

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ARTHUR MILLER

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Nicholas Trajano Molnar: This begins an interview with Mr. Arthur Miller in Highland Park, New Jersey on November 30th, 2011. Thank you Mr. Miller for having us here today.

Arthur Miller: You're welcome.

NM: David Freschl is here as well. Could you tell us when and where you were born?

AM: I was born September 21, 1935 in Plainfield, New Jersey.

David Freschl: Can you tell us a little bit about your family, what was your father like?

AM: Okay, my father was a manufacturer. He was primarily self-educated. He attended school through the eighth grade in New York City, and then he had to go to work. He worked at various trades. He drove a truck. He was born in 1910. In the twenties, you didn't need a license to drive a truck, so he drove a truck. He apprenticed to a watch maker. He did various other jobs. While he was doing that, he went to night school for high school, and I was told that he got a high school diploma that way, but I never saw the diploma. Anyway, he was an avid reader, very intelligent, hard working, [and a] good family man. He had a temper, but he worked very hard. My memory of him was he would go to work about 8:30 in the morning, eight o'clock, come home around six, plop himself down in the living room chair and read the newspaper, the *World Telegram and Sun* for a half hour, and then we would have dinner. You had to be on time for dinner. It was a major sin not to be there. So, he had good relations with his employees. He had many friends. He liked to play cards, he played golf, and I think that pretty much sums him up. He liked cars. As he got more prosperous, he'd get a new car every other year. He liked to drive. He used to take me on long business trips with him. He enjoyed driving. He said, he always told me that he got some of his best ideas while sitting behind the wheel. He was creative and willing to take risks, probably the reason why he survived in business. I think that's enough.

NM: You said your father had various professions before he eventually went into manufacturing.

AM: Yes.

NM: What type of things did he make?

AM: Well, his father and his father's brothers were all leather workers, and they had small leather working operations in New York City. ... Eventually, his father got into making leather ladies handbags, and my father ended up working with him or for him, and just about, just a little before I was born, in the early '30s, they moved. ... It was basically a sewing machine operation. It was easy to move around, it wasn't much of a factory. They moved it from New York City--the Bronx--to Plainfield. I suspect that was because they were trying to avoid labor unions although they ultimately got unionized anyway. ... They opened up a location, several different locations in Plainfield over time, called Standard Handbags, and they made ladies handbags. They made inexpensive [products], their biggest customers were Woolworths and "five and dime" stores like that. They'd make up a ladies leather purse for \$1.99 retail, that sort of thing, and they had many seasonal changes. They had to change their line every three months because

there were four clothing seasons, so they had to end up creating and selling a new line every three months. ... My father did a lot of the sales in the early years as well as helped run the plant, so the plant, the factory in Plainfield was, the president of the company was my grandfather, and then, my father and my uncle, his younger brother, Milton, were the vice-presidents. So, they had a set up there where my grandfather would have one office, and then the big office next to it was my father and my uncle and they had like twin desks opposite each other.

NM: When you were young, did you go to this factory often?

AM: Yes, I went there a lot. Ultimately, when I was in high school I worked there in various capacities. I used to hang around. On Saturday mornings, my father would get up and go to the post office. He went to the post office every morning to get the mail at the PO Box so they could get the checks early because they were on a pretty tight budget, and he would take me to the post office with him. I remember doing that especially on Saturday mornings, but yes, I worked with him a lot. ... As I got older, he would take me on business trips with him into New York or upstate New York, that sort of thing.

DF: You grew up in a Jewish home?

AM: Yes, my parents were Jewish. ... Their background was Orthodox in the sense that they belonged to an Orthodox synagogue, which at that time, in the '30s, was really the only synagogue in Plainfield for Jews. There were no Reformed or Conservative synagogues, but they weren't what I would call "heavily observant." They didn't keep a Kosher home, they observed the major holidays, but they would ride on the Sabbath. My father worked on Saturdays. Everybody in the family worked on Saturdays, his father and his uncle. There was a point in time when my father, who had been working, really five and a half days, sometimes six days a week, went to his father and said, "Dad, I would like to take Saturdays off. I'm a family man now. I have children. I'd like to spend a little more time with my family," and my grandfather looked at him in shock, really. ... They spoke a lot of Yiddish to each other. That's a guttural German/Hebrew mix, and his reaction was "*(Enmitten Volch?)*," which, if you understand a little German means, "You're going to leave work in the middle of the week?" For him, Saturday was the middle of the week, but my father prevailed, and he ultimately joined a country club, and played golf on Saturdays, but he'd still go to the post office Saturday morning and Sunday morning, pick up the mail.

NM: Could you tell us about your mother and her side of the family?

AM: My mother also, her family was in the garment trade. Both my grandfathers emigrated here from Europe, both came out of Russia or Russian Poland--the Pale--by way of Paris. They were both Paris-trained before they came to this country, my grandfather who, in the handbag business, came over here when he was eighteen. I've tried to trace when my other grandfather, his name was David Madoff, there's a picture of him right there by the way, in his ambulance driver's uniform. I don't know if that was the Crimean War. It was not World War I, and he was a tailor, Madoff, and came over here and went into a business with his brothers in a ladies garment manufacturing business in Scranton, Pennsylvania. ... That's where my mother grew

up, in Scranton. Eventually, they moved around, they moved back to, I guess there was a break up between my grandpa, David Madoff, and his brothers. My dad ultimately moved back to New York where he met my mother. They were distant cousins, and they met at a family gathering of some kind, and my mother was an artist. She was very good at drawing and sketching, and she worked for various garment manufacturers doing what we call "knock offs," which is copies of fashionable designs. She would go to the new design shows, and watch the new designs, and then step out in the hall and sketch them, and then bring the sketches back to her employer to be copied, and that's the way they kept up with the latest fashion trends. I suppose in those days, today, you see, all the new fashions are, you know, in the newspapers and everything. In those days, I don't think they were as widely publicized. So that was my mother's trade. Once they got married, I don't think she worked for more than another year, and then she started having children in Plainfield.

NM: Could you tell us about some of your siblings? How many brothers and sisters do you have?

AM: I have two younger brothers and one younger sister. One brother is a year younger than me, one is five years younger, and my sister is about nine years younger than me, all born in Plainfield.

NM: Could you tell us about your recollections of growing up in Plainfield as a youth?

AM: Sure, the first five years of my youth were spent, we were not very prosperous. We lived in rented accommodations. I remember one where we lived, I think from the age of, I was around probably ... two to five, and it was a two family. We lived in the ground floor, another family, the father was a truck driver, he used to park his truck in the driveway, lived on the second floor. ... We'd get together, I mean, the kids would play with each other. The families were friendly, and let's see, the major recreation was playing outdoors, teasing the old man next door, who ... spent a lot of time on his porch, and spent a lot of his time "shooing" us away from his house. ... Right down the street, there was a Catholic Church and a nunnery, which we found fascinating, but we were afraid to go into, and listening to the radio was the other major, I loved the radio. We would listen to the radio religiously every day between five and six till my father came home from work and then we would have dinner. I had my favorite programs. They had what they called serial programs, fifteen minute programs, the Lone Ranger, Tom Mix, various programs, and then, in the evening, they would have longer radio shows like The Shadow and stuff like that. ... My Grandpa, David Madoff, who was at that point living in New York, he and his wife Rose would come and stay with us, and he spent a lot of time with the grandchildren. ... He shared our interests unlike my father who didn't want to listen to the radio with us. He would share our interests. He was very religious, and he'd listen to the radio with us, and discuss these programs, so it was nice to have an adult who was interested in what we were doing. He would take us, at that point, there was a very small Orthodox synagogue in a converted house, and he would take us. We would walk down there on Saturdays, and I would sit with him in the synagogue. ... Those were happy memories, very happy memories of him. My Miller grandfather was the manufacturer but at that time Grandpa Madoff was a tailor. He could make anything. Once you showed him a design, he could copy it. He was very good, very skilled. He made clothes for us, the children, and he made clothes for my mother and so forth,

and he would come back and forth from New York. Eventually, I think sometime in the '40s, he opened a little tailor shop in Plainfield, and lived behind the tailor shop. It was on Front Street. I remember going there from time to time. So, that's my memory of him.

DF: What was it like growing up during World War II?

AM: Well, I remember Pearl Harbor Day. I was in our den listening to the radio as always when the radio was broken into by the announcement that Pearl Harbor had been attacked by the Japanese, and we were all shocked, and worried, and anxious about it. ... Then, growing up, let's see that would be 1941, December 7, 1941, by that time I was six years old, and I pretty much had a pretty good idea what was going on, and we lived through wartime rationing. We would collect tin foil. We would buy bubble gum, or gum, and peel the tin off, and make these big balls of tin foil. We would collect milk weed from the fields. ... The milk weed was used to create or manufacture life preservers for the Navy. The tin foil, I guess, was used probably in electronics. We had rationing of everything--meats, sugar, gasoline, and so forth, but I didn't experience much in the way of hardship. By that time, my father had shifted his production from ladies handbags to war materials, and he was making life preservers for the Navy. He used to bring, he had a very good relationship with a Navy commander who was a procurement officer. ... They had become friends. He would bring him home to dinner. The guy spent a lot of time in his factory, and these contracts for life jackets, they were kapok filled life jackets, were extremely profitable, ... but even before the war started, we had built, my father had built a new house, using an architect, across the street from Hubbard School on Stelle Avenue in Plainfield. I don't know how he could afford it, but I imagine they had a big mortgage, and they managed to move in. I think we moved in when I was in kindergarten, and that would be when I was five. It would be 1940, so we were living there when Pearl Harbor came a year later. It was a nice split-level house, four bedrooms, three bathrooms. ... For those days, ... architect designed, it was a pretty, very nice house for a middle-class family. So, we played a lot of war games, watched a lot of war movies and imitated, you know, soldiers. There were a lot of open fields around where we lived on Stelle Avenue in Plainfield. It hadn't been fully developed, and it didn't get fully developed until after World War II, but, so we would go into the fields. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

AM: ... The topic is growing up in World War II in Plainfield. ... We had the draft. Both my father and my uncle were exempt somewhat from the draft, my father especially, because he was involved in manufacturing war goods but he became a volunteer.

[TAPE PAUSED]

AM: ... My father became a volunteer air raid warden. He had an outfit with a little helmet and a jumpsuit, and I remember his billy club. They gave him a policeman's billy club, which we kids loved to play with. My Uncle Milton, his younger brother, became a welder. He would work during the day in the factory, and then, he would drive to Newark, Belleville, to the shipyards, and work on welding these Liberty Ships, which they would turn out about one a week. So, he was working sixteen to eighteen hours a day between the commuting and the welding, and it was a tough life for him. He wasn't married, and that was his contribution to the

war effort. ... I remember air raid drills. Now, I don't remember if this was in the '50s or the '40s, but I think it was in the '40s, where we would duck under our desks or go out in the hallway in school. They were concerned about that. At that point in time in the '40s, one of our major, as kids, forms of recreation was going to the movies. I mentioned that I went to see a lot of war movies. Plainfield was the kind of town where you could walk anywhere in safety, at least we felt it was in safety, and we would walk, we had four movie theaters in town. We would walk downtown on Saturday afternoon with a buck in our pocket and go to the movies. Usually, it was a double feature with shorts and so forth, and that's how we would spend Saturday afternoons. Other than that, it was playing outside, playing war games, playing ball, baseball or football, pickup games. We lived right across the street from Hubbard School, which was kindergarten through eighth grade, had a big school yard, and we used to hang out, my brother and I, at the school after school. In the basement of the school were these giant coal burning furnaces, and they were maintained by a couple of Scottish janitors whose job was to keep the school clean and also keep the fires stoked and empty the ashes. They would take the ashes out in wheelbarrows and dump them in a pile in the school yard behind the door to the janitorial area, and eventually, by springtime, the pile was at least fifteen feet high. It was a small amount-to us kids, it was a mountain, and we played a game called, "King of the Mountain," which was someone would get up on the mountain, and the other kids would try to pull him off. ... That was the game, and running up and down that thing, it was a lot of fun, and we played other games. Another thing we did for recreation, especially in the spring, was marbles. The school yard had large dirt areas, which were perfect for marble circles. Now, kids today don't play marbles, but in those days, we'd draw a big circle in the dirt, ... and we would shoot the marbles, and if we knocked the marble out of the circle, we get to keep it. So the most skilled players ended up with large collections of these agates we used to call them, very nice looking marbles of different sizes. We would trade marbles. There was a lot of collecting. We would get prizes in cereal boxes, and we would collect the prizes and exchange them, pins of various types, things of that nature. That was another kind of recreation that we had. I remember my grammar school teachers, most of them, right from kindergarten on up, and I thought we got a very good education there. We had a principal whose name was (Mr. Rhodes?) that everyone lived in great fear of. He was kind of a dour man, and once a week, we would have an assembly, and he would open the assembly with something that would never be allowed today, he'd read from the Bible. Of course, we don't allow that today. We have a separation of church and state, but he would read from the Bible before even the Pledge of Allegiance, and of course, the great fear was being called down to the principal's office for discipline. It seemed to us that was his main function. Of course, I'm sure he also did a lot of curriculum development and lots of other things, which we had no idea of. So, that was my grammar school experience. We had a wonderful gym teacher. We had gym every day for at least forty minutes where we were taught skills. The gym teacher, the entire time I was there, was a tall gray haired fellow named Mr. Cook. He taught us gym skills, tumbling and football and baseball and that sort of thing. He would coach us. We didn't have teams the way the kids have today. There was no such thing as an organized little league team. All sports were pickup games. So, we had to learn the proper skills and that was one of his jobs to teach us how to throw a baseball, how to swing a bat, how to throw a football and that sort of thing, and he was very good at it. We revered him. He was a very kind gentleman and everyone listened to him. He maintained discipline without any effort at all. ... I think that about covers it.

NM: This is the Hubbard School?

AM: Hubbard School. ... It was on Eighth Avenue, or was it Eighth Street, and the back was on Stelle Avenue. So, our house faced the back of the school and the school yard. I was a school crossing guard for a while which was easy for me. We came home every day for lunch. We looked down on the kids who couldn't walk home for lunch. They were "brown baggers." There were only a few of them. They had to bring their lunch, and eat in a little room set aside for them, but I would say ninety-five percent of the kids in that school went home for lunch right from first grade on down, on up rather. The school was, as far as I can remember, almost, if not entirely, white. The African-American kids were confined to a different school on the West End. I forget the name of it, but it was, because they were segregated, housing, their housing was segregated in Plainfield. There were no African-American families anywhere within blocks of our house. No one would sell them a house ... or let them build a house. So, they were confined to an area on the northwest side of town, west, pretty much, of Grant Avenue. That was like the dividing line. ... Of course, when they got to high school, the school was integrated in the sense that the African-American kids, there was only one high school, so everyone went to the same high school, but the habits of segregation remained, that is, self-segregation, and social segregation, although there was a little more intermixing, and certainly on the athletic teams. I just read an article in today's *Star Ledger* about Milton Campbell who was in my Plainfield High School graduating class of 1953, who had come in, as a junior, in 1952, second in the Olympic decathlon. He was a high school junior and he won the decathlon four years later in 1956 in the Olympics, probably Plainfield's most famous athlete. You want anything else on grammar school? I think I pretty much have covered it. We had a lot of good music and arts. We would go to the opera every year, the Metropolitan Opera, organize a trip for seventh or eighth graders where we would go in on a matinee and attend the Metropolitan Opera, the big opera house in New York City. We would study the opera in school for months, and then, we would attend the opera. We had a band. We were encouraged to participate in band, and we were given any instrument we wanted to play and taught how to play it. They would loan us the instruments, whether it was a bugle or a cornet or a tuba or whatever it was, we would get instruction if we wanted it. I took up the clarinet for a while, but I didn't like practicing, so I dropped out. ... Of course, the band teacher hauled me down to see the principal who tried to convince me to remain with the band, but I didn't succumb and dropped out, but we had art. ... Most of the art in the lower grades was taught by the grade teacher. I don't remember there being a separate art teacher. I think there was a separate music teacher, but all the teachers in the lower grades, they could teach singing. They could teach pretty much any of the arts. They were required to be able to teach those various skills. I think that's about it.

DF: Moving on to high school, did you have a favorite subject in school?

AM: Well, in my first year in high school, I took a journalism class, which I loved for some reason. I thought I was going to be a writer. So I took to the journalism. I had a journalism teacher, a young teacher, named Morton Siegel, who I became very friendly with. He came to our home several times, had dinner with my family, and I thought he was just a terrific guy, and I learned a lot from him, and I immediately got involved with the school newspaper. We had a school newspaper that came out once a week, so that was my main activity the first couple of years, actually the first three years, of my high school career. I didn't go out for any sports. I did

go out, in my freshman year, for cross country and did not, I made the team, but then I broke my foot. They gave us these very thin track shoes which were designed for running on tracks. They were thin soled, no cushioning, spikes, and I was running in this backyard of the Hubbard School practicing and my foot hit a root. I broke a metatarsal bone, and that ended my cross-country career, never went back. I got involved more with the school newspaper at that point. By the time I was, when I was a sophomore, I was the news editor. When I was a junior, I was the editor-in-chief of the school newspaper, and that was my main activity. I ran for student council president in my senior year, and was elected, and so, I dropped out of the newspaper and spent all my after school time working on the student council, which was a big deal in those days. So, I would say journalism had been my favorite subject. I was in advanced courses in most fields, in math. ... We had German. We had some language courses. I believe we did, yes, but I would say journalism had been my favorite subject.

NM: I wanted to ask about changes in the community after World War II. Did the makeup of the community change in any way with the influx of returning servicemen and new construction?

AM: Not that I was particularly aware of. Of course, I was only ten or eleven. This would be 1945. I was ten years old then and I wasn't paying a lot of attention. My father, of course, gave up the war contract until the Korean War came along not too soon after that when he was again, making gloves this time, for the Army, trigger finger gloves for the Korean War effort. Again, that was a very profitable contract, but I don't have any particular memory of GIs coming back. I'm sure they were of course, or a lot of construction, though I'm sure there was that too, but I wasn't tuned into that.

NM: You mentioned that African-Americans lived in one part of town, but in the part of town where you lived, were there people of different religions and ethnicities?

AM: Yes, but as Jews moved into a neighborhood, the non-Jews would gradually move out. At least that was my impression, but definitely on Stelle Avenue. My first five years there, there were people of all different religious backgrounds. ... Neighbors on one side were Catholics and Protestants. There was a German Protestant family on the other side. I would say it was two-thirds when I first moved in there, non-Jews, and mostly, even less than one third Jews when we first moved in, as far as I can figure out. ... Now, everyone had a one car family if you had a car. A lot of people didn't have cars. The wives, who were stay home wives, for the most part, would take the bus to go shopping or walk to go shopping. Food trucks would come around every day. We had a vegetable guy, (Mr. Teresco?). We had a meat guy who would come around. The meat was supplied by a butcher shop on Third Street, several butcher shops, and they could call up and get deliveries of those. The milk was delivered. The bread was delivered every day. We had a milk box, sort of an insulated box, at the back step. The milkman would come early in the morning, deposit the milk in there. We leave him a note saying we wanted some chocolate milk today, or some cottage cheese, and he'd leave that behind too. Same thing with the baker, it was a national chain, or at least a statewide chain, called Dugan's Bakery, and they would have these Dugan's trucks, and they would come around every day and respond to requests for different kinds of bread, cakes, and stuff like that. ... Most of the time my mother, if she wanted to go downtown, she'd have to take a bus or walk. Eventually, she got a car, was not until I was in high school. ... Everyone's mom was a stay at home mom. There were almost no

working mothers, almost. I can't think of one unless they worked in the family store. If the family had a store, everyone worked in the store, mom, dad and the kids, because store hours were such it required a lot of labor, but aside from those people, everyone else stayed home, the moms, taking care of the kids. We had, at least starting in the late forties, we had a servant, but it was always an African-American woman, usually uneducated. Some of them couldn't read. They'd come up from the South, and there was a big turnover. My mother was very hard on the servants. She was very prejudiced, although she developed relationships with them, but she was also very prejudiced. She used to call them *schvartzes* which was a derogatory word, Yiddish word, for black. Of course, today it's not, if we say it in English, it's not necessarily derogatory, but in those days it was. If my parents didn't want us to understand what was going on, they would talk Yiddish to each other, although we started, we would pick up Yiddish from them or with my grandparents. But the servant had her own room and her own bathroom on the lower level of the house, and they worked, they got Thursday night and Sunday off, and the rest of the time, I don't know where they went on Thursday nights or Sundays, but they'd disappear. The rest of the time they'd be living in our home, the sleep-in people, and that freed my mother up. After all, she did have, at least through the early '40s, three kids, and then, ultimately four kids, so it was a lot of work for her. ... She had her own health problems. She was suffering from, she was manic-depressive, although no one understood it at that time. It was bi-polar disorder, but no one could identify it. She would get depressed, mostly take to her bed for days on end. Sometimes she would go in a manic phase, but that was very rare. Ultimately, in the mid '40s, my dad consulted with a German psychiatrist who came in a Mercedes Benz from New York City, diagnosed her, but they had very little treatment in those days. The main treatment was shock treatment. I remember my mother being in the bedroom for sometimes a week or more or longer, and my father didn't understand what it was. It was hard for him to understand. After all, he had limited education, and the doctors didn't understand it. Doctors, we had a family doctor who would make house calls for two dollars. Whenever I was sick with a fever or cold, he would come to the house, we didn't have to go to his office, examine you, prescribe some drugs and leave. That was the standard procedure. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

AM: ... Our family doctor was Dr. George Diamond, and he was a pretty sophisticated guy. ... He would come to the house, treat you, if you were running a fever or something. We all got the usual childhood diseases. There weren't a lot of specialists. I think there were probably obstetricians who delivered babies, but we didn't go to a pediatrician. We went to the family doctor, and I thought I got pretty decent medical care considering that medicine was, even then in the '40s, pretty primitive. Didn't have a lot of, I don't think they had penicillin until sometime after World War II, or maybe in the end stages of World War II. I'm not even sure if it was available to civilians. When I was twelve, I had appendicitis. I had my appendix taken out at Muhlenberg Hospital, the same hospital where I was born, in Plainfield. One winter, my father, who decided he was going to learn how to ski, hauled the family up by car to Lake Placid, New York. It was in the '40s, I think '48, '49, and we were taught to ski. I broke my leg. I remember the leg being in a big cast from toe to hip, and I had to come home by train because they couldn't get me into the car. They had to lift me through the train window. I even couldn't bend my leg, and that was a big event. All my friends came and autographed my cast, and those were the two main health issues I had. Of course, we had the usual measles and all that stuff.

NM: During your time in high school you were very active with the school newspaper. When the Korean War occurred, was this something that students in high school would follow?

AM: No. We weren't really, there was a draft. I think we were concerned about the draft, but only after we got out of school. We didn't follow it the way we followed it, at least as I recall, World War II. World War II, we had maps with pins in them. We would follow the troop movements. We would listen to the broadcast every night on progress in the war. We would read about it, watch movies about it, a lot of propaganda, and do whatever we could to contribute to the war effort, but during the Korean War, I think we were much more not really that heavily involved in following it, as far as I can recall, at least I wasn't. I was much more interested in what was going on in high school and my school activities. As far as I was concerned, we never had anything in the school newspaper about it. It was only school student news, sports, what prizes were awarded to what kids, assemblies that sort of thing. So, it was only school news that we were reporting on.

NM: At what point does your father get this contract to manufacture gloves for the Army?

AM: As soon as the Korean War started in the '50s. They were good at sewing. The gloves had to be made out of a special material. It was made out of canvas and deer skin. The deer skin was in the palm and the trigger finger. Deer skin was the only leather that didn't get stiff in the winter time from the cold and the ice, so they would be able to manipulate their weapons with these deer skin gloves. ... I remember taking a trip with my father up to northern New York, which is the center of the deer industry, the deer skin industry, and we drove all the way up to northern New York, almost to Canada. ... He would meet with the guys who, the tanners, I think it was called Tannersville actually where we went and make his purchases of large lots of deer skin, he would negotiate a supply contract. I remember taking that trip with him. I remember while I was in high school, taking trips with him to New York to visit machine shops to purchase special machinery, that sort of thing. He would always talk to me on these trips, talk about his business, which was very much on his mind all the time. ... I guess he was trying to inculcate me into the business. He wanted me to get into the business at one point the way he had gotten in to the business, and of course, I was interested, but I knew I wasn't going to become a glove or a handbag manufacturer. After the Korean War, everything fell apart business wise. ... There were no more defense contracts. They started getting a lot of competition from overseas, and this was still in the early '50s, maybe the Korean War was still going on, but he ended up having to develop a new line of products because the ladies handbag line was lost to imported bags. He couldn't compete with imported [goods] especially from Asia. So, he developed a line of teenage plastic items, still cutting and sewing and imprinting pictures on them. He called it the "Pony Tail line." By this time, he had hired a marketing guy and a couple of engineers. His business was growing, and that took off after a while, and ultimately led to ... a law suit. The first line of stuff he developed, he called it "Seventeen," and there happened to be an Annenberg magazine called *Seventeen*. They sued him for copyright infringement, and he lost the suit, so he had to shift his brand from Seventeen to Pony Tail. He had a picture of a teenage girl with a pony tail on the back. The products were successful, the line was successful, although there were times when they were very close to bankruptcy. My uncle kept wanting to file for bankruptcy and my father would insist, "We got to keep the doors open, things will break for us," and they did

eventually, and they were pretty successful. Ultimately, they sold their business to Mattel. This was in the early '60s, but in the late '50s, my father bought my uncle out, so my father was the only owner of the business at that point. My uncle left the business, took his money, and bought a pharmacy in Plainfield. I guess he was fed up with the manufacturing business, and the ups and downs, and so he loved that little pharmacy, and my dad was the sole owner at that point. My grandfather had passed away while I was in high school.

NM: Can you talk about the Pony Tail line and what type of products would be in the line?

AM: Okay, there were locker hangers where you would open it up and you would hang it on the inside of your locker. There would be a mirror, little pockets for putting your lipstick in, and stuff like that. There were diaries with a picture of ... a girl with a pony tail, basically stationary items of that nature. I remember when I was in high school and we were just developing the line, which would be about '52, I was going around to local stores with samples in the Central New Jersey area, and trying to get them to place orders just to see if they could move the stuff. ... We sold a few, but ultimately, they were able to go national with it, and it was successful. Picture albums were another item they had, all stuff with this sub teen or teenage girl on it. It was aimed at young girls below the age of fifteen.

NM: It is quite the transition making gloves for the military.

AM: It was, in terms of the marketing, in terms of the product description, but not in terms of the manufacturing process, which was still plastic. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

NM: Can you talk about after high school? Were you encouraged to go to college?

AM: Yes. I would be the first generation in my family on either side, not the first because my cousin (Sandra?) who was a couple of years older than me went to college, but yes, I was encouraged. My parents were very proud. ... I had a good academic record, and they wanted me to attend college. I applied to various, mostly Ivy League schools, and I was admitted to Princeton and Cornell, Pennsylvania, U of P, I believe Rutgers also. That's what I remember. I wanted to go to Cornell. My father pushed me very hard to attend Princeton so I ended up acquiescing, and I'm not sorry I went there. The reason I wanted Cornell was I felt it was more natural. It was a coed, whereas Princeton was all male. It was a very unnatural social life, but I ended up in Princeton. I remember the interview process. They had a, we were interviewed at the school by the admissions office, and we were interviewed at the Plainfield Country Club, in the men's locker room, by an alumnus. The local interview was to determine your ethnic background. It would be someone who would know your family, and they had a Jewish quota. So, I would be identified as a Jewish applicant at that point. This was 1953, and you know, ... they would also, I guess the local guy is just trying to see if I would fit in, not academically, but socially. I guess I got his approval because, now the Plainfield Country Club was a place where Jews could not play golf. We were very well aware of it. It was segregated. My father belonged to a different country club up in Watchung called Twin Brooks which was ninety-five percent Jewish members. Again, we had this segregation, no blacks in either place, of course, and

eventually, many years later, these places became integrated, but not during the '50s and '60s. So, that was the application process, but I was encouraged to go to college.

NM: When you were admitted to Princeton, did you live there?

AM: Yes, I was only twenty miles away, or eighteen miles away from home, but everyone had to live on campus all four years. That was a requirement. You couldn't have a car with a few minor exceptions. I'd send my laundry home every week in a big fiberglass box. I would mail it home. In those days we had mail delivery twice a day, and once on Saturday. You'd get morning mail and afternoon mail. I remember once sending a special delivery to my girlfriend in Westchester on a Thursday morning. She got it Thursday afternoon. Of course, postal service ain't what it used to be, but you ... had these big fiberboard boxes. I would mail the laundry home, my mother would wash, iron it, or her servant would wash it and iron it, and put it back in the box, and mail it back to me. ... The other thing is my mother was a very good cook. She did all the cooking in the house. The servants did not do any cooking. They were mostly cleaning, washing, doing laundry, stuff like that. My mother did all the shopping and the cooking, unless she was very sick and taken to her bed, and at that point, I don't remember how we got fed. Although I suspect that my grandparents would come and stay with us from New York and prepare food. My grandfather, her father, was a good cook too, and he would make food for us.

DF: Did you get involved in any activities at Princeton or join one of the eating clubs?

AM: Yes, I mean in my freshman year, I had a single room, and I had a guy across the hall from me who also had a single room, and he decided to go out for the fencing team. I didn't know anything about fencing, but his name was Lou Moscovitz, and he convinced me to go down to the gymnasium with him and try out for the fencing team. Now, in those days, even if you didn't know anything about fencing, they would teach you, so I became a member of the freshman fencing team, and I stayed on that team. My sophomore year I was a starting member of the varsity because I had a good record, and I had an aptitude for it. ... By my junior year, I was Second Team All-Ivy, and my senior, I was First Team All-Ivy in my sport. ... I also joined Elm Club in the end of my sophomore year. Everyone had to belong to an eating club of one kind or another. But the primary focus of my social life, such as it was, was the fencing team, you know. It was a long season. We'd start practicing in early November. We'd go to amateur meets, then we'd have a season that didn't end until the middle of March, so it pretty much absorbed most of my academic year. I would practice and go to meets. I became very close with the coach and the coach's family. His name was Stan Sieja, and he liked us, liked me, and I would hang out at their house a lot. His wife Wendy would make dinner for us all the time, so that was a very positive relationship, and it made my college years bearable because the social life was terrible. There was discrimination although I wasn't, you know, I was vaguely aware of it. It was there in the air. I think we had one African-American guy in my class at Princeton. That was it. We had a Jewish quota. The Jewish guys would hang around together pretty much, but it was definitely self-segregated as far as mostly religious affiliation, and, of course, there was almost no minorities other than that. We had one guy from Japan, I think, in my class. That was it. No other people from Asia, no Chinese, as far as I can recall. The school in the '50s, when I was there, was still a gentleman's, Southern gentleman's school. ... Most of the blacks in town had come as either slaves or servants for Southern Princeton guys who brought their family retainers

with them and who would live off-campus and come and take care of them. ... By the '50s, of course, there wasn't any of that around, but there was still that atmosphere of genteel gentlemen, kind of thing. It's much different now. Of course, the big change was admitting minorities and women, but that wasn't until after I left. They've got a woman president now, so it's a completely different institution than it was when I was there. We got a good education. I was in an honors program called the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, which was very good for me. I got to write two long theses, and that was a big help getting into law school I think. So, academically, I did alright, and socially, it was kind of a bust except for the fencing team. We would import girls, women, for football weekends once or twice a year. At one point, I was dating a woman, young woman, high school girl, who lived across the street from my fencing coach. I got to meet her through him, and that went on for a year. We would go to the movies or something, or I'd hang out at her house but for the most part, it was a very abnormal, strange social life. The guys who were coming from all-male private schools adjusted very easily. For them, this was a big deal. It was freedom for them, whereas for me, it was just the opposite. I came from a coed high school where everybody had dated. You had social friends who were girls. We'd hang out together, have lunch together in the school cafeteria. We had none of that in college.

DF: Did you ever go up to Rutgers?

AM: I think I went there a couple of times for football games. Aside from that, I don't believe so, no. No, I did not. Rutgers at that point was also an all-male school, small, and it was similar to Princeton. They played football against each other every year until Rutgers got big in the football area, but I didn't hang out there very much. I would go to a place called, which ultimately became Douglas College. At that point it was New Jersey College for Women or something, and we would go to socials there a few times a year. They would hold socials and we would go to those. So, that was one thing we did have contact with Rutgers about.

NM: What were your majors at Princeton?

AM: Well, the Woodrow Wilson School was what they called a "bridge" program. You could take any course you wanted in politics, economics, or history. Then, they had these special seminars which focused, one each semester, on international affairs or special public issues, so you had a little of both. Seminars were small, relatively, maybe fifteen to twenty students with a professor, and that was where you developed your junior thesis and your senior thesis. ... There was always a main topic of discussion for the semester in the seminar, normally focusing on international affairs.

NM: In your major, would you follow topics like what was happening in the Soviet Union and China?

AM: Yes, we were interested in those things. The Cold War was going on, at least, yes we had the Cold War. Russia was the big enemy, communism was the big bugaboo, and we were very much interested and would study Russian affairs, Russian politics. ... It was a big subject, Eastern politics. China wasn't much in those days. Western Europe was still recovering from

World War II, just beginning to grow and develop, but the big focus was on communism, anti-communism, and Russia.

DF: Could you talk a little bit about the formation of your own belief system through college and studying these different public policies?

AM: By belief systems, you mean my political beliefs, or other beliefs?

DF: Yes, political beliefs.

AM: Political beliefs, I would consider myself a liberal. My parents were straight lifetime Democrats, big fans of FDR, and I followed suit in that respect. I don't remember getting terribly passionate about these issues the way kids do today. So, I was an "armchair liberal" in those days. I supported, I was a big fan of Adlai Stevenson. I loved him. He ran for president in '52 and again in '56. '52, I was a junior in high school, '56 I was a junior in college. I was a big supporter of his, I was an admirer of his, and I would say that my political beliefs pretty much tracked his. ... Does Adlai Stevenson mean anything to you?

DF: Yes, I know who he is.

AM: Good, I mean because a lot of college kids, you'd say Adlai Stevenson to them today and then you'd draw a blank. He was a very prominent leader in the liberal wing of the Democratic Party for many years and very instrumental in founding the UN. By the way, the UN was getting developed in those days. He remained with the government even after '56. He never got to be Secretary of State although he should have been. He was a US delegate to the UN for many years, and so I would say my political beliefs pretty much tracked his or he tracked mine depending on how you look at it.

NM: What led you to apply to law school?

AM: Okay, in 1957, we had the draft. I didn't want to go in the Army. I realized that if I didn't get into some kind of deferred situation, I would end up in the Army. However, I did interview with a number of industrial companies looking for a job. I remember going out to Proctor and Gamble and having interviews out there, none of whom offered me a job. I was interested in, at that point, marketing and advertising. I thought my journalism background in high school would be a help in that area, but I wasn't considered. They didn't offer me jobs. So, at that point, it was either get drafted or get into graduate school. I wasn't particularly enamored of the law. My only role model was my father's lawyer, a small town solo practitioner. I knew very little about, I wouldn't say I knew very little about it, but I knew a fair amount about politics and some law I picked up in my various politics and history courses, but I wasn't really heavily involved with the law at that point. I applied to law school. I was admitted to several law schools. Columbia was my choice, and I ended up matriculating there, and it was a bath of fire the first year. Really, it was quite an experience, but by the end of my first year, I began to enjoy it, and realized that this is something I probably want to do. I wasn't that enthusiastic when I first got there. I found my professors, however, very inspiring, very bright. They were teaching us skills to understand how the law works. It was all basic stuff, but by the end of my first year in law school, I decided I

wanted to be a lawyer although I had thoughts about going into teaching. I spoke to my dad about that while I was in law school, and even while I was in college, he discouraged me from that. He didn't think it was going to be lucrative enough. He was, don't forget my dad was a child of the Depression, and financial security was very important to him, and so he wanted me to get into a field where he thought I would be a good earner. ... At that point, teachers weren't earning a lot of money, still don't, and so although they had some kind of job security, he tried to discourage me from going into teaching and I never did actually. I stayed with the law. After I graduated, I was again eligible for the draft once I graduated from law school. So, what I did was join the Army Reserve. I joined a combat engineer unit, and they sent me for six months training in infantry and combat engineering, two months at Fort Dix and four months at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri where I learned to be a combat engineer. Build bridges, blow them up, dig ditches, all the things that--a combat engineer is just a rifleman with a shovel really--and we learned basic infantry tactics. ... I was assigned during my Fort Leonard Wood experience to a regular army unit. In other words, the way it was setup was we would have these reservists who were there for training, and they would separate us out for special classes every day, but then we would come back and join basically a combat ready unit of regular army guys. These were career guys. They were our barracks mates and they had great disdain for us. We were in for six months. A lot of these guys were in for life. They were from poor, deprived backgrounds. The Army was a big deal to them, and so, the few reservists in my company would hang out together, try to, you know, protect each other. The attitude of the regular Army guys and the sergeant, the company sergeant, the platoon sergeant, was just stay out of our way, don't interfere with what we're doing, just tag along, and that's what we did. ... I had more education than any of my company officers who were lieutenants and captains. I would sit and read books, which was looked down upon. There was a fair amount of religious discrimination among my fellow troopers. One guy from Utah had never seen a Jew before in his life, and he was very prejudiced, very prejudiced. So, we survived, the college graduates, most of the reservists were college graduates. We survived. I got out and I was assigned to an army reserve unit on 42nd Street in New York City, a quartermaster unit, where I spent the next five years or four and a half years going to weekly meetings and two-week summer camps. Most of the members of our company, the quartermaster company, were lawyers, doctors, accountants and professional people of that type. The colonel I was assigned to as his truck driver was a lawyer. I would drive for him in the summertime, and most of the time, when we went to the reserve meetings, the weekly meetings, guys would be sitting around playing bridge and watch an occasional movie. There wasn't a lot of training going on. The only real training we got was the two-week summer camp. We were not combat ready, that's for sure.

NM: Was the transition from military to civilian life difficult?

AM: Yes, it was a shock. It was hard for me to adjust to it. First of all, it was my first real exposure to very, very poor, deprived people in a close atmosphere, sharing the same room with these guys. I mean, I remember one guy from Appalachia. He had to have all his teeth pulled because they were rotten to the core. He had never gone to a dentist. This guy from Utah had never seen a Jew before. This is the kind of people we were interacting with. A lot of them were in for a career and it was hard to get used to. That's why we kind of sort of hung together, the reservists, college graduates. We were, you know, three or four in my company, we immediately found each other, and we would eat together and try to do whatever we could do together, stay

out of everybody's way, which is what they wanted us to do really. They just wanted us, the big thing that I learned in the Army was don't get noticed, don't volunteer, don't get noticed, don't do anything which calls attention to yourself. ... So, you learned, as opposed to college or high school, where I was encouraged to be an attention getter, a leader, not in the Army. It was survival because of who my fellow soldiers were among other things. Their mission was different from my mission. My mission was get this over with and get out. There were very few married guys in my company. Most of them were soldiers between the age of seventeen and twenty-one, or a little older, except for the company sergeants, who were in their forties and fifties. Some of them had been there for twenty years.

NM: Can you talk about the relationship between the officers and the recent college graduates?

AM: Yes, the officers themselves were recent college graduates. They were doing their time also. They'd probably been to Officer Candidate School or officer training in college. The company captain was a career officer. The company consists of several hundred men as broken down into platoons and platoons had first or second lieutenants running them. We had very little contact with the company commander, but we had a lot of contact with the second lieutenants who ran our platoon, commander, and they had had some training, but they weren't interested in us particularly, just stay out of their way too. They were learning their trade. Mostly they followed the lead of the career sergeants in the platoon who really knew what was going on and pretty much ran things. That's always been the way as I understand it in the Army probably in all the services. Your non-commissioned officers were there a long time. I mean, they would rotate out the platoon leaders but the sergeants would hang around a lot longer.

NM: Was your basic training and advanced training physically hard?

AM: Yes, it was, especially the first two months in Fort Dix. We went on long marches. We camped out. We did a lot of ... physical training, calisthenics, running, marching, and we learned basic skills, how to fire a rifle, which I was terrible at. I couldn't hit the side of a barn with the thing, and a lot of the training was done by watching movies. We learned to take apart an M1, and put it back together again, care for the rifle. So, we got in pretty good physical shape. Had some basic simple skills, but the really good infantry skills were not learned until the second half after the first two months. The guys who were going to stay in the infantry stayed at Fort Dix for what's called advanced basic, and they learned, they became real infantrymen. They learned to shoot better. I mean, I don't think I spent more than two or three days on the rifle range. One day, we crawled under barbed wire. There wasn't a lot of that, not in the first two months. Basically, the first two months we were learning how to march, take orders, stay out of trouble, keep as invisible as possible and get into good physical shape, and get us ready for the four months of advanced training where we really learned the skills. Of course, my four months advanced training was done in Fort Leonard Wood where I was learning how to be an engineer.

NM: You were trained in that because of the Reserve unit you joined in Plainfield?

AM: Yes, it was a combat engineer unit. So the Army was told to train me as an engineer, so the first two months everybody gets the same training, basic training, and then they split you up. If you had joined, if you were a reservist, and had joined an infantry company, you would stay

on and learn infantry skills. ... If you were an engineer, you'd do that. You get trained in that. There were various other specialties, but that's what happened.

NM: This is more of a technical question, was it a certainty that you would be drafted after completing your degrees?

AM: I think it was pretty sure. I mean, it was a high percentage if we were healthy to get drafted. So, yes, that's what motivated me. At that point, I was married, had no children, and if you got drafted, you were in for two or three years. You didn't have much of a choice of what kind of training you were going to get, whereas in the Reserves, you knew you'd be out of training in six months and can get a job, and I needed a job. I wanted to get a law job, so I wanted to get out of the Army as fast as possible. I moved back to New York after Fort Leonard Wood and we rented a small apartment. My wife got a job. I think at that point, let's see, this was 1961, she would have finished undergraduate school, and she was working in publishing I think, and I got a job for six months working as a research assistant for a law school professor named Richard Powell. I helped him do annotations for his treatise on property. ... After six months, I applied for jobs with law firms, and got a job with a small firm in Midtown, in New York City.

NM: While you are in the Army Reserve, was there a concern that perhaps you and your unit might be called up to active-duty?

AM: Well, when I was in Fort Leonard Wood, we had the Berlin Crisis. The unit was put on alert. We could be called out on like six hours notice. We had to stay on the base, and they were going to fly us over to Germany. They didn't, but everyone was very nervous about that. Once I got out, I wasn't as concerned because I don't think they were calling up reserve units at that point. ... Don't forget, at Fort Leonard Wood, the combat engineer company I was with, was a combat ready company, that they were ready to fight, but once I got in the reserves, there wasn't that much concern.

DF: Was that the overall attitude amongst the reservists, that they did not want to go abroad?

AM: ... Well, the overall attitude was we're going to do our time with as little trouble as possible. We were the quartermaster and headquarters company for the entire division, which was a reserve division. We had a lot of responsibility, which mostly the accountants in the company did very well. We had to supply the entire division every summer with equipment, food, and everything, so there was a lot of logistics involved, most of which was being done by, you know, by members of the company run by the officers. Some of the reservists had been in for quite some time. They didn't mind. I think some of them stayed in beyond their six years because they got good pay and they liked the work.

NM: What was your position when you were in the Reserve?

AM: I was a Spec 4. ... It was like a Corporal. I was a jeep driver, drove a quarter-ton truck at one point. I was assigned to headquarters company. ... I was one of the drivers for the company and that was pretty much it. It had nothing to do with my law [degree]. At that time, I was a

lawyer, and I was practicing law in New York, but ... it had nothing to do with my legal skills. It was basic stuff.

NM: What type of law were you interested in, and what type of law did you end up practicing?

AM: Well, Columbia Law School trained us to be corporate lawyers. That was the focus of the law school, still is actually. So, I wanted to become a corporate lawyer. One summer when I was in law school, I worked as a clerk, basically a runner, for a big "white shoe" firm down in Wall Street that did a lot of maritime law. ... I was assigned to the, basically a lawyer who ran the backroom office for the law firm, there were about thirty or forty lawyers. They represented shipping companies, and my boss was Jewish, and I spoke to him about applying to the firm once I got out of law school for a job. ... He said, "They will not hire you no matter how smart you are. You're the wrong religion." They hired him because he was in the back office. He had no contact with clients, didn't do what you would consider normal legal work. He ran the paper work for the law firm, made sure things got filed on time in the right places, that sort of thing, and he had assistants like me who would run to the courthouse, pick up documents, deliver documents, run around to the law firms. That was his job, but he said, "Don't even waste your time, you will not get hired," and that was the situation in 1960 in the big Wall Street law firms for the most part, particularly in this field, maritime law, because the maritime companies, the shipping companies, were also very discriminatory. Now, once I got into a medium sized firm, it was about twenty lawyers, my first job, the firm, I hate to say this, it was a Jewish law firm. All the lawyers, with no exception, were Jewish. The major client was a Jewish industrialist who ran and controlled several large companies, mostly in the retail field, and we did all their corporate work for them. I was trained to do securities work. I did work as a trial lawyer somewhat. I wrote briefs. I wasn't sent to court, but I wrote briefs. I learned trusts and estates. I had a pretty good basic background learning different areas. Whatever was needed for the corporate executives, we did, so if a corporate executive needed a will or an estate plan, we did it. Now, when we were at law school, the basic orientation was you could teach yourself anything given enough time. You don't have to take a course in it, just learn how to understand it from the books, and so that's what we were doing. We had a lot of confidence that we could learn almost anything. ... So, I learned trusts and estates, will-drafting, I did some tax work, and the securities work, which was very interesting. ... We were writing prospectuses for public offerings. After that, I went to another law firm. I actually worked for three firms when I was in New York City, each firm lasted about two or three years, from 1961 until 1968, seven years. ... My second job, I was assigned to a litigation partner and began to do trial work. It was also trial by fire. I mean, they'd hand me a file and say, "Go try this case." I had no training in how to be a trial lawyer. I might have had a course in evidence, and no clinical work, so I winged it. I did alright. They would assign cases which they didn't regard as "winners" to me, didn't want to waste the time of another lawyer. Then, the third firm I was with, I also did almost entirely trial work. So, I gradually focused more and more on litigation, less on securities, trusts and estates, that sort of thing. Then, in 1968, the law firm, the small law firm I was with, there were four lawyers, five lawyers, broke up, and they had no job for me. At that point, I had gotten sick and tired of moving around. I kept moving around hoping to improve my situation, increase my base pay which I did each time, get more responsibility. I was hungry for responsibility, and I did achieve those things, but when this law firm broke up, they had no job for me. I didn't want to start back in getting my resume around and starting with the interview process. ... I had always

had a job when I was looking for another job. In this situation, I was going to be out of work. At that point, I had a neighbor ... the same age as I was who was on his own in New Brunswick, and we had become friends. Our wives had gone to Barnard together, so we knew them, and he offered me not a job, but he allowed me, he said, "I'll let you rent an office from me in my New Brunswick office, and you can do some," ... I guess you'd call hourly contract work for him, and that's how I started. I had one client, my father. I did his corporate work, and I gradually was working my way through doing work for this guy's clients on an hourly basis and working off my rent that way. By that time, we had two children. Lynn wasn't working. We managed to eke our living, and gradually, I developed a partnership with this guy and became an equal partner. That lasted from '68 to '78, at which time that firm broke up, mainly because I discovered my "partner" had been stealing funds from me and from clients. So, he got indicted, pled guilty, and was given a two year suspended sentence and quit the law. I ended up holding the bag. ... We had three or four, a couple lawyers, working for us at that point, and three or four secretaries and paralegals. I pretty much had an entire year where I had to wrap up the work of the law firm with almost no income. Fortunately, Lynn was working at that point. She had taken a job as a librarian so we were able to live off her salary. ... I formed my own law firm at that point, and it's been my own law firm ever since until August of 2010, when we merged it. We merged it, my wife and I, Lynn had become my partner. ... Lynn had left being a librarian, went to Rutgers Law School in Newark, and became a lawyer. ... She worked for a large law firm for a year, and then worked for me for a year or so, and then in 1993 became my partner. I had had a partner, a younger man, who left the firm at that point, so ultimately it was just Lynn and me and several employees until August of 2010, when I was, at that point, I had been practicing law for forty-nine years, and decided to start thinking about withdrawing and retiring. So, we've merged with a firm of younger lawyers in the hope that they'd be able to take over my practice, and that's where we've been from August of 2010 until now, which is ... November 2011. Based on my health condition, I'd always felt that I would be there three years and then retire from there. We decided that I wasn't going to be able to practice law anymore and so we decided we would both retire December 2011, and that's what we're going to do. We haven't been doing much in a way of law practice the last six months because of my health.

NM: I want to back track because we covered a lot. I want to go back to the 1960's when you are raising a family and working in New York.

AM: I was commuting.

NM: Where were you coming from?

AM: Metuchen.

NM: You lived in New Jersey then?

AM: Well, we moved out of New York City when my second child was born. He was about six months old. I guess it was about 1965, and we'd bought a small house in Metuchen, which was a fairly easy commute. ... For several years I commuted to New York City, until '68, when I became a New Jersey lawyer. I had to take the bar exam in New Jersey at that point. So, I studied for the bar and passed it, but I had already been a lawyer for ten years, well, eight years,

and I took the bar and passed it. ... Once that happened, and I opened the office in New Brunswick, of course, my law firm in New York had broken up so I stopped commuting.

NM: From our conversations before, I understand that you followed the Civil Rights movement. Could you tell us about your experience?

AM: Yes, I mean this was the '60s and early '70s. I think the Plainfield race riot took place in '68 or '69. We had lots of friction between the black community and the white community. We were very concerned in Metuchen, again, it was a segregated community. The blacks lived in an area mostly over in Edison called the (Potter's Field?) area. It was kind of a rundown area. ... There was a lot of tension between the whites and the blacks in Edison and Metuchen, and we formed an operation, a group called the Metuchen-Edison Race Relations Council, and I became active in that. ... That consisted of community leaders both from the African-American community and the white community, and our job was to foster racial, improve racial relations. We ran social events. We gave out awards. We tried to publicize these various activities, the idea ... it's okay for the races to get together and do things together. There was a lot of involvement with the church community. Church leaders were very much interested in this movement. So, I was also involved in the anti-Vietnam peace movement, went on marches, sit-ins. So, both of those things were going on at the same time. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

NM: Could you tell us about approximately what years this council was active?

AM: I would say it was about '69 through the mid '70s, late seventies. We ran an annual dinner where we gave out Brotherhood Awards. We ran social events. Mostly, it was an opportunity for the community leaders to get together and talk. If incidents came up, we'd get involved, try to calm things down. There was a lot of unrest in the communities in Central New Jersey, all over the country at that time, riots. I mean Plainfield was a typical example. I mean, I already described to you how segregated it was, and there was a lot of resentment to that. ... Of course, it all broke out in '68 or '69 with these terrible riots in Newark, Plainfield, were the two major ones in Central New Jersey.

NM: Did your father and mother still live in Plainfield at that point?

AM: Once the riots happened, they had something called "white flight." Everybody left town and sold their houses. My parents moved to a place in Scotch Plains and then a place in West New York, but yes, they got out of town. They were afraid, frightened, and so our neighborhood turned from no African-Americans to probably ninety percent African-American in a period of a couple of years.

NM: Had your father sold his business to Mattel yet?

AM: ... He sold it to Mattel in, before this, in the mid '60s. He worked for them for a couple of years and then he retired. So, by that time, by the time he moved out of Plainfield, he was retired. He was still in his late fifties. He was young, but he worked very hard all his life, and he

had gotten a fairly decent price for his business. ... He decided he was just going to play golf and cards and socialize. They also had a house in Florida, an apartment there, and they would go back and forth from Florida to New Jersey. So, they lived a retirement life. ... They seemed content with that. They belonged to a country club here in New Jersey and one down in Florida.

NM: You had mentioned that you participated in things such as sit-ins and marches. Do you recall any of these incidents that you can share with us?

AM: I remember sitting in at the offices of Congressman Patten in New Brunswick just to protest something that was going on. I remember representing some kids. There were a lot of marches going on, and I ended up representing kids, college kids, Rutgers students, who got arrested for demonstrating. There were a bunch of students, young people, who camped out on city hall front lawn in New Brunswick, and they were arrested for protesting. This was the Vietnam War they were protesting, and I defended them in municipal court, and got them acquitted actually because the whole defense was they were peaceably demonstrating. This was just like the Occupy Wall Street group, but they were not blocking entry or exits from the city hall. They were just on the front lawn, and there wasn't any hygiene problem the way you had in New York or various other places, and the political situation was somewhat different, but I did defend them and they were acquitted on constitutional grounds. I took a number of cases for the American Civil Liberties Union during this period, the '60s and the '70s, free speech cases, as a volunteer. One case was a sign case where a fellow named Miller, same last name as mine, was, put up a big sign across the street from a development in Milltown protesting the development, saying the houses were, I don't know, something wrong with them, they weren't built properly. Of course, he had an axe to grind because he didn't want this extra traffic and so on, and he was given a ticket for violating a sign ordinance. We got him acquitted on constitutional grounds. As long as the sign was reasonable in size and so forth, so that was one case we had, and I had another case where a fellow, this is an interesting case, he was taking photographs on the New Jersey Turnpike. He was a professional photographer, and he witnessed a state trooper causing an accident. He was driving by and he saw a trooper who was backing his car up, caused an accident by really negligent driving. The photographer pulled over to the side of the road, and started taking pictures, and of course, the state troopers converged on him, and confiscated his camera, pulled the film out of the camera, threw it on the ground, and he was charged. There was an ordinance, an ordinance passed by the Turnpike Authority that said you couldn't take pictures on the New Jersey Turnpike because it was against their rules and regulations without a permit. ... I brought that up to the appellate division. We argued that it was an unconstitutional restriction on freedom of speech, taking photographs was a speech issue. Ultimately, they decided in my favor but on slightly different grounds. They decided that the regulation was not necessary. That is, it wasn't necessary to prohibit photographing on the Turnpike. There were no safety issues. So, the regulation was beyond their authority. So, he was found not guilty. I had a number of cases like that, free speech cases mostly.

NM: How did you get involved with the ACLU?

AM: I don't know. I was always a volunteer member. I don't remember who introduced me to them, but I was always very supportive of what they did, after all I was an armchair liberal. ... So, this was my way of making a contribution through my legal efforts. It didn't involve too

much effort on my part and I enjoyed the work. Yes, I don't remember exactly how I became involved, but once I became involved, ... we started getting assignments, and my wife also worked with me on some of these cases in later years.

NM: You had been mostly doing corporate law at this point?

AM: Well, once I moved to New Jersey, I did everything. I did personal injury. I did trusts and estates, wills, corporate, after all, I was a solo practitioner basically, even when I got partners in. ... Again, my Columbia training was that I can teach myself any area with the proper amount of study and application. ... Something else you have to keep in mind, back in the '60s and '70s, law was a lot simpler than it is today. There were fewer regulations, fewer laws. There has been a legal explosion. There was almost no family law. It wasn't even much of a subject in those days. Secured transactions were very simple. Everything was simple, simpler than it is today. It wasn't totally simple, but it was easier to learn and master. Today, we're talking about the 21st century, laws are much more complicated. Any particular area that you select, you're going to have a lot more you have to learn to master, and so there's much more specialization today than there was in those days.

NM: I wanted to ask in reference to your work with the ACLU, was it hard to transition to these types of trials and a different type of law?

AM: No, it wasn't. A trial is a trial as far as I was concerned. Most of the work was appellate work, brief writing and appellate argument, either in the appellate division. First there was a trial and then there would be an appeal to the appellate division or the Supreme Court of New Jersey. My great regret was I never got a case that went all the way up to the United States Supreme Court. I was mostly doing state court work, occasional federal case, but it never went beyond, only one federal case I had ended up in the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, but most of it was appellate work. ... It wasn't hard to learn this stuff. The constitutional principles were very appealing to me and interesting, and I enjoyed researching and writing about those things, and, of course, my college background didn't hurt me in that area. It helped, gave me some good perspective.

NM: Were you following the events in Vietnam?

AM: Yes, we were, oh sure, and we were protesting. Yes, we were definitely following them, keeping an eye, reading the newspapers every day. I wasn't much of a television guy. Most of my information came from print, magazines and newspapers. Even to this day I rarely get news from television. I mean, we read three newspapers every day, I read at least two of them. I don't get much information from the internet unless I want to look something up, but I'm a print guy. It comes from my background basically, whereas today, the young people are getting a lot of information through the internet, through television. I'm not knocking that. It's just a different source.

NM: When you say you participated in these protests of the Vietnam War, in what form did these protests materialize?

AM: ... Oh, we would march. We would sit in. We would hold rallies, that sort of thing. I never went through the, down South and marched in the Civil Rights march down there, but we had marches up here in New Brunswick, and I was a New Brunswick lawyer. I was active in Metuchen as I said in the racial relations council and the ACLU, so I participated. ... It wasn't a lot of it, but whatever it was available, and was necessary, we would do it.

NM: In the New Brunswick area, are there any particular marches or gatherings that stand out during this time period?

AM: I don't remember any particular one. I do remember sitting in Congressman Patten's office. He was very cordial to us by the way, didn't throw us out, had us in, and listened to our, what we had to say. ... He was a very good politician, and knew how to handle that sort of thing, but no one in particular stood out. I remember several down Easton Avenue with college students from Rutgers marching through the university campus. They were peaceful. There wasn't much in the way of, once in a while, a kid would get hauled away for making, getting in the way or mouthing off to a policeman, but mostly they were relatively peaceful.

DF: Did any of the protests conflict with your duties with the reserves?

AM: Mostly, by that time, I'd been out of the reserve. I got out of the reserve, they let me out six months early, or nine months early, so by '66, I was out of the reserves. ... It didn't interfere with my legal work in other areas, none of my clients held it against me. ... I didn't think there was any conflict in any way with what I was doing in my career.

NM: Is there anything that we missed about your time growing up in Plainfield?

AM: I'm trying to think, I mean, I've told you pretty much what the family life was like. We belonged to an Orthodox synagogue. When a conservative group got together, Jewish conservative group, my father became a leader in that group, and helped form a conservative synagogue, and left the Orthodox synagogue. One thing I remember very vividly, growing up, say between the ages, as early as I can remember, there was a street on the West End of Plainfield called Third Street where the Jewish merchants had their stores, their food stores. There were a couple of meat stores. There was a grocery store. There was a delicatessen. There were one or two bake shops, and mostly, the food was kosher, and the Jewish housewives would walk down there, it was not a difficult walk, and purchase their kosher food there or order and have it delivered from those places. I remember the delicatessen was a wonderful place. It was just like a typical Lower East Side delicatessen in New York City. There was a big pickle barrel with pickles in it. You put your hand in and helped yourself to the pickles. They would have different kinds of sausages, hot dogs really, and all kinds of specialty meats, lox, stuff like that. ... We used to hang out there. We'd go there on Sundays for sandwiches or Sunday dinner. I used to hang out a lot, not hang out, but my mother tells a story, I disappeared one day when I was about, must have been about six years old, five years old, ... maybe even younger, and they couldn't find me. They got very upset and alarmed, and then they got a call from Mrs. Stein at the grocery store on Third Street. I had walked through Stelle Avenue to Third Street, just to visit the (Steins?), and I was sitting there on the counter, and they were feeding me. She called my mother and told her I was there, but that was a big adventure. So, I had very fond memories

of that Third Street area. My mother would take me shopping with her wherever she went, I mean downtown on Front Street ... in Plainfield there were department stores, clothing stores, and I would be hauled along because she didn't have, at that point, someone to watch me at home, and she wanted to go shopping. ... I remember in high school, my father belonged to this country club called Twin Brooks up in Watchung, and I'd become a caddy up there. ... I would caddy, carry golf bags. They didn't have carts in those days so this was in the early '50s, so I would haul the golf clubs for a couple of players and I did that summers when I wasn't working in my father's factory. A few summers I worked in his factory at various tasks in the shipping department. I also even worked on sewing machines for a while in that area and moving goods around. I had a pretty thorough understanding of his business by the time I graduated from high school. As I said, I think he was grooming me to go into the business. ... That was the last thing I wanted to do. I didn't consider it intellectual enough. I wanted to be a writer, or, you know, at some point a marketing executive. I wanted to be a corporate type, and my father had a very hands on informal relationship with his business. I mean, he was on a first name basis with everyone in the factory. He'd walk around, he knew, one of the things he used to emphasize to me, if you're going to run a business, you have to know how to do every single job in that business, whether it was operating a sewing machine, cutting, heat sealing. Whatever it is, repairing stuff, you got to know how to do it, partly because there may not be someone around to do the job, but also so you can understand if other people are doing the job correctly. ... I think he wanted me to learn the business from the ground up that way, and I did to a certain extent, but there was no way that I was going to do that as a career. Now, both my brothers went into the business. The brother who was a year younger than me, ultimately stayed with my dad until he sold his business to Mattel. My brother had a partial stock interest, and then took the money and opened up his own manufacturing facility. My youngest brother, who went to college and then got a business degree from Rutgers, went to work there in the '50s, but he didn't last very long because he started telling everybody what to do based on his experience in graduate school, and they didn't care for that, so he went on to other things.

NM: I wanted to ask about the relationship between your father and the people who worked there. I am just trying to get a sense of the size of this factory. How many employees worked there?

AM: Well, it was unionized. There were probably fifty to a hundred employees, 125. When they sold to Mattel, it got much bigger, and he got along very well with the union leaders. It was a very comfortable relationship, even though they had left New York to avoid the union, but they worked everything out back in Plainfield. ... They had a softball team with the workers and my father and my uncle. They all played on the same team together. They had a league in the summertime. One of his employees who was a truck driver, would drive me back and forth to college and come and pick me up. So, it was a fairly close relationship between a number of the employees and my family. There wasn't much distance there.

NM: As far as the background of the people who worked in the factory, were they people from all over Plainfield?

AM: Yes, I would say. During the Hungarian Revolution, we had a lot of immigrants come in from Hungary, and a number of them came to work in the factory. They could hardly speak

English, but they were very good, hardworking, and skilled people. ... They were operating, mostly women, operating the sewing machines, I remember that. I'm trying to remember, I guess that was in '56, yes. A lot of the Hungarian immigrants who fled the Soviet invasion of Hungary, ended up down in Camp Kilmer, and my dad employed some of them. There was a big cultural gap between those people from Europe and the native, the American workers. ... I don't know how well they got along together, but the Hungarian workers, the Europeans, would hang out together. They had different hygienic habits. They weren't used to bathing every day, and I remember complaints about that. Of course, I don't know what their home situations were like, or even what kind of facilities they had available, but they were hardworking, and very skilled, and valued employees.

Lynn Miller: My grandfather only bathed once a week his whole life, my grandfather from Russia. ...

NM: Besides the Hungarian refugees who you remember working in the factory, did African Americans, Jews, Catholics, and people from different backgrounds work in the factory?

AM: Yes, we had from all walks of life, all ethnic groups, anyway. The office workers were all white, but we had a number of, some anyway, minority workers, not a lot. They weren't high up on the skill level, African-Americans anyway, at least not at that time, and most of the work there was sewing, and cutting, and shipping. ... Of course, there was some designing going on too. Mostly, this designing was copying other people's designs.

NM: Is there anything else about your time at Princeton that you want to share for the tape?

AM: Well, I think I spoke about the social milieu, the sports thing, ... and my academic interests. ... I wasn't particularly happy there. Aside from the fact, if I hadn't had that fencing team affiliation, I would have been miserable. I just felt like an outsider. The first year was a horrible struggle. All the private school students who had come in, they were way ahead of the public school students, even though I had been in special classes all through public school, all through high school. These guys, most of the stuff they were learning in their freshman year, a lot of it they'd already had in prep school, but by the second and third year we kind of caught up. ... Everyone was on par by junior year in terms of academic achievement and skills.

NM: You talked previously about how you had the chance to take courses in different fields of history and political science at Princeton. Is there any type of topic you particularly focused on?

AM: I liked it all. I liked the politics stuff. I liked the history. I found it all very stimulating. I really enjoyed my, the academic side of college. We also had electives. I remember taking a music course, art course. ... I took a sculpture course. The sculpture was a volunteer after school thing and so it was quite an eclectic mix. I took some religion courses, which I found fascinating, and, of course, I took three years of German language. So, it was quite a mix, a little bit of everything.

LM: Who was the famous sculptor that you studied with?

AM: I don't remember his last name.

LM: He had a house down by the canal.

AM: Yes, don't worry about it. ...

NM: What particular types of history did you learn about? Was it modern or ancient history?

AM: I remember taking a European history course. I remember taking an American history course. I don't remember taking anything like Greek and Roman history. I'm sure it was available. ... There wasn't a lot of interest in it at that point as far as I can remember. Mostly we were interested in eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth century history. After all, we'd all come out of World War II and growing up in that era, and a lot was happening in Europe, tremendous, you know, ferment, with Russia, Western Europe, and that was the focus of all the history we were taking too.

NM: Moving on to your law career, I know we covered it pretty thoroughly, but is there anything that we left out?

AM: I don't think so. I mean, I ended up taking a number of seminars as a third year student. There wasn't a lot of practical stuff we were getting, clinical stuff, the way you would get today in law school. I got a lot out of what's called "moot court" where we did an appellate, brief, enjoyed that, I learned a lot about legal writing from that. I enjoyed legal research. Of course, in those days, it was all by hand. There was no electronic research. There weren't any computers. So, everything had to be done by hand, by reading, using textbooks, and going from case to case. It was much more laborious. Today, I could do in an hour what might take me three days back at Columbia Law School in research, researching a topic, because the computerization has streamlined and enables you to focus that type of legal research tremendously. So, it's much, much easier today than it was then, but I enjoyed legal writing. The seminars we took, we all had to write papers in, and in college, I did a large thesis in my senior year on the interstate commerce commission and regulation of the trucking and railroad industry. ... I was very much interested in governmental regulation, which was a big thing in those days. The interstate commerce commission doesn't even exist anymore, but in those days, it set all the rates for truckers and railroads. There was a lot more regulation in commerce than there is today. Although, in certain areas in commerce, regulation has come into focus more. I mean securities, for example, is much more closely regulated than it was back then.

LM: You did not have environmental laws, either.

AM: There was no such thing as environmental law. We had a labor law course. I was interested in labor law. We didn't have environmental law. We didn't even study family law. There wasn't any family law courses as far as I can remember back in the late '50s. The only way you could get a divorce back then was adultery or abandonment. Divorce was very difficult to get. I remember working, one of my early jobs as a lawyer in New York, working with a family lawyer who employed detectives to follow people around and try to stick them with an adultery charge. It was all very unsavory, and big law firms didn't want to have anything to do

with it. So, it was left to the smaller law firms. Of course, in the eighties and nineties, family got to be a much different kind of practice. Divorce got easier. There were bigger money issues involved, alimony and support and equitable distribution, dividing up family wealth, so the bigger law firms got into the field later on. ... When I was first starting out, family law was considered kind of unsavory. It was, you know, hanging out with these private eyes who would break into bedrooms with cameras and take pictures. ... They'd go in with a recorder and that sort of thing.

NM: How has Plainfield changed from the time when you were a youth there?

AM: I haven't been back there very much in the last twenty-five years. Areas that were all white are now predominantly African-American. The city, the politicians, the city council, I know, the population of Plainfield is heavily African-American and Hispanic. So, the ethnic composition and the racial composition of the town has changed dramatically. The town is still somewhat depressed economically. It's, back in the '40s and '50s, as I said, there were four movie theaters. There were two big department stores. There was a lot of, it was a hub. ... There were some big company employers, but it was a center, a shopping center. We didn't have the highway shopping centers. It didn't get developed until the late '50s, early '60s. They just started then. One of the first ones that were developed was on Route 22. It was called the Blue Star. ... It's still there I think. ... There were very little of those highway shopping centers. All the shopping was done in central towns like Plainfield or Westfield or Trenton, places like that. ... Of course, the riots, the racial tensions, had a lot to do with losing that focus, the commercial focus. ... Then, of course, people started wanting to get in their cars and drive to shopping centers, and that's what they were doing by the late '70s and '80s, and that's where we are today, although there has been some renaissance, I understand, in downtown. If you go to downtown New Brunswick, you'll see a return to a lot of commercial development that New Brunswick enjoyed back in the late '40s and early '50s. There are theaters. There are stores. They don't have any big department stores, but there's plenty of commerce going on, apartment buildings, businesses. So, there was a loss of that central commercial focus, and now it's being regained. ... I don't know about Plainfield. As I say, I'm hoping that it will also enjoy that kind of change, but I don't know if it has. Have you been back there? Have you been there?

NM: No, I am not familiar with the area.

LM: What about the big houses up on the hills?

AM: ... Plainfield has always had an area with very large and expensive mansions which remain there. It's called the Sleepy Hollow area.

LM: A lot of people go back there.

AM: Yes, but as a commercial center, I don't think Plainfield has come back at all really. It hasn't managed to do what New Brunswick has done. Places like Trenton and Newark are struggling, Newark, the downtown, if you go to downtown, Newark, I've been there a lot, they lost all their department stores, all their upscale shopping, and that's what happened to Plainfield.

LM: Yes, we used to walk downtown. The kids were able to walk downtown after school. ... It was a walking town. I don't think it is anymore.

NM: Is there anything that you would like to add as we conclude the interview about growing up in New Jersey, your career, or your family?

AM: Well, I think growing up in Plainfield was a very nurturing environment. There was a lot of personal freedom as a kid. I was allowed to walk around town, play outdoors all day long without any supervision. ... That environment has changed somewhat, I know. Raising my kids in Metuchen and then in Highland Park, was also very nice, both good communities to raise families in. ... We had our issues and problems, but for the most part, they had good educations, the schools were good. I was on the school board in Highland Park for a few years. I got involved in that and learned a little bit more about the education system through that experience when my son was in high school, and I enjoyed that experience. That was my one elected office. I was elected to the school board. I was kind of drafted for the job, and so that was an interesting civic assignment which I got. I got a lot out of that, but when my term was over, I didn't want to renew it either. I had enough, too many meetings, but both Metuchen and Highland Park were great places to raise kids. As I say, good schools, friendly people, a pretty safe environment, both were good walking towns. You'd walk around, walk downtown, the kids were allowed to play outdoors without a lot of supervision, unlike today when parents keep an eye, a much closer eye on the children than they did in those days. I mean, I would disappear after school. My mother had no idea where I was. I only had one obligation, got to be home at six o'clock for dinner. ... Aside from that, she had no idea where I was, and as I said, one day I disappeared and ended up down on Third Street in a grocery store, but that didn't stop her from letting me go out and play every day. Discipline, we never touched on discipline. My parents believed in corporal punishment, and I'd get strapped, beaten, when I was misbehaving. Mostly that job was left for my father to do when he got home, but being the oldest, and I suppose the most mischievous of the four kids, I got the brunt of it. Once they saw me getting disciplined, it kind of brought them, my younger brothers, into line, and I think my father used me as an example from that point of view. I was somewhat rebellious as a kid, and I remember getting strapped a fair amount at times on a bare behind with a real leather strap. There was none of this spare the rod and spoil the child, ... and that was the main form of discipline. None of this time-out business that the kids get now, no one got shamed into doing anything. You knew that if you were going to get out of line it was going to hurt physically and I remember that very vividly. I don't think it scarred me for life or affected me, although my wife probably disagrees, but corporal punishment isn't very popular these days the way it was back then. That was how you took care of your kids.

NM: Is there anything else?

AM: I think I pretty much covered everything.

NM: Well, thank you for having us Mr. Miller.

AM: You're welcome. The other voice on the tape is my wife, Lynn Miller.

NM: Who we interviewed and are currently transcribing. Thank you very much, both of you.

DF: Thank you.

AM: You're welcome.

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

Reviewed by Katie Ruffer 3/12/13

Reviewed by Nicholas Molnar 3/29/13

Reviewed by Lynn Miller 5/7/13