... maybe fifteen or twenty puppies crowded into one kennel and defecation and urination and all this mess had to be cleaned up a couple of times a day and fed. They were sick and we'd have to medicate them ... It was ... when you had to work and earn the money, you did a lot of things that you wouldn't ordinarily do.

SSH: Did you live near the veterinary school?

BL: I lived in the fraternity house for two years, and then, my wife and I, we got married, and we found a little apartment, again, one of those jewels that's transferred from student to student. It was fifty dollars a month, all utilities: electricity, heat, about seven or eight blocks from the veterinary school. And it was a home converted. There was another veterinary student who lived above us; and the way the house was situated, they had to walk through our apartment to get up to theirs. But they were classmates so it was quite all right. We had to make some of our own furniture. We had ... nothing when we got married. I made some of the furniture and we had a friend, former friend, who had a truck and he loaned us his truck so we could move our stuff down to Philly, and that's how we lived. The last year we ... my daughter was born, ... my first daughter was born, September of the senior year. So having a baby, that took care of my support. I had all these other jobs to help keep us going and I had a scholarship, too, which I got at the ... The tuition was seven hundred dollars a semester back in those days which is ... able to handle. Also, I would grow some crops during the summer. I'd go back on the farm and grow soybeans, field the soybeans, and helped ... and used that to help pay for some of my tuition.

SSH: So, in the summertime you would move back with your parents.

BL: Moved back with the parents. Yeah, we ... retained the apartment but we moved back on the farm and one year I grew soybeans. The following year I, or the same year, I interned at Ticehurst's Veterinary Hospital. You had a summer internship that you did.

SSH: As a veterinarian, do you take a general course or do you specialize immediately?

BL: In those days, you ... you didn't specialize. You had to take all the courses, large animal, small animal. Today, you have tracts, I believe that, you know, if you want to concentrate more on one type of animal, you can do that. But at that time, we ... did general education.

SSH: Everything from surgery to ...

BL: First three years were classroom work. The last year was clinical work. Then you would rotate ... do the rotations. You'd be in medicine where you would handle the medical cases. Then you would have a surgical rotation. Then you would have a large animal surgery; large animal medicine, and you had ambulatory clinics where you would go with the field veterinarian to farms. And also we had a nice situation where they ... where you would go out and live either with a veterinarian or in town with a practitioner and he would pick you up every morning and you would go out with him to do the farmwork.

SSH: Just to back up a little bit, when your wife's mother was able to bring her four children to the States, did she come to New Brunswick or ...

BL: They lived in, not Metuchen, in Elizabeth. They were up in the Elizabeth area. Her mother was a schoolteacher and she was a great mother-in-law; nicest woman you'd ever want to meet.

SSH: How did your wife come to NJC? Was it because of the proximity?

BL: I think it was because of the proximity.

SI: Going back to your days at Rutgers, you talked about the all Jewish fraternity at U Penn. Did you see any kind of bias, or anti-Semitism, or segregation at Rutgers?

BL: I never felt there was any bias or anti-Semitism. I had no problems. I would go to Hillel here and, as I say, I never much matriculated in the general student body. The six or seven of us that lived upstairs were all compatible and they were all of various religions and faiths.

SI: Was Hillel just founded?

BL: No, it had been in existence for quite a while when I was there. Not the new one you have now I understand but there was a Hillel and you could attend services there.

SSH: When your family moved to Freehold to start the poultry farm, how did you maintain the relationship with the extended family?

BL: They would come visit us because that was a great thing, you know, they'd go down to the farm, get out in the country. My mother was a marvelous host. I mean, you had something to eat about three steps out of the house ... three steps out of the car. Food was the thing. If you didn't eat, then something was wrong. She was very generous. 'Course they thought it was great to come out to the farm, sit around under the trees, and we were doing all the work. It was just ... they thought farming was great, you know. [laughter] They would see us ... relaxing, you know, under the trees, in nice chairs and the fresh air and the sunshine and ... this is great. They didn't know how much work was involved in this thing. So, they ... the extended family, would come visit us. Being a ... having a livestock farm, I don't know what kind of farm you lived on.

SSH: Cattle ranch.

BL: All right, then, you know, it's a 365-day a year job. We never got off the farm as a complete family unit except, the one time that we did was, when my brother got married. We hired a neighbor to come over and feed the chickens for one day, I think it was, and we went to the wedding, came back, and that was it, and all the rest of the time we were tied down to collecting eggs every day, feeding the chickens. You know, if the power would go out, you didn't have any water. So, you'd have to carry water manually to three thousand chickens and they thought it was a great game because when you'd put fresh water in the fountain they'd all start drinking again. And sometimes we had no power for three, four days at a time.

SSH: Did you ever think of changing from poultry to something else? My grandfather had cattle and then my father raised sheep, because of the markets.

BL: We ... got out of the poultry industry, I think, at the right time. You know, I went off to school. My father, who originally wanted the farm, never worked on the farm because either my brother ran it, I ran it, and then, finally, when I went to school, to veterinary ... to Rutgers, he came back and he found that he didn't like it at all.

SSH: So, he maintained his carpentry during this time?

BL: Yeah. He worked as a carpenter and then he worked as ... you know, at the ... during the war as a fireman. And finally it came time for Daddy to come home and run the farm and he didn't like it too much at all. So, I think he finally sold out, sold the birds out, and then, sold the farm and moved to retirement ... a community in Toms River. And he would come in and work for me as a maintenance person at the hospital and my mother would do the bookkeeping. She was ... at eighty years of age, she was still as sharp as a tack and would find all the mistakes that the young girls made in the books and always complain to me.

SSH: When you finished your internship in veterinary school, how did you progress?

BL: How I progressed from there?

SSH: Yes.

BL: After I graduated from veterinary school, I got a job with Dr. Millar, Joseph Millar in Deal, New Jersey. And so, my wife and I, my little daughter, Diana, moved up to Allenhurst and we had to stay in one room at a private home. We found a room in a private home about a block or two from the hospital. And I started working there and then the ... assistant, who was at the hospital moved, changed jobs, and there was an apartment that was available. So, we moved up above the hospital at Dr. Millar's. I stayed there and it was a very well-known practice, very ... a good practice. And Dr. Millar at that time was president of the American Animal Hospital Association so, he was away quite a bit and I was left in charge. So, I could ... run the practice and in those days, you worked pretty hard, six days a week. We had Sunday ... morning hours. Had one day off a week. If I didn't take the day off and get out of the hospital, Dr. Millar would catch me to [go] down and do something or take the emergency calls. I was available all night for the emergencies and we had office hours until about nine o'clock in the evening. And I worked alone in ... at night. You were the secretary, the receptionist, and the kennel person, and the veterinarian. Can't get that done today. My people are ... I don't have them anymore ... but the people who work at our hospital now they have a secretary and an assistant and kennel people and they ... ought to go back forty years and then they would appreciate what the situation is now. So, I worked for a year at Dr. Millar's and I had the itch to get out on my own. Veterinarians are generally an independent kind of group and, so, I told Dr. Millar I was thinking of leaving. I had been going down to Toms River because, when I worked there. There was a great number of people who would be coming up from Toms River and the southern area because there was no veterinarian there and I figured that would be a good place to start a practice. So, I had been going down looking for a place and Dr. Millar said, "Why don't you stay here? I'll make you a partner." Which sounded, you know, like a great thing, having no money, and this was a big established practice and ... but he had a son who was going to veterinary school and I kind of saw the handwriting on the wall. "Where would I be three years from now, when young Harry graduated, and there was no increase in salary and there weren't a lot of bonuses to go with the job?" and I said, "No, I'll ... I think I'll still go out." So, he says, "All right, let's do this." He says, "I'll ... be your partner. You go down there and we'll be partners. I'll help you start this new practice." So, I went down and I found a location and then I went back to Dr. Millar and I said, "Oh, I've got the spot. Let's go." But the one thing about Dr. Millar, he was a procrastinator. He never made a decision. He says, "Well, I have to check with my financial ... " Well, it wound up that I did it by myself. I had maybe a thousand dollars in the bank. I had a set of plans drawn up. I went to Mr. Frank Sutton, who was president of the Toms River bank, and I said, "This is what I want to do." Well, first I went in there and I spoke to the ... one of the vice-presidents. He said, "I'm sorry." He says, "We don't give construction loans." And I says, "... I'm going to try once more." So, I went to the president, showed him my plans, said, "This is what I want to do." He said, "I'll have an answer for you in a week," and he did, and it was 23,000 dollars that I had to borrow and they gave it to me, and I built the hospital. Moved all the stuff down in the truck. My ... then I had two kids, because my son was born while I was up at Millar's, and, so [we] packed the two kids up and some old kennel stuff that I salvaged from Dr. Millar and started a practice in Toms River. My practice was busy before I even had the hospital built. When I would come down on my day off, there might be ten or twelve people waiting just to see a veterinarian because there was nobody in the area. So, we started off, we started off busy. Started off as a single practice. My wife, she would autoclave my instruments in her pressure cooker and I would do the kennel work first and then come into the office and take care of the patients and then at night, when everybody left, we would do

surgery. And it got so busy that I finally hired a kennel person and then I hired a secretary and the next year I hired an assistant. And we went from a one-man practice ... I think now my son has six veterinarians and probably thirty or forty employees that work at the hospital. It ... you know, the area grew. The Garden State Parkway opened up. People started to migrate down. Population in Ocean County grew from ninety thousand I think, to close to now four hundred or a little more. Toms River, when I got there, was seven thousand people and now it's eighty-five. So, the practice continued to grow. As the population expanded, we just added new veterinarians and new additions and had a good practice going.

SSH: Unbelievable.

BL: Yeah..

SSH: What were some of the stories that the veterans were talking about? Did they ever talk about their experiences?

BL: Yeah, I had a crazy friend who was a Marine and he would tell wild stories about, you know, being in China and close calls that they would have. Another friend was a Navy pilot and, unfortunately, he convinced me to go up with him one day at the local airport. He had a Piper Cub and he thought he still had a P-51 under him with this Piper Cub and he went through so many acrobatics and stuff; I just about crawled out of the airplane when we got through.

SSH: Do you remember their names?

BL: Kaiser was the Marine. The other fellow, I can't remember his name. Walt Plaut was in the Army and ... he was one of the roommates up at the ... Poultry Building and his father had a poultry farm in Toms River and they were German people; had come over before the war, I think, and ... or during the war. Walt was in the Army. That's how he got his citizenship papers, as being in the Army. And they had goats. ... They would make goat cheese and I really didn't like goat cheese but I would ... you know, as a guest at their home I would have to eat it and, so ... they were lovely people, hard-working people. Walt and I took a camping trip one summer. Since he was Army-experienced, he had a pup tent and we decided we were going to go up to Nova Scotia in his pup tent and, so, we did. Lanning was Roland Lanning, Jr. His father was the Campbell Soup man who supplied us with soup. But he was an ensign in the Navy and tells the story that they got orders to move their ship from one location in Florida to the other and the commanding officer wasn't there. And he was the ranking officer and didn't know too much about commanding this ship and was in charge of moving this ship to the new port. And as he was coming in and everybody was on the dock, the ship crashed into the dock and took part of the dock off. That was his Navy experience. [laughter]

SI: At Rutgers, you mentioned that you were cut off from the social sphere. Did you take advantage of any of the concerts, the orchestra, or things like that?

BL: We would occasionally go to the Glee Club concerts. ... We really at the ... the guys at the Poultry Building really didn't partake much in Rutgers activities. Occasionally, we'd go to a football game, if we stayed down on the weekend, but most of us were working, most of us were

going home, most of us had other jobs. Most of my time was spent at Douglass, if I had spare time.

SSH: Was mandatory chapel in existence at that point?

BL: No. We did have chapel.

SSH: Did you?

BL: We did go to Chapel on occasion. Yeah.

SI: Did you have ROTC?

BL: I had ROTC, yeah, and we would have to march in Buchleuch Park and I had it for two years. Since we were land ... the Agricultural School is a land-grant college, it was required. And it was ... I was in good shape back in those days because I lived over at the Poultry Building which is on one side of town and I had classes here, so, we'd have to walk. There were no bussing, so, you walked from here and, if you wanted to go have lunch, you walked back and then came back in the afternoon. So, we did quite a bit of walking in those days. Then, eventually, we ... my roommate got a car and, so, he would loan his car, if I ... needed it to get back and forth. A couple of the guys had cars eventually.

SSH: Before we turned the machine on, we talked a little bit about Korea and how that affected you graduating in '51.

BL: '51. During the Korean War, as I say, we were exempt, had a college exemption during the school year but during the summer, we were called up for induction, or to report for induction, and at that time, they were rather strict in their selection and I had ... I have hay fever and asthma and they didn't ... they wouldn't take me. They didn't want anybody with any kind of medical problem that would require any kind of treatment, so, the hay fever and asthma, that was rejected each year. Then I got too old for them after that. [laughter]

SSH: How have you maintained affiliation with Rutgers since then? Have any of your children gone to school here?

BL: Well, I had two children graduate. I had ... my oldest daughter was a Douglass graduate and my youngest daughter is a Rutgers graduate. My son is a defector, and that's a story in itself, because he went to the University of Florida because he thought he could go on their water ski team. He was a waterski enthusiast. Living in Toms River, we're right by the water and, so, they did a lot of waterskiing and he heard that they had a waterskiing team ... so, he went to the University of Florida, never did waterskiing. But he did go back and graduate Penn. He's a Penn graduate. My youngest daughter graduated the Communications, she took the communications course here at Rutgers and works for ... NJN, New Jersey Network. She has a program called *Homeless Tales*. All my kids are still involved with animals. *Homeless Tales*, she ... brings in a shelter, a different shelter from the state each week with a couple of animals that they put up for adoption and they've been very successful in placing ... these animals. And

my oldest daughter is an artist; didn't start out as an artist. She went to Arizona to get her Master's in Physical Education; she was a phys ed major, and couldn't find a job, back in those days. So, she went to selling insurance and then got a job promoting sports. She worked for a fellow who put on the (Tucson Greater Open?) and the Michael Landon ... Tennis Tournaments and he faded out and she took over his work and she was probably one of the few women involved in golf. 'Cause men do not like women in golf. Even though I don't play golf but, anyway. To the point that in some ... that at the country club at ... in Tucson, they don't allow women in the ... men's dining room. There's a special dining room for men that women aren't allowed in. But, anyway, they found out that ... they tried to run it themselves, as men, and found out that they were a flop and, so, they got her back to run their tournaments. But too stressful a job for her and she had a ... great ability with artwork. And, so, she started to study, pursued it, and [is] a very successful artist now in Tucson, and a very successful businesswoman.

SSH: Do you have any other questions, Shaun?

SI: Not that I can think of. Is there anything that we skipped over, or do you think that we should ask?

BL: Oh, I don't know ... it's just lots of stories. The thing is I ... even in a small town I became very successful and was fortunate in taking an interest in a dog that died on the ... on the examining table. And I opened this dog up and his heart ... I asked the owners, you know, permission to do an autopsy and found that this dog had heart worms. And at the time I graduated school in ... '55, the heart worm was a parasite that they said was in the South, you know, Florida, Texas, Louisiana, so forth, and I became interested in this parasite and finally wound up becoming the president of the American Heart Worm Society. We had done a lot of original research here, right in Toms River, and we developed a surgical procedure for removing the worms from the heart. We were one of the first practices in the country that ever did heart surgery on dogs, in a little tiny town of Toms River. So, it gave me the opportunity ... I've lectured throughout the world. Was invited to go to Japan and Australia with Merck and Company. So, it's been a very rewarding kind of a career.

SSH: Are you completely retired?

BL: I work occasionally when they need some help. I do ... I've branched out now and I do a fish practice. I do fish medicine and specialize in koi and pond medicine.

SSH: Really?

BL: Yes. [laughter] There's very few veterinarians in New Jersey that take care of fish and it ... all started by deciding I wanted a fish pond. And, so, I dug a couple of holes and put the linings in and made the waterfalls and got some fish. And went over to see the fellow who sells the fish and he was complaining that he has a batch of sick fish and he doesn't know what to do and he says he doesn't know where to go and there's nobody that ... takes care of fish and so on. I did some basic work; you can take care of fish just like you do any other thing. It's a little specialized. But we did some cultures, found out what the bacteria was that were affecting his fish, and did a sensitivity test, told him what antibiotics to use, showed him how to inject them.

And then he said, "That's great," and he said, "Why don't you start doing this for other people." So, I went to school; went ... down to the University of Georgia and took their course in fish medicine, and I do fish ... medicine now.

SSH: I have to honestly say, that I have never heard of a fish doctor.

BL: They can't tell you what's wrong with them. It's up to you to ... well, same like any other animal. We do the, you know, the same kind of thing. We do skin scrapings, looking for parasites. We do biopsies and like a gill biopsy. Recently, I had a call from somebody [who] had a fish with a growth on its ... upper lip and [I] anesthetized the fish, took a biopsy, sent it down to the University for the pathologist to look at, came back with a diagnosis. So, you can do a lot of things. You treat the water or you can treat the individual fish.

SSH: What kind of animals did you have in the house?

BL: Everything. No. Well, we had cats and ... dogs, mainly. ... All of my children have animals. My daughter in Tucson, she's got three or four cats, or maybe five, and a horse and she doesn't trust the veterinarians in Arizona because any time something happens, I always get a telephone call from my daughter. She's asking me what to do with her cats out there. My son, who's a veterinarian, graduated ... I graduated first in my class ... he messed up, he graduated second, but, we'll forgive him for that 'cause there was twice as many kids in his class. He has a couple of cats and a dog and we have a pet parrot at the hospital that he ... specializes in bird medicine, too. He does a lot of bird medicine. And my other ... oldest ... youngest daughter, she's got two cats. But ... as kids, they would raise birds that fell out of nests. They would have them walking around on their shoulders. And when we ... my young ... oldest daughter was great with raising ... well, and they raised squirrels. We had a squirrel that used to come back in the house for nursing ... to take his bottle and nurse on a baby bottle. My youngest daughter had a little ... hawk that she raised and we had all sorts of ... stuff.

SSH: Were you ever interested in politics?

BL: No. I served on the Board of Health, the original Board of Health, in Dover Township for about five years, and I, you know, I've been the president of the New Jersey Veterinary Society, Medical Society, and I am Society-played out. I ... learned the greatest word in the English language about five years ago and that's 'no.' [laughter] The one thing I am, I'm the Emergency Veterinary Coordinator for Ocean County which is a big job. It was a job I volunteered ... well, somebody suckered me into, not knowing what's involved, but it's been a very interested job. And ...

SSH: What does that entail?

BL: What does that entail? That entails, if Ocean County has a hurricane or a ... forest fire or a nuclear accident and requires the evacuation of pets and people, it's up to the veterinary part of that staff to coordinate the evacuation and handling [of] the sick animals. ... It's an interesting thing but people will not evacuate ... if they have pets, if a person has a pet or a family has a pet, they will not evacuate, if the pet can't go with them. The other thing is that Red Cross shelters,

if you go to a Red Cross shelter, you are not allowed to bring your pet with you. So, it becomes difficult, if people are told to evacuate, they've got a pet and they don't know what to do with it and where to take it. We provide the facilities where they can leave their pet and know that they're going to be secure and we try to give people advice as to what to do, how to prepare for an emergency, identifications of the animal. Try to contact your relatives make sure that you ... you know, if it's an impending storm coming up the coast, half of Ocean County would have to be evacuated in a ... force four hurricane. All the ... barrier islands, all the way up to Route 9, which is halfway in the county, would have to leave. What are you going to do with all those people? What are you going to do with all the pets? Same thing with nuclear ... a nuclear accident. So ...

SSH: Because you can not take your pet to Red Cross ...

BL: Well, our ... recommendations are ... to people is to prepare ahead of time. Locate a motel or locate some relatives in another county or ... a safe area where they can go with their pet and then they got to be prepared, you know, have the vaccination certificates and the medicine, if the pet's on medication, and food and kitty litter and ... a lot of things.

SSH: Are there any farms, or anything like that in this area that you would have to worry about?

BL: There are a lot of horses. There are some cattle. There are also a number of birds and reptiles and pocket pets. We have made arrangements. There are ... it's like the New Jersey Horse Farm ... has facilities for ... taking animals and we've tried to locate people with vans that can ... transport horses and stuff ... and, so on. That's all part of the planning that we had ... to go through, and that's ... my job now and even though I'm retired I still ... keep pretty busy. Still have my love of gardening, you know, I still have a big garden.

SSH: Do you do any traveling?

BL: We had a big trip planned this year, a wonderful trip. My wife and I had signed up to go on the ... to explore the lost cities of the world, which involved traveling to Tibet, Mongolia, Nepal, Uzbekistan, Jordan, Oman, China, Cambodia, and Laos, and about two weeks before we were ready to go, my wife tripped and hurt her leg. And I ... we had to cancel the damn trip out and she's on crutches now, so, we never did go but I hope when things are better, we'll try it again. And we've traveled. We've ... gone to Egypt, which was a wonderful experience. I used to do a lot of scuba diving and we were down in the South Pacific; went to Tahiti and Bora-Bora and Morea and all those exotic places. And what do you think you find when you get off the boat in Bora-Bora?

SSH: A diner?

BL: Hertz Rent- A-Car. No place on earth now that's really like it used to be. But it ... was great. I did a lot of ... I did some scuba diving. We ... went and did ... one of the most exciting things I've ever done in all my life was a shark-feeding breakfast in Bora-Bora. Where they take you out to the reef, you put a pair of flippers ... no, you put a pair of ... a mask and snorkel and

you hang on a line and the guy has a bucket of chum and he starts to throw the chum out and within five minutes there's fifty sharks swimming around you. It gets your adrenaline going, let me tell you, when a big shark passes by your eye, it's about that far. [Mr. Levine holds his hands a distance apart.]

SSH: You could not just have seen this from the boat?

BL: That's where my wife was. She says, "Yes." She says, "I saw all of these fins going around in a circle."

SSH: Wow.

BL: That was great. That was an exciting trip. So, I've been around the world and so on.

SSH: Well, we thank you very much for taking time to come in and sit for us.

BL: Delighted to talk with you.

SSH: If you come up with any other anecdotes that you would like to add to the transcript, we encourage you to do so.

BL: Okay.

SSH: Thank you.

BL: I hope I've given you what you wanted.

SSH: Thank you very much.

SI: Thank you.

[One amusing anecdote took place at graduation. Graduation took place at the stadium. The faculty and guests were seated on one side of the stadium and the graduates were assembled on the top of the other side. At the proper time the graduates descended, in lines, down the isles to the field, walked across the stadium to take their places next to the guests and faculty.

A hush fell over the stadium as the University President was about to start the proceedings. At that precise moment a lone figure appeared atop the opposite stadium wall, in cap and gown, proceeded to descend the stairs, cross the field, stop, doffed his cap to the President and proceeded to take his place with the graduates amid the applause and cheering of the assembled group. That was Humphrey, the class jester!]

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Reviewed by Bojan Stefanovic 4/25/01

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 9/15/01  
Reviewed by Bernard Levine 12/20/01