

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH BERNARD Z. SENKOWSKI

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SANDRA STEWART HOLYOAK

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TRANSCRIPT BY

MICHAEL OJEDA

Sandra Holyoak: Dr. Senkowski, thank you so much for taking the time to participate in the interview. First of all, I would like to ask you if you could tell us a little bit about your family. I understand from your pre-interview sheet that your mother and father were born in Poland.

Dr. Bernard Senkowski: That is correct.

SH: Can you tell me if they knew each other before they came to the United States and a little bit about their lives.

BS: I do not know too much about their meeting because we would be going into the early 1900s and late 1800s. But they knew each other in Poland. My father served with a Polish Division from Canada in World War I, and after the war, he came to the United States with his parents. Then his wife to be came over from Poland, and they got married in Michigan.

SH: How did your father serve with the Polish forces from Canada?

BS: Well, he was living in the United States and he spoke better Polish than English at that time. He spoke to people in the church community in which he was involved and found out that there was going to be a Polish Division formed in Canada and that they were going over to France and fight in World War I. Therefore, he went up to Canada and enlisted with the Polish Division.

SH: Was your father in Michigan at this time?

BS: From Michigan – Wyandotte, Michigan.

SH: How did he get, what brought him from Poland to Wyandotte?

BS: His parents came over first and then he followed.

SH: do you remember what year this was?

BS: I'm not sure; it goes back quite a ways. He must have come over about 1910.

SH: His parents had been here before that?

BS: They were here just a few years. His father or my grandfather was an organist in the Catholic Church and came over to this country with the goal perhaps of playing in a large church. However, he wound up playing the organ in a relatively nice church in Wyandotte, Michigan. In the early days, the people who were immigrating to the United States all knew someone who already had come here. Through correspondence, they were able to find different locations that were immunable to them and their language.

SH: Was your father a musician in Poland? Was that his occupation in Poland, your grandfather and your father?

BS: Yes. My father played the organ in Michigan and then when we moved to New Jersey, he played the organ in Lyndhurst, New Jersey for about twenty years.

SH: Did your father talk about the experiences he had during World War I?

BS: He mentioned that they were in a battle in France and that he was wounded in the field. Some French family sort of got a hold of him and took care of him. He remembers that the French cognac was excellent.

SH: Did your father find that the service, the Polish unit, stayed together or was he then integrated within?

BS: Yes, it stayed as a unit throughout the war. Then when the war ended and, unfortunately the U.S. Government had no benefits for the ones that fought in the unit such as the Polish Division in Canada. So, he didn't know at that time the pluses and minuses of staying with an American division. But, since he still had a strong Polish feeling when he came over, he thought that was what he wanted to do and he did it.

SH: Did he talk about the political scene in the United States at that time during World War I?

BS: No, not that I recall. The only time I recall about the political scene was when Roosevelt became president. At that time, work was extremely difficult to find in this country. I remember that since my grandfather was playing in the local Polish church, my father was working on WPA and that was a tough life. It was fifteen dollars a week, working five days, but with six children and a wife it didn't go very far.

SH: Your grandfather and grandmother's names, do you remember what they were?

BS: Yes, my grandfather was Stanley Senkowski and my grandmother was Josefa or Josephine.

SH: How many siblings did your father have?

BS: My father had a brother and two sisters, one in Poland, so there were three beside him.

SH: Did you visit your grandfather.

BS: My grandfather and I did play a lot of pinochle to pass the time when he became ill.

SH: What were your father and mother's names?

BS: My father's name was Marion Chester and my mother's name was Sabina.

SH: Now your mother's name is very typically Polish, but your father's is not. Is there a reason for that?

BS: Marion is the male name, and I think because the family was involved with the church that it probably stemmed from St. Mary and even today they'll have "this is the Marian year" and I think that's how his name was given to him.

SH: Your mother and father met in Poland. Were they friends and sweethearts in Poland and renewed that in this country?

BS: Yes, as far as I know they knew each other in Poland and how well I don't know. That's one of the sad things about our family. Since we were quite poor, there was not as much discussion with parents and children as you find these days. He would go out and do his thing and try to get bread on the table. We would be out in the fields playing softball or sticks or something just to occupy our time. So, I don't know too much about our family history.

SH: Do you know much of your maternal grandparents?

BS: A little bit. Not too much. My grandfather apparently was quite a good musician in Poland. I don't know how he met my grandmother, that's just too far back, and I don't remember them discussing that with me. I'm just trying to think whether it was anything special. In Poland in those days, it was hard to say who was controlling what border, because the Russians took over pieces of it and then they fought and they got it back. Then the Germans took over a piece and so the grandparents at one time spoke German as well as Polish and my father spoke some Russian as well as Polish. I don't know very much about what they did when they were in Poland. In the States they had a little farm in Wyandotte, Michigan. Then they moved to Lyndhurst, New Jersey where he played the organ in a Catholic Church. They were not very wealthy and life was kind of difficult even for them.

SH: Both grandparents then, or grandfathers, were organists in the Catholic Church?

BS: Father and grandfather were organists.

SH: Did both your maternal grandparents come to the States?

BS: No. Only my father's family.

SH: Do you know how many siblings that your mother had?

BS: She had, I believe, two sisters, one in Wyandotte, Michigan and one that lived in Hamtramck, Michigan. And that's about all I know about her side.

SH: Do you remember any names or anything?

BS: One was Jadwiga. J-A-D-W-I-G-A, Wroblewski, W-R-O-B-L-E-W-S-K-I, and her family still lives in Wyandotte, Michigan.

SH: Were you involved in the church then as a young man growing up?

BS: I was an altar boy. I was very much involved with the parish in Lyndhurst, New Jersey because, in order to survive, my father was the organist and the janitor. Being that I was home, I helped to empty the furnaces of ashes like twelve or fifteen barrels of ashes. I was up at four o'clock in the morning to help him. So you might say I was involved with the church. Then when he had to cut the grass and in those days it was with a reel mower, I happened to be close by and so part of what I had to do was to help also. He would let me know that he wanted the help.

SH: How old were you when you moved from Wyandotte to Lyndhurst?

BS: I think I was about between five and six years old.

SH: Do you remember any difference in the move at all?

BS: Well, I remember in Michigan we lived in Dearborn and my grandmother lived in Wyandotte where she had a little farm. She had one or two cows, some geese and chickens. I remember that one day we visited her and one of those nasty geese grabbed me with the bill and was whacking me with the wings. So, that I remember. (laughter) I remember in Dearborn the church did not pay the organist very much. My brother and I would go to stores looking for old newspapers. I was about 4 years old; my brother was 8 years old.

SH: Your brother, I assume, was older than you.

BS: Four years older, yes.

SH: Now tell me a little bit about your siblings and their names.

BS: The eldest is my brother Thaddeus or Teddy. He's, he will be seventy-four in April. My sister Barbara's birthday was in January and she was seventy-two. Then comes myself at age 70. My birthday was in February. It is a very famous day. It's the day when they look for the groundhog to come out. Next in line is my sister Celia. Cecelia is sixty-seven. Sister Laura is sixty-five and my sister Irene, I think, is sixty-two.

SH: Do they live in the New Jersey area?

BS: I have one sister who lives in Newport Beach, California. One lives in Palm Harbor, Florida and the rest are in New Jersey.

SH: Do you keep in close contact with your family?

BS: We try to visit each year.

SH: Now tell me a bit about growing up in Lyndhurst and the type of community it was and what your activities and interests were.

BS: It was a sparsely spread, oh, ninety-nine percent white community. I was involved in going to school on Saturdays to learn Polish and prepare for the sacraments of the church. Being that we didn't have much money, I did all sort of odd jobs. I would in between grammar school lunch hour and after school deliver groceries. I carried the groceries on my shoulder because I didn't have a bike. I graduated from the grocery store and delivered newspapers. Later went to work for a drug store to deliver prescriptions and to deliver telegrams. During the war, many of the telegrams were not good news. I would do anything to find work. I would work in a grocery store for six days after school and during lunch hour and all day Saturday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The pay was one dollar per week.

SH: You had said earlier in the survey that your father had studied for the priesthood.

BS: He had gone two years towards becoming a priest in this country.

SH: Do you remember which seminary?

BS: It was in Michigan. I think it was at Orchard Lake.

SH: Did he say why he didn't continue to pursue it?

BS: I think he said he never wanted to be a priest but his parents wanted him to be a priest. He really wanted to become a good musician. And he actually studies the piano under one of the students of Paderewski. Paderewski, as you know, was an excellent pianist, but the parents were pushing him toward becoming a priest but it wasn't his calling.

SH: Was there any of this pressure to his sons? You or your brother?

BS: Not at all. It was a different life. As I mentioned before, when you're quite poor, and we were quite poor, there wasn't a close-knit family like you find in a little better educated, better economic status of the families. I would disappear for a day to play softball, or go down to a fellow that was racing pigeons and help him with the pigeons, or I would work with good old Joe Paterno. He had a truck that delivered fruits and vegetables and he would take me with him. He'd stop by his house and give me a nice glass of milk and a sandwich and to me that was a treat. Then I met some gentleman on a horse and wagon who sold bananas. I'd climb up on the wagon with him and would go throughout Lyndhurst selling bananas. I would carry the purchases to where they had to go. My pay was a bag of bananas to take home. That was an interesting time to grow up.

SH: To travel from Michigan to New Jersey was it by car or rail or what?

BS: No, we sat in with the moving truck since we had very little money. As a matter-of-fact, when we moved to New Jersey we stayed with my grandmother in her house for a short period of time. As is typical even today, Mother-in-laws and daughter-in-laws have misunderstandings, and so we moved from there into what I think must have been the poorest area in Lyndhurst. These homes, there were nine of them that were at one time owned by the Lackawanna Railroad Company for their executives. They were 100 years old when we moved in. They were cold-

water flats. There were four three-room flats per house and to give you an idea of the real estate value, the fellow that owned them wanted to sell the house for \$500. They really were run-down. I remember, as I got a little older, my grandmother lived on one side and we lived on the other side in three rooms. I would with money from little odd jobs buy a bag of plaster and plaster up the holes you could see through to the outside. I don't know about the weather these days but it was cold in '30s and '40s in New Jersey. I remember walking to school in snow up to my waist. But it was a different period in our history. It was a different period in our life. The problem that exists today is one that I didn't feel when I was a kid. My feeling was "go out and do things" and I wonder who today at age thirteen or twelve would be willing to work twelve hours a day, six days a week for three dollars a week knocking down garbage piles with a pitch fork? I did that for a whole summer.

SH: Where was the garbage job?

BS: Lyndhurst, New Jersey, dump. I did that for a summer at three dollars a week. To me it was a job and I did it.

SH: Was your money your or did it go to the family, community, pot?

BS: Well, it was mine. Sometimes my father would meet me half way, but essentially I contributed to the house. The only thing that happened from the job was I had gotten some kind of infection on my foot. A nice teacher in Lyndhurst in the seventh grade at Lincoln School would drive me home and tell me, "Now, Bernard, remember you have to wash your feet and put on a clean pair of socks everyday." I said to myself, "I have one pair, how am I going to put it on a clean pair every day?" But there were always nice people in my life and I feel I owe them a debt of gratitude.

SH: Did you go to public school and not parochial school?

BS: I went to public school. I went to Washington School in Lyndhurst on Ridge Road until grade six. That is when I worked in the grocery store at noontime and after school. Then in the seventh grade, I went to Lincoln School and in the eighth grade to Roosevelt School. I graduated from the eighth grade and then went to Lyndhurst High School. When people say today, "Oh, you have to be bussed to school," I would say, "I walked every day from Page Avenue to Lyndhurst High School which must have been two to three miles a day one way and it didn't phase me a bit." And I did that for two years. I had gotten a job through the high school. When it was mentioned that they were hiring people in East Newark, New Jersey, it was a company called Automatic Winding Company. They were making transformers and coils for B-29 bombers. This was in 1944. I was working nights from 6:00 PM to 12 AM, part-time. I worked almost a year when I decided that since they wanted me full time and I was a good worker, I quit high school. I only had two years of high school. I remember the last day of school a physics teacher said, "Senkowski, you're going to be a failure because you're leaving school." I think he would be surprised that I eventually achieved an A.A., A.B., M.S. and Ph.D.

SH: Hard work.

BS: That's some of what I find is missing. The people's motivation and desire to drive to be able to accomplish. Well, I'm fortunate in that respect. I worked at the Automatic Winding Company for just a little over a year, full time. I was sixteen when they put me in charge of about twenty or thirty women on the production line. They drove me crazy. When you have twenty or so women on a production line that are working piece work, complaints of you're giving the others the better jobs so they can make more money and how come I don't get that? I went through this for about three months and I told the boss, I don't want this job; it's too much of a bother. So then they gave me a different job. "You want to repair transformers?" Now these were transformers that were tested at voltage of 10,000 volts and fifteen amperes, which is enough to kill you. However, a safety box was built so that it would be grounded. It turned out that I could fix transformers pretty well. The boss gave me one woman to help and then another one. Pretty soon, I had about five ladies, again, working on these transformers.

I was in the drugstore one day in Lyndhurst, New Jersey, the Ritz Pharmacy, and there was a gentleman talking to the pharmacist. "I run a tool and die shop out here in Rutherford." He asked me, "Do you want to come and work for me? This way you'd be closer to home. You know, it's defense work that they were to change. I'll take care of it." Well, he worked out a deal where they released me and I went to work in his machine shop. I started to work on drill presses, lathes, grinders and punch presses. I was starting to work on dies since he was making different parts for the armed forces. I did that for about three months. Then I thought I'm about seventeen and a half, "I think I'll join the Navy." My father agreed. I said, "Pop, sign here" and he signed. He went with me to the bus and I left for the New York and I joined the Navy. At that time, they were having several different programs. One was to become a radio operator. They gave me a bunch of books to read in electronics. I took the radio operator's test and they started off with the Morse code very slowly, "dot, dot, dot, dot" and I got it. Then they went "dit, dit, dit, dit, dit" and I lost it. So then I had the oh, I don't know what kind of test but, I guess your intelligence or the general examination they gave all then men that went there. When I finished, they said, "Senkowski, you have all of the qualifications to be a good gunner's mate, or a machinist." So I said, "Fine." When I finished with boot camp none of these schools came about, they gave me a sea bag and said, "Put your stuff in it," and they shipped me to Boston to catch the USS Bogue. Then they shipped me to New York, Pier '57, I guess it was, and then finally to Norfolk, VA, where I boarded the USS Bogue. I think it was in April of '45.

SH: Just to back a little before we get on the boat. Can you tell me how aware your family was of the war and what they were going through before you enlisted?

BS: Well, we knew the war was going on. My father was the organist at the church; and, therefore, he wasn't involved in war type of manufacturing or involved in it. We didn't have much, but that was no different than it was before the war, because before the war we had the Depression and we were at about the bottom rung of the ladder at that time. During the war it didn't improve much because the church didn't increase the pay for playing the organ. That didn't change very much.

SH: Did the Depression, when you moved from Michigan to New Jersey, was that in the midst of the Depression?

BS: Yes.

SH: The dates sounded different?

BS: Well, let's see. The Depression was from 1929 to about 1940, or 1939, just about when the war started. I was born in 1927, so at six years old it was 1933, right in the prime time. I think the move and all was during the Depression. Even during the Depression Lyndhurst was not a bad little town. I would take my wagon, which I made, to the town hall and they would give us a bag of flour, some jam, evaporated milk and some canned goods, that helped a lot. There was a baker who delivered bread to people that could afford to buy it and he used to leave a box of older bread on my grandmother's porch. He said, "This is for your ducks." She did have a few ducks but that was our food. What we had left over, we gave to the person next door, who had four or five kids with almost nothing to eat. That was a tough time. I went looking for the bakery after I finished college. I found it but they were no longer the same owners. I wanted to tell them what a big help they were to us.

SH: Do you remember what his name was?

BS: I did. I forget now. But his bakery was in North Arlington; it was Kotzinski.

SH: Now did your mother, was she involved in any of the organizations that helped with the war effort at all?

BS: Well, that's a sad story. My mother, when we moved from Michigan to Lyndhurst, had her last child, my sister Irene. About six months to nine months later she was taken to a mental institution for depression and she never came out. So I don't remember too much about my mother except the night they took her in the ambulance to the hospital. My grandmother was the glue that kept whatever contact we had with one another and she really raised us. I was only about seven years old when my mother had a mental breakdown.

SH: Now your grandmother then raised the babies and the whole family. Now this is your Grandmother Senkowski?

BS: Yes. I never met the other grandmother or the grandfather. My mother's parents never came to this country. They stayed in Poland.

SH: Have you ever had any interest or have you ever gone over to Poland or has any of your family?

BS: I've been telling my wife that I want to make a trip to Poland before I die and I suspect that one of these days I'm just going to take a plane and go out there. Just to say I stomped on the soil my grandparents came from.

SH: Do you remember the name of the village or town?

BS: My sisters knew. They told me one time but I forgot. It's near Warsaw or Krakow, in that area. I think it is called Grajewa.

SH: All right. Well, let's jump ahead then to USS Bogue. This is an escort carrier?

BS: It's an escort carrier. It was built in either Tacoma or Bremerton, Washington. They took a cargo vessel hull and built a flight deck on it, a hanger deck below the flight deck, two five-inch guns, on the fantail, a number of forty millimeter and a number of twenty millimeter guns around the flight deck were installed. I boarded the ship in Norfolk, Virginia as an apprentice seaman.

SH: Now which duty did you have?

BS: Well, with all my available talent they put me in the deck force. This meant that I chipped and painted a good part of my time on the ship. In addition to the chipping and painting, it was my job to pull in the heavy lines when we would leave port or to get the lines out on the docks. In other words, it was manual labor. My duties also included lookout, watch and firing of the guns.

SH: When you got on board the ship, knowing these are like mini floating cities, did you have a sense of where people were from that were serving on board the ship? Were they very diverse?

BS: Yes, they were from throughout the United States. It was quite heavily populated with sailors from Alabama, Kentucky, the Carolinas and Virginia. We had quite a few from Pennsylvania, from the Dakotas, from the State of Washington and California. But, there were quite a few of the southern men that were on the ship. Some of them could not really read or write and signed their paychecks with an "X." But being that I was very adaptable to whatever circumstances took place, I played pinochle, single or double deck, and they loved to play cards. So, I became a buddy.

SH: Did you have much interaction with the officers on board or was it very delineated?

BS: Well, I recall two incidents particularly where I was involved in contact with the officers. One of them was when we were going through the Panama Canal to go out to the Pacific. I bought one of these big brimmed straw hats and was sitting on my bunk. They were four high and were like hammocks when a lieutenant commander saw me with that hat. Here I am new on the ship an apprentice seamen. He said to me, "What Navy are you in?" I said, "Sir, the United States Navy. "Well, get that blankety-blank hat off your head and don't ever let me see you wearing that again!" I got rid of the hat. That was one interaction. The second interaction was when we were in the Pacific Ocean and the captain of the ship was in the invasion of Normandy. He couldn't sit still and just run the ship like a captain should. We were always firing either 40 mm guns or the 5-inch guns. I hated the 5-inch guns. We had a target that was several miles distant and my job was to put on these big asbestos gloves and catch these white-hot shells as they came out of the breach of the 5-inch guns. So I was doing that and we fired twenty-five to thirty-five rounds at a time. I weighed 120 pounds and every time that gun would "boom" it raised me off the deck about three inches. I was using asbestos gloves when the gentleman from Alabama came up and said, "Ski, let me show you how to do that." I said, "Okay." He got a

broom and when the hot shell shot out, he swings the broom and he whacks it off into the corner. Comes another shell and he whacks it off. "Here, Ski, you know what do to." So I got the broom and I got ready. The white-hot shell came out of the gun, I swung the broom, hit it, it bounced and hit the gunnery officer in the leg. Well, not only did I hear the riot act, but also, he says, if it happened again, he's going to put me in the brig for life. So I went back to the asbestos gloves. That was my second interaction with the officers of the ship. So I did have interaction with the "braids" as they called them.

SH: Was there any discussion at all on board the ship about the North Atlantic and the submarines?

BS: Well, with ... the sailors that were on the ship ... we talked amongst ourselves. The USS Bogue, in the Atlantic, sunk thirteen submarines. They carried F6F corsairs and TBM torpedo bombers. As it turns out, they sunk the only two Japanese submarines that were sunk in the Atlantic off the coast of Europe. No other ship in the United States Navy sunk Japanese submarines in the Atlantic. On our bridge we had thirteen submarines painted, consisting of eleven German submarines and two Japanese subs. The first trip into Hawaii there was a Kaiser carrier escort docked ahead of us. We were docking in back of this carrier escort when the anchor chain wouldn't release. The commander took a sixteen-pound sledgehammer and was hitting the chain to release the anchor. He couldn't release it in time and the bow of the ship just cut into the back of the Kaiser aircraft carrier and opened it up and our ship missed the magazine by about six feet. Had we gone six feet more we would have blown it up and us with it. I was on the front part of the ship. My job was to pull the wires, the rope and chains and so on. Fortunately, the chain released and after that our trips were in the Pacific to carry troops and ammunition to the islands.

SH: Now what do you remember about the trip down through the Canal? What did you do besides play pinochle?

BS: Most of what I did was chip and paint, stand watch and work with the gun crew. That kept most of the men in the deck force busy. Also read the "blue jackets' manual" and in there they had the different requirements to become seamen second-class, seaman first class. And so I kept reading the manual. I passed the seamen second-class test. I passed the seamen first class test. And when I wasn't chipping and painting, I was reading the book. Once we got out through the canal, the other thing that took a lot of our time was every day you stood watch. And my job was lookout. They had little areas under the flight deck, under the perimeter flight deck, and they gave you a pair of binoculars and you had to scan the horizon of the ocean to see if you located any ships or any submarines and that was an eight-hour watch. And you know, that took a good chunk from four to midnight. And there were usually two people on watch, so at night you would take two hours on and two hours off and it was a way that they had us occupy our time. Otherwise you would go crazy. I had a disposition that home was wherever I was. I hung my hat there, that was home.

SH: Do you remember anything about the Canal?

BS: That was an interesting trip because we were, of course, the only ones in the Canal, going through at the time, and you could see how they lowered the water and raised the water to get you through the canal and to build that thing was a real masterful piece of work. With all of the problems they had back in those days, it really is something to see. We had one-day liberty in Cristobal and I remember that. We went over and drank a little bit.

SH: Now was Cristobal the first leave you had since you left Norfolk?

BS: Yes.

SH: How long did it take, to do that? Do you remember?

BS: Well, in Norfolk, for three days, we loaded ammunition because we were going to start delivering ammunition. And, I guess, it probably wasn't too long. Probably two weeks or so when we were going through the Canal. To give you an idea of some of the mentality of the people that were on the ship, this one fellow he was about 6'1" or 6'2". We were loading ammunition on the ship and this guy, we all were given knives, is throwing his knife at my shoe. And I'm telling him, "Hey, silly, cut it out," I'm about 5'6" or 5'7" and this guy is 6'2". And he hit my toe and he cut the leather and my toe bled a little bit. I went down to the dispensary and the chief looks at it and says, "Hey, son, you better stay here in the dispensary for the next day." They put a little Band-Aid on it and I relaxed in the bed, in the dispensary, while they were loading the rest of the ammunition. So a little scratch didn't hurt too much, but I got out of loading that stuff. So we went through the Canal and our first stop was San Diego where they loaded on provisions and got us to go up to the Aleutian Islands and we up loaded supplies.

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BS: It was really a very interesting place and the moss grew along the sides of the mountain. What we, as silly kids, rolled down the mountainside in the moss and it really was quite nice to feel that freshness of the cool air. Some of the fellows went fishing off of the side of the ship and I remember that one of them caught a four or five foot fish. But when they opened it up they decided not to cook it. Then we were off from there to Hawaii. That would be the time that we cut into the carrier, The Kaiser carrier. We were met by the Navy band and they had the band play and welcome us to Hawaii. We had a short visit. It was probably about a week in Hawaii. Then we loaded up ammunition, again, and we, at that time, loaded the ship with personnel for a delivery to Guam. We left Hawaii and went out to Guam, Saipan, Okinawa, and then we hit a hurricane. We got into Leyte Gulf, in the Philippines, and the winds were so strong that the ship was being blown around the anchor. The captain had to pull up the anchor and go back to sea because you're safe when you're out on the ocean. That was the time that all of these young soldiers got seasick and that's the only time in how many hundreds of thousands of miles we put on that ship that I didn't get seasick.

SH: This was your first time not seasick?

BS: Right. I was seasick when I left California, when I left the Aleutian Islands, when I left Hawaii, when I left the Philippines. When I left Japan, I didn't get seasick.

SH: How long did the seasickness last?

BS: Three days. We had very nice fellows on board. I'd be lying in a bunk because I'd be there for three days. All they did is push it up, put it on a chain and leave me there. A fellow had come in around noontime. "Hey, Ski, we're having nice, greasy, pork chops for lunch, you want to come out and eat?" They were nice fellows. I got over it after three days. I was fine no matter what kind of weather we hit, nothing bothered me after that, but it just seemed that every time we left land that's what happened to me.

SH: How many were in the convoy that you were traveling in?

BS: We finished in the Atlantic. USS Bogue completed its tour of duty of convoying the ships. In the Pacific, we were alone and we would take the troops, or ammunition, or whatever until the end of the war.

SH: Without any destroyer escort?

BS: No escort. We were on our own. We were very lucky. I swear, to this day, I saw a periscope but we could never find it. Thank God, maybe. As soon as I told them "periscope off to the port bow," they immediately called General Quarters. Everyone got into their battle stations and then the captain said, "Who is this guy that called for a submarine sighting? It was me.

SH: Was this the only General Quarters the whole time you were in the Pacific.

BS: Yes. Except for drills. We had drills every so often, where we would go to our battle stations. I swear I saw the periscope zipping along the water but they didn't detect it. It's possible it was an imagination but it's hard to tell.

SH: Transporting personnel like this, did you interact at all with the Army personnel that you were transporting?

BS: We knew most of them but they had their own place where they kept busy and we had our own sleeping quarters. The mess rooms were for everybody and they were mess rooms. I remember, you have these metal trays and you are walking through the chow line and the cooks throw something in each spot on your tray and you would sit at this long table. When we hit a wave, it would slide down the table and off the other end. You would have to hang on for dear life to hold on to that food. I remember when we may have unloaded a bunch of soldiers in Guam; the Skipper said we could go on shore to see a movie. We went there and we were watching some kind of movie when Japanese snipers started to shoot at us. They disbanded the movie and sent us back to the ship. When I heard some of the things that men went through I had it very easy.

SH: Now was your brother in the service?

BS: My brother was in the Navy and he was on a troop transport. I met him on the Pacific Ocean when, I think, we were either in Saipan or Guam and he was a motor machinist, petty officer, second class. He came over to our ship and we visited. Then he went on his way and I went on mine. I guess it was probably after about twelve months on the ship when I passed the petty officer, third class test and they gave me a stripe. There were times that you learned to survive. You learned to do whatever you were given to do. In the deck force, I was out in sea air. They needed somebody to scrape the boilers while they were on! The temperature out in the Pacific must have been 120 degrees. The perspiration just blew and rolled off your face. At that time I learned a bit about presentation and I presented so many comments to the Chief Petty Officer they threw me back in the deck force and I was in daylight again. That was a tough time. There was a time when our evaporators broke down and the evaporator is how we got our fresh water. You took showers and everything in salt water, which was terrible, but we had fresh water to drink and for the food. There were experiences for an eighteen year old. When we go to the bathroom, the commode was a long trough. It wasn't like the chief petty officers or the officers; they had regular toilets. We had these long troughs with boards on them. If you were sitting on this trough, some sailors would go open up the sea valves and they'd gush this cold seawater down the hole and you would get a shower. You would say to yourself, "What's the matter with these people?" These are things that develop a person to understand what goes on in the real world. These are things that happened on this ship, the USS Bogue. We were always busy. We were either on watch, we were on the guns, or we were chipping and painting. When I got my stripe, as petty officer, I was put in charge of work parties. Although I was in charge of work parties when I was a seaman first class. I got this group of about eight seasoned sailors and a project, the ballast tanks; I may have mentioned that to you. Ballast tanks are on the sides of the ship and these are just there to sort of stabilize the ship. And our job was to go in there with mechanical sanders to sand off the rust and then paint it. I took the eight men, we went down with masks on our faces because of the dust and all and I'm working and working and working and working and finally I wipe the dust off the glasses and look around and nobody's there. Senkowski is grinding away. I said, "Okay I'll fix those guys." What I did was when I saw one of the fellows up on the deck, I told him, "Alabama where were you? I'm going to put the whole bunch of you on report." He puts his arm around my shoulder and said, "Ski, if I were you I wouldn't do it." Well, I also take good advice when I'm given good advice. So I didn't put him on report and we managed to get our work parties completed one way or another.

SH: Weren't you pretty young to be a third classman?

BS: Oh, I guess, there may have been others. See, on this ship I had an advantage. I had two years of high school and I could read and write. I was able to pass the test. I would take the time. There were times that you would spend your time playing cards or rolling dice. These guys were trying to teach me all of the things in life. There is one day when we got paid around four thirty or five in the afternoon, they said, "Come on, Ski, let's go and play cards. We can go play some dice." I said, "Oh, I'm not very good." They said, "We'll teach you, we'll teach you." We went and I rolled dice until I lost all of the money I had. I lost the paycheck and we were coming back from one of the islands to the State of Washington, Bremerton or Tacoma. One fellow lived up there. He said, "Ski, I got liberty next week, I was supposed to be on captain's watch. I'll give you twenty-five dollars for your leave." I said, "Okay." I gave him my leave and I took the twenty-five dollars and that rolled away with the dice also. I lost that

and I said, "I will never gamble again," and I didn't. I wouldn't play cards for pennies until I was vice president with Alcon and we were in Puerto Rico. We each put in twenty dollars and this one man played dice for us. Now, I'll go to Atlantic City or Vegas once in a while and I lose some money. I know I can't gamble. If I go it's a contribution. To give you another example of the mentality of some of the crewmembers, one night I went out on the front part of the ship and I'm watching what's going on. There are about four guys and they're holding this one man, and at eighteen years old I thought, "What are they doing out here? This is our team." They got this fellow and put him on the boson chair, which is a board with a rope. They lowered him over the side. They let him hit the ocean; and if they let him go, or if he fell off, he would die. These guys pulled him back up. I had never seen anyone that white, or almost green, shaking like a leaf. All they said, "Next time you'll know what we mean." That was the group I was with. We had a fellow that was from Canada; and if you had a piece of stainless steel, you could make your own knives. He made a knife that had a wavy blade in it. All he would do in his spare time was with a stone just sharpen that knife. His test on sharpness was the hair on your hand or your arm would fly off. I was surrounded by "America's best." I learned real life. I came out a seasoned old man.

SH: Did you have leave anywhere else besides Hawaii and Washington, in the islands at all?

BS: When we were at Tokyo Harbor, I think I mentioned to you that it was Christmastime. We loaded the ship with Japanese planes; we had liberty every day. I went over once and I saw children and women and old people standing in line, a block long, with little cups. They were getting a scoop full of rice out of a bowl. I didn't want to see that so I stayed on the ship. I could read a manual; I could chip and paint. I had things that I would do.

SH: When you had done the tour, you came back from San Francisco and then to Japan, or out...

BS: We arrived in Alameda near San Francisco on the day the Japanese war ended and we were there for about a week or so and then we shipped out on another trip. We were always going out on the Pacific somewhere. We went on the last trip that ship made. It was to Tokyo Harbor to pick up those planes. Then we brought it back to Tacoma or Bremerton and we mothballed the ship. I was on it for about three months helping to mothball it. Then I was put in charge of a group of about sixteen men to go to Lido Beach in New York and discharged.

SH: When you were on board the ship and you were in the South Pacific, did you have any other interaction with the other forces, the Air Force, Army, other than transporting the men?

BS: We didn't carry any more planes on the ship. We were sent either to transport ammo or troops. We did have U.S. planes pull targets for practice firing. We were using 40 mm guns for target practice. We didn't have any interactions with the enemy except for the time that there was a mine that was floating not too far from the ship. I think I mentioned the officers got out their 45's and they tried to blow the mine up. They couldn't do it. They couldn't hit it. So they got some of the sailors to get on the 20 mm guns and when the mine blew up we had shrapnel metal flying all over. We were lucky we didn't get hit with that shrapnel.

SH: Do you remember the name of the captain or any of the officers on board the ship?

BS: The captain of the ship was Captain Dufek. I did read some years later that he was in a helicopter crash in Alaska and at that time he was Admiral Dufek. He was the same officer that was at Normandy, but they rescued him so he was still okay. I remember his name but the others I don't recall. I had no interaction with them.

SH: Have there ever been any reunions or anything with the group on the ship?

BS: There was no reunion that I know of and I never corresponded with anyone. I guess it was because the men were being shipped out and changed. Some of them were on a ship for three or four years.

SH: When you brought the planes back from Japan did you get to inspect them at all? How was your interaction with that?

BS: We were told to bring them back to the States. Our job was just to give them an inspection. As a matter-of-fact, the people on shore would do the studies. Our job was to get the plane tied up on the flight deck and the hanger deck. I would do my usual. Pull up the ropes and then sail back to the States.

SH: After you loaded the plane were you tied up by the USS New Jersey?

BS: Yes. That was when we were in Tokyo Harbor. I think they called it Yokasuka Bay and the New Jersey and the Wisconsin were there at the same time. That's when Midnight Mass was held in 1945 and I went aboard then. They had so many officers on board a lieutenant was common on that ship. It was unbelievable and I'm surprised they didn't put me scrubbing their wooden deck. It was a big ship. Sixteen-inch guns. We had those five-inchers that I hated and I would have hated those 16 inch even more.

Did I think it was a bad experience? No. I think I wanted to do my part but I also learned about the real world. How do you handle yourself when you're with guys that would cut your throat just as easily as shake your hand? If you had to get into a fight to survive, would they be on your side? I think they would have because I blended in. I knew how to speak to these guys and I understood it if they weren't too bright. I had two years of high school so I was better off but, again, I wasn't that bright either. I learned about education in the Navy. I don't know if I told you, but in boot camp, there was this fellow that was sleeping in the lower bunk. One night he's crying and crying. I looked down and asked, "What's the matter?" He says, "I miss my parents and I feel terrible." I said, "Don't worry, you'll be okay." Three weeks later he was in Officer Candidate School while I was going to go in the deck force. He had one year of college or two years of college. Look at this kid two years of college and they make him an officer. I understood the value of an education.

SH: That's why you were so diligent with the manual and studying.

BS: Right. I went from apprentice seaman, to seaman second-class to seaman first class and finally petty officer third class. Because I was in the deck force involved with the tying up of the ship, the guns, the chipping and painting, they called that position a coxswain. When you hear that boson's pipe, piping on an admiral, I did that. Only when I did it I said, "All right, men, man your brooms."

SH: Did you have any distinguished visitors on board the ship?

BS: On the *USS Bogue*, when we came in from one of the trips to Guam we came into Bremerton and at that time I guess we did our job pretty well in taking ammunition and troops to the islands because they decided to have a party for us. They brought on board all of these gorgeous young ladies to show the bridge with the thirteen submarines painted that were sunk by our ship. Then we went to someplace, buses took us, and it was like a big red barn but it was all tables and benches in there. I remember I got another lesson about the real life. We were at a table of about six men and they would bring over a platter of chicken. I didn't take mine first. I gave the tray to the next guy and when the tray came back to me it was empty. Then they brought a tray of ham and I did the same thing. When that came back empty, the next time food came I was first. So here was another lesson of the real world. We had a party there. There was dancing and so on. The ship had a fairly distinguished career. As I mentioned before, sunk the only two Japanese submarines in the Atlantic. That was something special. The ship itself traveled about 500,000 miles. On escort duty, it was always traveling. In the Pacific we were always going to one island or another because when you transport either ammunition or troops that's your job. Deliver, go back, get more and deliver again. That was the only time I remember anyone special coming on board. They really didn't treat us to anything extra special. They just wanted us to get troops and ammunition to wherever we had to go, do your job. Deliver, go back, get more and deliver again.

SH: Did you transport troops back if you took them to the Pacific?

BS: No. We never brought anyone back. It was a one-way trip.

SH: Where were you during V-E Day and the bombing of Japan?

BS: When V-E Day ended I had just about completed boot camp. Oh, V-E wasn't finished. That was when President Roosevelt died. I was in boot camp for that. Then I think I was assigned to the ship shortly thereafter, because they gave us the medal for the American Theater, which I received. I also received the Asiatic Pacific Medal and the Victory Medal. I think the V-E ended and I must have just gotten on the ship and was either out through the Panama Canal when that happened. The rest of it was the Asiatic Theater, a very short time in the American Theater.

SH: Where were you when you heard about the bomb in Hiroshima?

BS: I didn't hear about the bomb to tell you the truth because we were out on the ocean at the time. They must have dropped that in July of 1945 and in July 1945 I was either (probably) in Guam, Saipan or one of those islands. The war must have ended two or three weeks after the

bomb was dropped; and we just landed in (Alameda) Naval Base, outside of San Francisco, on VJ Day. I know we had just got back from the Pacific. We spent, I guess, about a week or two here in the States and then, out again.

SH: Do you remember any sort of celebration when you came into California?

BS: It was wild, absolutely wild.

SH: As a kid of eighteen, what did you do?

BS: What every other eighteen year old did. There were a bunch of us together from the ship and we walked up and down the street and there were just hundreds and hundreds of people. On the bottom of Market Street they had boxes and boxes piled and this tremendous fire burning. Everyone was grabbing everybody on the streets. People were drinking like crazy. I just drank, I guess, but not like crazy and it was quite a time. Anywhere you looked there were hundreds of people. Civilians, sailors, soldiers, just walking up and down and feeling good that this was over. It was one day I will always remember. I don't remember when I got back to the ship but I know I got back because I was there for the next job whatever it was.

SH: Did you see any of the integrated troops at all after Truman took over?

BS: No. You mean the troops that we took over?

SH: Yes.

BS: No. We never got to know them very much. They more or less stayed together and we were busy. You can't leave the decks from being chipped and painted. They kept me going all of the time. It was amazing. I guess that did two things. One, it kept the ship in good condition from rusting. Secondly, it kept the men, you know, when we chipped and painted you had twenty guys on deck, so they had work to do. Things to occupy their minds. What there was on them. I guess that essentially is what we were doing. Even to give you the mentality of some of the officers on the ship, when we came back from a trip to either Saipan or Guam, and there had still been some fighting going on, we came into Hawaii, into the harbor. As we were pulling in and the commander had us put on white uniforms and then they slung us over the side of the ship to paint the spots that were there, so it would look nice when we came into the harbor. There we are in our dress whites painting the sides of this ship. You know, to me that said something about some of the officers. They had a couple of screws loose, also, just like these guys I was telling you about. When I say it's an experience and an education in real life, it truly is. You have to be strong enough not to go to the leeward side.

SH: On board the ship were there any library facilities available to you or any classes or church services?

BS: Yes. We had church service every Sunday. There would be either a minister or a priest that would have the service. Libraries...not that I remember. There really was nothing on that ship where you could say was a rest and relaxation area. Unless you would go down the holds like I

did and we'd play pinochle at night or something like that. There wasn't much. The chief petty officers, they had their own little bedroom. They had beds with box springs. The officers had black servants they could call. They took care of fixing the beds, serving these guys their meals, while we would go through the chow line and they would slop it on the trays and then you'd have to hold the tray so it wouldn't fall off when the ship would move. It was a different lifestyle. Again, the chief petty officers were mostly through service and accomplishment in their field. The officers most of them were educated. They had a college degree or they were going to college and many, like the captain, were Annapolis graduates. They got the cream of the crop just like a CEO in the executive committee in a company. If you keep your eyes open, you see what goes on and you do learn an awful lot.

SH: You talked a little bit about when you went back to Japan and what you had seen on your leave and how you decided not to go again. Can you describe that at all?

BS: Sure. The first time we set out I walked the streets and we never went alone. We always had a couple of fellows with us. You know, they would all stop by and they would bow to you and ask, "You got cigarette?" or, "You got gum?" I told them, "I got nothing." We would walk the streets and we would see human beings just like we were. I remember I saw some very pretty Japanese girls walking the streets, going home, or wherever they were going. The thing that truly bothered me was this long line of children, elderly people, and this big black pot on the corner. All these people had a little cup and they would take one scoop of rice, or whatever it was, and fill up the cup. That's how they were feeding those people. That bothered me.

SH: Did you see any of the living facilities?

BS: No. I went back to the ship. A group just before me got on these small boats to take us to the ship and capsized. Everybody was rescued. I got on the next boat. I went back on the ship and I stayed there. I had the opportunity for a week to go in any time that leave was given to us and that was every day. I just didn't go. I saw the line of people and that wasn't for me. Other guys took advantage of it. Some of these seamen, I was telling you about before, came back in the ambulances cut up, beat up. It was quite a crew.

SH: Did you have any interaction with shore patrols or MPs?

BS: No. I was a pretty good kid. The only time going back to the ship you had to pass shore patrol to get in the base but I hadn't had any trouble. The trouble I had one time was with the, well, they call them "Captain of the Guards." We're out here hundreds of miles in open ocean. You look anywhere you want, you see nothing but water and they give me a big placard with the twenty-one commands or whatever you're supposed to know. They give me an olive braided belt with a big .45. Well, between that belts hanging on this 120-pound kid, the gun was almost dragging along the deck and I got to stand watch over this guy that's in the brig, underneath one of the stairwells. It's a dismissal, dark, small corner and this guy is going, "Ski, can I have a magazine?" "Can't give you one." Half-hour later, "Ski, could you give me a magazine?" "I can't give you one." "Ski, I have to go to the bathroom." "All right." I march him out to the bathroom and I wait and he takes his time. I got him back into the dungeon. Finally, he got to me one time. He said, "Ski, please, please, I'm going crazy here, I need a magazine. At least le

me read something.” I said, “Okay.” Where’s he going to go? We’re in the middle of the ocean. He can’t go anywhere. I got him a magazine. The captain of the guards comes. He looks in and this guys reading a magazine. He says, “Ski, if I ever catch you doing that again you’re going to be in there with him.” I said, “It will be done, give me the magazine.”

SH: Do you know what the guy was in for?

BS: You know, some minor infraction. You overslept or you didn’t show up for mustering. I mean, anytime there was firing of the guns everybody was there. Any time there was general’s orders everybody was there. Sometimes you would come in fifteen minutes late for muster and they’d check on every guy. You’re not there. “Write him up.” They’d give him Captain’s Mast and the captain would decide. You know, whatever he says is law. This poor guy stayed in that dungeon, and that was a miserable dungeon. I’m glad I didn’t have to spend time with him.

SH: As you said, you didn’t have any hostile enemy fire. Did you feel you were prepared for it if it had come?

BS: No question about it. I mean, the asbestos gloves I would put them on, stand there, and catch the shells. I wouldn’t use the broom, but I’d catch the shells and we would put it wherever. There was a wire bin and that’s where I used to throw the shells. But it would have been no question. When you’re out like that and that’s your life they, more or less, put you in a pattern of thinking that’s react. General’s orders you’re supposed to be at your station and you’re there. When they were firing the 40 mm, you know, I hated guns. The noise used to drive me crazy, but what they did is they had me right next to the gun, on the 40 mm, and I had to feed it. There were three of us and about four shells. You’d pull them out of the case, hand it to the next guy, hand it to the next, I’d give it to the guy who puts it in a breach and all you would hear is those guns. Boom, boom, boom. That would go on for half an hour or an hour. I would do the same whether the enemy was there or not. Your trend of thought was “do your job” and I think all the rest of the guys were the same. Now, if you had hand to hand combat, that’s different. I don’t know. If I had a gun, I’d shoot. If he shot first, he’d probably get me. I don’t think anyone on that ship would have had any problem at all as far as using the guns or whatever we had on it to try to defend ourselves. I think that’s the way it is in the Army. When I talk about the battle of this or the battle of that, there were always exceptions that had the mentality, the strength, and the direction to be able to bail guys out of serious places. But when they put a gun in your hands and you’re marching in there with twenty, thirty guys your job is to shoot. You don’t have a choice. I’m sure that’s what happened in the Army. If they had me in the Army I’d do the same thing. I preferred the Navy and I made a good choice because, whatever the conditions were, I had a bed, I washed my own mattress cover, it was clean. The food, I even got to like it, after about eighteen months, which the guys couldn’t understand. You know, I came from a background where we didn’t have too much food and here they gave me enough. I got used to it. The only reason I left the Navy was I had this guy feeling that going back and finishing school and to get more education because I saw what happened to guys that were college graduates. They became officers and guys like me were chipping and painting and shooting the guys. I knew I could do better.

SH: So you didn’t ever consider a Navy career after the mothballing of the ship.

BS: No. I mentioned to you that they really tried to get me to sign over for one more year and they would have given me a second stripe, which meant I only had two to go to be a chief and I would have easily made that had I stayed. At thirty-eight or thirty-nine, I could have been retiring from the Navy. This other feeling of going back and finishing school was predominant in my mind at that time.

SH: Even when you left Bremerton you knew.

BS: Yes. I knew I was going to finish. When I finished high school, I was working. I finished the two years of high school in one year after I got back. I was working in a drug store part-time while I was going to school nights and the Druggist said, when I graduated high school, "Why don't you become a pharmacist?" He says, "I'll tell you what. What I'll do is when you become a pharmacist I'll let you run this store." He says, "I trust you. You know the store."

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

SH: This continues an interview with Dr. Bernard Z. Senkowski at the Meadowlands on March 25, 1997. The answer you were giving was about your career plans after you got out of the Navy and the pharmacist that you were involved with before you had left and now you had returned and was working...

BS: Tom Esehak who was a Rutgers graduate, pharmacist, said that he would have me run the store that he currently owned because he said, "I trust you and you know the store," and he would open up a second store. The nice part was he said, "I'll pay you in cash and in ownership," I thought that was great. So I went down to 3 Lincoln Street, I think it was, The College of Pharmacy in Newark and registered for pharmacy. It turned out that there were 430 or 450 applicants and they were only accepting eighty. Well, you could see I had a bit of a disadvantage with two years of normal high school and making up two years in one year and I turned out to be candidate number eighty-one. Not a single one of the eighty changed their minds and I was not registered to go ahead at the college, in pharmacy, at that time. Tom was very disappointed and said, "Gee Whiz, maybe next year." He visited and talked to alumni of the college but when you have 430 applicants and they're taking eighty applicants.

SH: Was this still the University of Newark or was it under Rutgers?

BS: No. It was Rutgers. The college of pharmacy I think was Rutgers right along. Then I knew this fellow from high school and he said, "Go to Fairleigh Dickinson with me. We take chemistry and it's like pharmacy." I said, "Well, maybe he knows more than I do." So we went and enrolled in Fairleigh Dickinson, which was a junior college at that time. Fairleigh Dickinson started in 1945 and I was a student in 1947. So here again, it was a beginning type of college. Peter Sammartino and his wife were actually running it. We met at women's clubs and they had a castle like building in Rutherford and I put in the two years there. Then finally I was about ready to go back to work and I decided not to pursue pharmacy anymore at that time. Kathleen Hillers, the chemistry teacher, got me on the side, she baked a terrific cherry pie, she said, "Why don't you transfer to Rutgers, Newark? This way you can get your Bachelor's Degree." Okay."

So I went to Newark and they gave me almost all of the credits that I had accumulated at Fairleigh Dickinson and in 1949, September, I started finishing up my chemistry requirements at Rutgers, Newark. In those days, we were in the old factory. And I must say, when you think of a college or a university you see these nice buildings, with trees, etc. These two old buildings in Newark and most of the labs were okay. The teachers were great. One of the labs they had nothing in it. Professor Edwin Weill was the analytical chemistry professor and he wanted somebody to do research in his lab. So I built him a cabinet with tables and an electrophoresis apparatus. We did paper electrophoresis, which was, in those days, ground breaking. He never forgot that I built that lab for him. At the time I took my course work there, I met Professor Carroll and Professor Panson and those were the three I knew best. Panson, Weill, and Carroll. There was a very nice man who was dean. His name was Carl Olsen, and I had trouble trying to meet the payments for tuition because my GI Bill ran out after three years. I used one year to finish high school. So the last year I had a problem. I used to work from six to ten or eleven at the drug store and go to school days. Well, one of the fellows that worked in the drug store was a good Polish man. I came in kind of down hearted one day and he says, "What's the matter?" I said to him, "Oh, Bernie, I'm going to quit school." "What do you mean quit school? Why?" "I don't have the money for tuition. The money for tuition for the next semester is \$186.00." He comes in the next day. "Here. I want you to go ahead." I thanked him very much and I gave the \$186.00 to the school and finished up the semester. I had one more to go. Carl Olsen called me in and told me about Theobold Industries. It was a division of Theabold Industries in Kearny, New Jersey, which was called Hatco Chemical Company. He made a connection for me and I got the job. I worked from four in the afternoon until midnight. I ran water determinations, distillations, and making different formulations of napalm. I was able to pay twenty dollars a week toward my tuition until I finished. There was one teacher, I wish I remembered his name, I would like to get a hold of that bird. Because I used to work from four until midnight and some nights I worked from four in the afternoon until eight the next morning. I used to come in late for some class. I think it was called "psychology of this or that," I don't remember. He wanted to fail me because I walked in at nine-fifteen or nine-twenty my eyes half closed. "Oh, Mr. Senkowski is coming in to visit with us, late as usual." You know, I tried, "Hey I worked last night." He didn't want to hear it. So if he could have he would have failed me, but he couldn't because my tests were passing grades so I think he gave me a "D." The only one I ever got in school and that's why I wish I could remember his name, but I can't.

SH: Did you notice on the Newark campus, were there a lot of GIs like yourself?

BS: Yes. There were a lot of GI Bill students, but there were a number that were younger kids and as time went by, of course, the GIs dropped off and the local students were there. We had the pharmacy students that would take classes there, like physical chemistry, experimental physical chemistry. Nursing students would take courses in chemistry at the Arts and Science school there. They were in old, beat up buildings, but the teachers were excellent.

SH: You have a BA or a BS?

BS: BA. A major in chemistry. Dean Woodward felt that every college student should have a well-rounded education and in Newark only Bachelors of Arts were offered and you had to take additional courses, liberal arts courses in addition to your science major. So I had a BA in

chemistry. He was a stickler for that and I think they had a library or something named after him, but the school, we had just these couple of buildings and that was it. One across the street from the other. I got my Bachelors in 1951 and then got married in 1952.

SH: Tell me about your social life.

BS: What social life? Well, I guess during the school years, both at Fairleigh Dickinson and at Rutgers, we made friends, or I made friends, with some of the students and we'd go out for a beer or talk. Some of them roller-skated and I went with them and roller-skated and, lo and behold, this one girl was always there to skate with me and who do you think it was? My future wife. I got to meet her there and I guess we got to go out a few times and a year or two later we got married. There wasn't too much socializing because there wasn't very much money. And especially, if I were going to school days I didn't earn very much at night. Even with a Bachelor's Degree in chemistry Hoffman-LaRoche's pay was not very much. They gave me fifty dollars a week and you couldn't go very far on that when you pay your expenses. When we got married I think they raised my pay to about fifty-eight or sixty dollars per week. That was tough.

SH: Was she a student, also?

BS: No. I met her at the roller skating rink. Someone stole my skates one time but they stole them after we met.

SH: One of the things I wanted to ask you about, before we go on to your Masters and your work with Hoffman LaRoche, what did your sisters do at home during the war? I know you said your brother was in the Navy?

BS: Right. He was in the Navy, but as I told you we were very poor. We didn't have a very close family and one or two sisters were in Michigan with my mother's sister. Another sister was with my uncle and his wife. The only ones home were myself and the youngest girl, Irene that was the last child born. I went to high school two years. In 1943 I went to work at Automatic Winding Company and then in December 1944 I joined the Navy.

SH: Did you get a lot of letters?

BS: Probably about three or four in the eighteen months. There wasn't a lot of closeness. That depends on how strong a core is built in a family. Ours was somewhat of an aversion to thinking and doing and we weren't even together long enough to really build a closeness. I think I'm closer now to my sisters than I was in those days.

SH: Are your wife's family originally all from New Jersey, also?

BS: No. Her father came from Compo Basso, Italy probably in the early 1900s. As a Blacksmith, he worked for the Hackensack Water Co. until he had become sick from the dust. The doctor told him he had a choice, either find something else or he's not going to last too long. So he gave up being a Blacksmith. He had a good head on his shoulders, even though he didn't

have an education to speak of, and he saw a business that people had and he started a little candy store. He had that for a while, and later on, he used to go to a butcher shop and learned what the man was doing. He opened up a little butcher shop. He made lemon ice, in the days when it was hardly known with fresh lemons, and he made Italian sausage. He made very good Italian sausage. He also made very good wine.

SH: What town was this in?

BS: In North Bergen, New Jersey. He had the butcher shop until some time during the war then he retired. Her mother died when she was about fifty years old so he essentially was the guiding hand in raising the three children.

SH: So when you met Mrs. Senkowski what was she doing? Was she working at that time?

BS: Yes. She was working for a company. They were involved with textiles and I think it was called Ix. It was in the West New York area. We got married in September 1952 and she worked for about six months or so and our first baby was born on August 26, 1953. Then from there on she took care of the house and baby and I had to find a way to make enough money for us to survive.

SH: Can you tell me a little bit about your children and how you raised them?

BS: Sure. Bernie, Jr. was born in Jersey City, Margaret Hayes Hospital and for the first four or five years we lived on what is now called Kennedy Boulevard in North Bergen. Her father lived downstairs and we lived upstairs. We bought our first house in Bloomfield, New Jersey. In those days, we bought a little Cape Cod and the price was \$17,500, but I got it for \$17,200 because I was going to do my own painting inside, which I did with some help from my brother and my brother-in-law and that was our first house. At that time our youngest daughter was born, also in Margaret Hayes, so my wife had two caesarians there. We moved when Andrea was just about one year old. We stayed in Bloomfield from about 1959 to 1970. Then we moved to North Caldwell, New Jersey. While we were in Bloomfield, Bernard and Andrea went to St. Thomas Parochial School. Bernie graduated from St. Thomas. Andrea continued grammar school in North Caldwell and graduated high school there. Bernie went to high school at St. Benedict's Prep in Newark. That's a good school. They really teach the kids well. They teach them discipline and they teach them to learn. They did fine. Bernie, after high school, decided he wanted to go ahead to college and I think what helped create the field that he chose was that we got him interested in ham radio. Through ham radio he got to talk to people at Rochester Institute of Technology in New York and Northeastern in Massachusetts. He finally wanted to go to Rochester. So we let him go to Rochester and he got a Bachelor in electrical engineering. Andrea, we wanted her to go to Rutgers but she didn't want to go to Rutgers. She was accepted by Virginia, Mount Holyoke, and she decided on Bryn Mawr in Pennsylvania. So we took her to Bryn Mawr and she was there for about two years when we moved from New Jersey to Texas. That was because of the shift in my employment. We can either continue with their education or we can now go into Hoffman LaRoche.

SH: Let us finish with the kids.

BS: Okay. Bernie graduated from Rochester Technology with a degree in electrical engineering in 1976 and he applied to a number of companies and he had opportunities at RCA. They wanted to put him on a management training system where he would be designing television circuitry. He wanted to be a salesman. He refused. Every place he went he was offered a job but not what he wanted. So he heard that one of his professors had a son that worked for Intel. Well, Bernie called Intel up and says, "I want to work for your company." "Who are you?" So he told them, "I'm Bernie Senkowski." "How did you hear about us?" So he told them about his professor's son. They invited him to an interview. Well, when he got to the airport at San Jose, they had a limousine with a chauffeur to pick him up. He got in the back of that limousine and said, "This is the company for me." He was hired. They interviewed him for eight hours and he said, "I want to go into sales." They said, "No, we feel you should go into marketing." He said, "No, I want to go into sales." He finally agreed to go into marketing first. Well, he worked for Intel for fifteen years and he did a good job. Then they had a big downsizing and they wanted to cut his salary too much and he didn't like that. Then he went to work for another company in Southern California called Cal ABCO for about five years. Then he started his own trading company in computer peripheral parts and now he is doing very well in San Clemente in his own business. Andrea while she was in Bryn Mawr met this fellow, Dean Barclay. He was studying liberal arts, an English major. She was taking biology. She had good teachers in Bryn Mawr and they had this exchange between Bryn Mawr and the boys' college just across the street. She met Dean. We got up there one time and got to meet Dean. His room was immaculate when we visited. He can't be too bad a kid if he keeps a room like that. Well, it turns out Andrea, I guess, was homesick because we moved to Texas and so she said she would like to go closer to us. So we signed her up at the University of Texas, at Austin, which is a good school and a nice college town. She decided at that time that people were destroying the environment and she switched to chemical engineering. She was always an A student in everything in Bryn Mawr. When she transferred, they gave an "A: on all of her subjects at the University of Texas. She took college mathematics. She took mechanical drawing, chemistry, and physics. She passed everything. One day Dean came over to visit us in Texas and Dean says, "I want Andrea to come with me to Harvard." I said, "What's your job? How much money do you make?" "Oh, I'm a graduate student at Harvard. I'm going for my Ph.D. in English." "How much do you make?" I asked. "Well, I don't make any money." "How are you going to support her?" I said, "Cut it out. She doesn't go with you. I'll tell you what. If you want to get married, then she can go with you." Well, they didn't see that. So he went to Harvard and she went back to school. I said, "Andrea, you have to finish up this next semester." She took music, art appreciation, drama and she got "A's" in everything. She was a well-rounded student. At the end of the year, in June, they got married. So Anna and I called up New Jersey from Texas and arranged for the wedding. I tell you that was amazing. Everything worked out fine by telephone, even the reception. It was a grand wedding. At first she didn't want a wedding, just a few people, but now I think she's happy she had it. So they got married and they were living at Harvard while he finished up his Ph.D. In the meantime, she had two years at Bryn Mawr, a year at Texas and decided that she wanted to get a degree from Harvard extension school. So she got a degree in psychology. Dean finished his Ph.D. and they moved to Oberlin, Ohio and he got a job teaching English at Oberlin, which is another fine school. Andrea couldn't find anything to do. She was babysitting. She was helping a caterer with sandwiches and what not and at about that time there was a contest. It was a Sara Lee baking contest. "What can you do with a pound cake?" So she came up with a

formula and made what she called Linzer cookies. They called her up and said she won the grand prize. The grand prize was a trip to France for her and her husband and she spent a week at Laverne Cooking School. There she took baking and pastry. Well, she got back to Oberlin, and there still wasn't much to do so she wrote to Case Western in Cleveland. She wrote to the University of Chicago for a scholarship in molecular biology. Case Western said, "We would be happy to have you work in our labs but we only have a couple of scholarships and we prefer to give that to someone who had a biological background." The University of Chicago said, "You all come down." Okay, she got a scholarship for \$96,000 for the normal graduate school period, which allowed her to have all her tuition and books paid and money for living, and she finished up the last three years in 1994. Andrea had gone almost seven years for this Ph.D. in molecular biology. She had five publications. As a co-author on one that she should have been the senior author on, because it was her idea. The professor had a post-doctorate from Japan and asked her if it's all right to let him be senior author, which was a dirty trick he played on her. She was trying to have a baby for almost fifteen years and she never could conceive because she had a severe case of endometriosis. She already had one or two surgeries on it. She had her orals for the Ph.D. and she did fine. The major professor of the department said, "Okay, Andrea, you did enough, now write it up." She said, "Well, I still have an idea." "You did enough, write it up." She started to write her dissertation and she called up her mother and said, "I'm pregnant." So they double-checked it and she was. She got sick and was bleeding the early stage of the pregnancy and she had to stay in bed for almost three solid months. No matter what, Dean took good care of her for that period of time. She had the baby on December 26, 1994 and we were there for that and so were his parents. Then we stayed for an additional week, I guess, before we went back to Texas. Then we went back to Chicago for a month in February and we baby-sat while she started her dissertation. Then we left in February and the in-laws came for three weeks or so, and then we went back for another month of babysitting. We rented a furnished apartment and she kept writing her dissertation and then, lo and behold, in June 1995 she got her Ph.D. in molecular biology from the University of Chicago.

SH: Well, we are going to back up to your career. Now that we have the kids educated. You and Mrs. Senkowski, you said you were just married a year after college.

BS: Right. I started with Hoffman LaRoche in 1951 at \$50 a week as an assistant chemist and that assistant chemist always bothered me. Here I had a degree in chemistry from Rutgers University and I'm an assistant chemist. Well, it turned out that I worked for about nine months and I quite. I had a job offer from Hayden Chemical Company. Also a couple of friends I knew from Fairleigh Dickinson started a little hand cleaner business. They were paying \$50 per week just like Roche was with no benefits and we started to make hand cleaner. You know, like paint remover quickie and this type of cream hand cleaner. This was quite an experience. One of the fellows was really bent on chemistry and we were going to make fine chemicals, too. We had a big fifty-gallon pot and we mixed the stuff to make the hand soap and we used a wooden paddle to stir it. Well, we didn't know anything about bacterial contamination at the time and what happens is the stuff liquefies after a period of time. Again, you learn about the process of manufacturing. One of the men took some cans over to Sears Roebuck and left it on the purchasing agent's desk and the buyer really was interested in buying from us. However, a week later when the man went back there he almost got killed. The can leaked and ate the varnish off the top of his desk. We didn't get the business. One fellow who was a chemist and had a degree

in chemistry, so we built aspirators, water piping and all, and he started to make an organic chemical called mesitylene. The way you do that is you place into a big reactor benzene, sulfuric acid and you boil the stuff in acetone, which are volatile solvents. But he was heating this thing with a Bunsen burner and I'm watching what he's doing and all of a sudden the flames start around the top of the connection and I said, "put cloth on the top. Put out the fire." He put out the fire. Well, we finally successfully made the mesitylene but when you do that you wind up with a benzene complex. You then have to split the sulfuric acid portion of the complex and you do that by vacuum distillation. So we hooked this complex and were making the chemical byproduct SO₂ vapors. We were discharging the SO₂ vapors down the sewer. One day the man from upstairs, there were people living upstairs, came down looking green. He said, "If you guys don't stop this you're killing me and I'm going to call the police." Well, that ended our chemical operation in Lyndhurst, New Jersey. We moved it to Newark, near where they used to finish steel drums in a laboratory, which was on the second floor. The first floor was storage. They were still paying me \$50 a week because I was the person who was helping them formulate the cleaner. One of the fellow's fathers helped build us a hood so when we make the chemicals it vented outside through the roof. I was involved in making the hand soap while they were making some chemicals. We had one chemical we were making with phosphorous-pentachloride and this was quite a reaction. We had some man knock on the door one day and he says, "Are you guys making anything that's going outside?" We said, "No, here's our stuff right in here." Well, it turns out that the byproduct was HCl and the HCl was corrosive. Shortly after that I said, "I better get a job that has a little more future." So I visited Hoffman LaRoche in the lab that I used to work in and the boss says, "Do you want to come back to work?" I said, "Okay." He didn't have an opening in his department so they put me into the nutrition department where I worked for a short time and then he made an opening in physical chemistry research. I went into the research department and I worked about six years more until 1958, I guess, in physical chemistry research in Roche's research department. There I learned a lot of good techniques. I think the man was a little off his rocker but he was a meticulous teacher and the only time that he maybe wasn't too understanding was when the supervisor of the lab was working in front of a swing balance in those days and it would swing over to the right and then it would settle down to zero. He was about ready to take the weight and it would swing to the left. He's looking at it and it settled down then it would swing to the right. He sees this fly walking on the beam of the balance so he calls the boss. "Dr. Boss there's a fly walking on the beam I can't weight the sample." "Who is the master you or the fly?" Says the boss. So that was the type of man I worked for. There I became pretty good in spectroscopy and did organic synthesis. I got pretty good at purification of organic compounds. Like 5-Fluoro, Uracil which was Hoffman La Roche's first anti-cancer drug. The standard sample that they had was only about five grams. I purified that. Now they had dozens of Ph.D.'s in the research department. My boss had me do it and when I went to somebody's retirement party the product inventor came over and said, "Oh, you are the man that crystallized my five grams of 5-F.U." He was the discoverer of the drug. I was pretty good at crystallization. There was one chemical compound that I thought I was really mistreated by Roche and that was essentially my boss's fault. He was working on a project with the United States Pharmacopoeia Group and that was to make a chemical that would simulate the spectral curve of vitamin A if measured in alcohol. It has a very nice symmetrical curve and you can measure it over and over but it is extremely sensitive to light and oxygen. The stability of the measurement had always some question. After two years, they were able to synthesize about two grams. Well the committee that was on this project said,

“It’s not enough. We need more material to be able to run the study.” So my boss calls me in and there were two Bernards in the laboratory. He calls, “Bernard” and the two of us would run in.” “I only want one.” So in Hoffman LaRoche today they still know me by Ben. He calls me in the says, “Make me this compound.” I never saw it before. I went down and got a book, on organic synthesis. I made the compound and the problem was purification. The first time I used a column. I got some celite 545, which is a diatomaceous earth, and I used it as a column and I poured the solvent with the drug through it. I got colors pink and red and blue and orange. I purified that drug to where it was over 98% pure through the column, which was my idea. Then I had to crystallize the compound from alcohol. You vary temperature and time and stirring rates to get the crystals that you want. I’d show the boss. He’d look at it. “No good. The crystals are too big.” I do it again. “No good, the crystals are too small.” He was getting to me by this time and the next time I crystallized the compound they were hexagonal plates. Every single one. He said, “That’s a good job.” So I did that and then we built equipment for me to run phase solubility studies on the compound to get purity. It was 99.8% pure plus or minus about 2% or 3% for the system. He published this in “organic analysis.” He didn’t even mention my name. Boss, if you’re alive, it’s going to get to you one day! However, you are forgiven.

SH: All this time now you’re still teaching and going to school?

BS: Well, let’s see, in 1953, Bernie was born and at this time Roche was only paying me fifty-eight or sixty dollars a week. I didn’t have enough money to pay the bills. So Professor Panson and Professor Weill were teaching nights at Fairleigh Dickinson. Professor Panson taught physical chemistry and Professor Weill taught analytical chemistry. They needed a lab assistant. It was like chipping and scraping the paint. So I went two nights a week from around six-thirty to ten and I got five dollars for each night so that was an extra ten dollars a week and that helped. I did that for about three or four years and then Professor Panson was told by Rutgers that Rutgers professors couldn’t teach at Fairleigh Dickinson. They have to stay at Rutgers and there is enough for them to teach at Rutgers so Professor Panson asked if I would want to teach the course. So I taught the course for about four years, experimental physical chemistry at Fairleigh Dickinson and then my good professor Benjamin Carroll said, “Ben, you have to come to Rutgers. I can’t teach experimental chemistry anymore, I’m too busy. Can you teach it?” I said, “I work, Doc, how am I going to teach it?” I said, “If you make it on Saturday.” Do you know Rutgers had a class on Saturdays for credit and these kids were complaining that they don’t have time to get a job or work weekends because they have to go to school on Saturday. So the following year, he says, “You want me to go talk to the president of your company? Make it on Friday.” I talked to my boss and his boss. He says, “Well, you make up the time.” Roche for the next twelve years, let’s see 1958 to 1970, twelve years, they gave me Friday afternoon from twelve on and I went to Rutgers and taught experimental physical chemistry and I don’t remember if I ever had to make that time up. Maybe I owe them some time. I taught there for twelve years.

SH: New Brunswick or Newark?

BS: Newark. I was teaching there on Fridays and after I took over experimental phys. chem. in Rutherford. Professor Panson showed me a master’s thesis that one of his students had done who now was going to Steven’s Institute. He said, “Why don’t you read that?” He knew I was

doing spectroscopy at Roche. I read it and I told him, "The wrong approach." The wrong approach, how do you think it should be done?" I told him, "You should study the ultraviolet region to actually see what's going on in the system." He says, "Why don't you do it?" I'm too busy. Next year. "Why don't you do it?" So finally, in the meantime, he said, "Why don't you go and get your masters?" So I went to Rutgers and I started my master's program at night and after about two years of the masters program I decided to look at this thing and I guess I spent about ten Saturdays and Sundays. The reason I did it was he said, "You know, if you do this thesis, you're going to get six credits and you don't have to take class work." That was the secret. No more class work. I ran the research on Saturdays and Sundays at Roche and we published it in the "Journal of Organic Chemistry" and then I think two more Ph.D.s were obtained continuing the study.

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

BS: By studying the reaction of iodine with aniline, by studying the ultraviolet region of the spectrum, then by looking at the visible spectrum at 520 mu or thereabouts. What we were able to see was the formation of a charge transfer complex in the amino group of the anilines and this is what we published in the "Journal of Organic Chemistry." Fortunately, I didn't have to take those six credits in course work and was able to get to do the last year of course work. When, between the wife, the kids, the job, I was about ready to throw the towel in until Professor Benjamin Carroll got a hold of me after class, bawled me out and told me to never say quit and to come back to class the next week, period. I did and I passed thermodynamics with him, which was quite an achievement. I did finish up the masters and received a degree in 1960. In the meantime, we now had the two children and things were moving along at Roche. In 1960, I was made supervisor of the analytical research lab and I got a letter from the Dean of the graduate school. It said, "Congratulations on achieving the masters' degree. If you wish to continue towards a Ph.D., you have to take all of these other courses and re-take so many exams from the master programs because they were fine for masters but not good enough for a Ph.D." So when it came time to go to school, I went to school again and for the next six or seven years I continued one year in Newark, one year in New Brunswick. And in those days, class was from six-thirty until nine-thirty. Traveling back and forth, once a week, they told me if I try to take two courses I'm only going to pass one so I didn't take the odds. I just took one course and for a Ph.D. I chose the subject and I did the work. Professor Panson said, "If you want to be a Ph.D. it's something you're supposed to do on your own." I decided to study iodine and a series of homologous alcohols and it turned out pretty well and I went to take the exams. Professor Panson told me to take a Ph.D. in physical chemistry and a minor in analytical. So I studied with John Liskowitz who was an extremely good man and I completely memorized the quantum mechanical particle in the box. When we took the Ph.D. exam for physical chemistry, I got the particle box right and I missed the simple thermo dynamics question, which I knew how to do. So I got back and Professor Panson says to me, "Why did you take physical chemistry?" "You told me to." He said, "Why? You're doing all analytical chemistry in work." I said, "Okay, I'll take analytical chemistry," and passed it. I got the major exam in analytical and passed, the minor in physical and passed, a minor in analytical passed, and about three or so of the master's exams retaken and passed. Then I guess I had the orals. I gave a seminar and Professor Carroll put his arms around my shoulder and says, "Ben, I just learned today you can teach an old dog new tricks." He was special. I took the orals and passed the orals and the thesis was all finished

and I went up to New Brunswick and the secretary says, "You can't get your degree." Here we've already made arrangements at a place in Somerville to have a graduation party, invited all to the party and I can't graduate. "Why?" "Well, you see there are six credits missing in research." I said, "I passed everything what else is there?" Professor Panson had to call them up and they said, "How long has he been teaching in Newark?" He said, "Twelve years." "Well, let him pay for the six credits," and I graduated on schedule and that ended the Ph.D. In the meantime, this was 1965, I was then promoted to assistant director of analytical research and quality control at Roche and Roche is a story in itself. So that completes my education.

SH: Now were you still teaching while you were getting your Ph.D. and working?

BS: Yes. Doing the research was a bit difficult. What would happen I would work at Roche from eight-thirty to five, go home for a bite to eat and then go back. Then I would work maybe from eight until three, four or five in the morning. It was pretty good because the security man would check on me every our to make sure I was okay. I had all of the solvents. I had the equipment and I had the chemicals that I needed. So it made it a little easier. Otherwise, it would have been impossible.

SH: In your experience at Rutgers having come in on a GI Bill and then gone on to get your Ph.D.

BS: They always look at Newark as the small brother or something like that. They didn't have too much respect for Newark in the early days. I think it was the New Jersey College in, around, 1944 or 1945, I think that's when Professor's Carroll/Panson and Weill joined the school. We didn't have much and we didn't get very much help in terms of money. That's why I built cabinets and hooked up the X-ray equipment just to help a little bit. Professor Carroll is a genius musician. He plays the violin beautifully and I came in one Saturday and I bought some copper pipes and a torch and I hooked up a water system that would hook into the XRD1 X-ray machine. You have to cool this tube otherwise it will burn out. He got it donated from General Electric. Well, I hooked it up and he'd be playing this beautiful violin. You know, you listen and say, "God, if I only had his mind." Well, I turned the water on, the water started circulating around the tube beautifully and it's going down the cup sink. There was a physics professor called Dr. Pine, he comes running up the stairs, white, and says, "What are you doing?" I said, "Charlie, what do you mean, what am I doing?" "I got water pouring all over the walls in my labs." I said, "Come here. Here's the water doing down the sink." I opened the cabinet and there's no pipe. It's just rolling down into the cabinet. So I shut the water off and we had to fix that. It's these little nuances that went on during the days in getting things going.

SH: When you were at Hoffman LaRoche you said that you had three patents. Were those through your research?

BS: That was work I did in LaRoche. You don't want to hear the whole story. All I'll say at Roche is that I started an assistant chemist. I was never happy as an assistant chemist. Then I became a chemist. Then I became an assistant director. Then I became a director. Then I became assistant vice-president of analytical research and quality control and then assistant vice

president of pharmaceutical operations at Roche. Then I took over as corporate vice president at Alcon Laboratories in Texas.

SH: Now is Alcon affiliated with LaRoche?

BS: No. I got bored at Roche. I don't know, I guess, I needed more of a challenge. The mind just wouldn't be satisfied with the mechanics of making tablets and capsules and liquids. Its machines. In production you're primarily responsible for man, machines and money. You want to make the best product you can, with the least number of people, and with the least cost and to me that wasn't very challenging. We rescued the problems that they had. I was able to overcome them. They did not have any problems with inventory and we cleaned up the place but I got bored. I parked in spot number one right next to my building and they saluted you when you drove in if you were an officer of the company and yet I got bored and took a job at Alcon that was a peanut size company. They had three buildings on campus. When I left, they had a campus and about, over, \$500 million in sales. So I had a chance to see them grow as I saw Roche grow.

SH: Can you finish up a little with Rutgers now? I know you are here today.

BS: Anna and I have set up a scholarship that's called the Ann and Bernard Z. Senkowski Scholarship. I told you the problems I had in trying to pay the tuition when I went to undergraduate school and I had to pay fifty-percent of the tuition going to graduate school until the final year, 1965, when I got my Ph.D. Hoffman LaRoche after that said they would pay 100% of the tuition. So I said it was tough working the way I was working, going to school, trying to pass the courses. The teachers were tough in Rutgers. I don't care what anybody says. They were tough. I said, "If there's a needy student that needs some help, I'll set up, with her, this scholarship that will give them the interest from the money," and that interest was enough to give about thirty to forty percent payment of a semester. I don't know, about \$1,200 to \$1,500-\$1,800 per student. This year I think they'll have two scholarships. They pick good students to award this scholarship. Straight "A" students. One of them did so well that he took a second major. I'm very pleased that they picked good students with chemistry majors.

Women: Do you have any interaction with the students?

BS: No. We met some of them when we went to the first scholarship dinner and we'll probably meet some tonight when we go again.

SH: Do you still teach?

BS: No. When I finished at Rutgers, in 1970, I was already director of quality control and analytical research. We had about 250 people and that was enough to handle. Then when I took over operations, I had the Nutley plant, I had Totowa, we built Belleville, we built Somerville, and that all came under my jurisdiction. It was a lot of responsibility. I didn't teach anymore.

SH: Now you're retired to California. What are your hobbies and what do you do?

BS: Number one, I guess, is I need more time. My son is in San Clemente and when we first moved to California I would spend three days or four days a week with him helping him get started. He's doing quite well now. I have reduced my time with him to one day a week. I handle a lot of our investments. I have a computer and I do some word processing and I go on the Internet a little bit. I really don't have enough time. I bought two books, one operating on the AOL and the other on the Internet but I haven't finished reading them yet. Correspondence and there is all types of bills we take care of. I can tell you that there just isn't enough time. We want to travel more and we have done some traveling and we'll do some more. I think golf takes a little bit of time. It's going to take a lot more time now that I don't go into my son's place and I do like the game of golf.

SH: Is there anything that you would like to say or anything that I have not asked that you think is something you would like to have on the tape?

BS: Well, one of the things that in my life was important is to never be afraid to try something and be motivated, and you can accomplish it if you want. Education is important. I think if we had more of the younger kids whose families, good or bad, understand that in preparing themselves for life they need to prepare themselves with a good education. They will be survivors and they will have a good life. If they do not drive themselves to achieve and accomplish, then you see like we see twenty percent, thirty percent in prison, those without homes, killing and robbing to survive. To me that's the dreg of the world. No one has to do that and I cannot be convinced that if you have the will and the drive to accomplish you can accomplish, and that's no color barred. Color has nothing to do with it. You may have to work harder to achieve, but you can achieve. And it's obvious if we look at the yellow race, the black race, the white race, and see that those who have achieved it wasn't a gift. You have to work for it. Anyone, who is willing to work, has the opportunity to achieve in this country. I guess that's about it.

SH: I thank you very much, Dr. Senkowski, for having taken part in the oral history project and this concludes the interview and again, my thanks.

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

Reviewed by Fidel Malpica 2/1/01
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 2/3/01
Reviewed by Bernard Z. Senkowski 4/21/04