RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH IRVIN BAKER

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH
and
SANDRA STEWART HOLYOAK

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY
MAY 26, 2000

TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

This begins an interview with Mr. Irvin Baker on May 26, 2000 in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Shaun Illingworth and Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

SH: We'd like to thank you for taking time to come in today for the interview and we'd also like to welcome Mrs. Baker who is sitting in the background. To begin the interview, I'll ask you to state for us where and when you were born, please.

IB: I was born in Akron, Ohio, December 28, 1920.

SH: Can you tell me please your father's name and a little bit about his life?

IB: My father's name is David and he came over to this country when he was six years old with his father and the family and settled in Atlantic City … My father and mother were married at a very young age, and they were divorced at a very young age; I was two years old when they divorced. My father met my mother who lived on a farm in Estelle Manor, which is near Mays Landing in Atlantic County. He met her during World War I, when he was employed at the Bethlehem Steel Company Plant, which was across the highway from the farm, and he worked there until he entered the Army. When he finished his enlistment, he went back to the farm, because she sort of struck a chord in his heart, and first thing you know they were married. After the divorce, I went to live with my grandparents. It was my mother's parent's farm, and I lived there, and they raised me till I was fourteen years old**.** I moved to Atlantic City. We left the farm.

SH: Where did your father come from?

IB: Latvia.

SH: Latvia? Did they keep any of the customs that you know of, your grandparents?

IB: If they did, they kept them hidden because they were very Americanized.

SH: You talked about your mother, what about your mother's family?

IB: My mother's family, my mother was born on the farm in the Mays Landing area, Atlantic County, and her parents came from the Ukraine. They settled in that farm and I don't know how they came to get the farm, how they were able to finance it, but they left the Ukraine for the same reason that my father's parents left Latvia. There were pogroms and they, being Jewish, were subject to attacks, and my Baker grandfather had a raid by the Cossacks and he had to hide his daughters in a potato cellar, and after that time, he said, "That's it. I'll not go through this again," and so he left and found his way to Atlantic City because his sister had preceded him to Atlantic City. Now, my mother's parents left because things were kind of tough and a particular pogrom didn't cause them to leave. They left because somebody in the family had made their way and said that things are better in America; you have better opportunities. My grandfather and grandmother were introduced as bridegroom and bride-to-be at the age of fourteen, which was the custom in those days, so they, they were married. My grandfather left with his mother and father around 1888 and my grandmother was pregnant. I guess, she was probably sixteen by

then and she followed after the child was born, while he was still an infant. She traveled in steerage across the ocean. She said it was a terrible trip. She was sick all the time, but, she made it in good shape. She was of tough stock. My grandfather and his parents set up a little tailor shop on this farm, where they made vests. Somebody else made the trousers, somebody else made the jacket for suits, for the Snellenburg Department Store in Philadelphia and they started with a cow. My grandmother took care of the cow, and then they started bringing in more cows and they eventually had a herd of twenty-five dairy cows. Then they decided that they should look into poultry, so they got into Leghorn chickens, and that sort of took the fancy of my grandfather. He became very interested in poultry husbandry. He managed to teach himself English, taught himself how to read and write, and he started getting textbooks on poultry husbandry, poultry pathology, poultry nutrition. I remember them. They were very thick, and he started experimenting and the farm grew. They had something like 8,000 chickens. These were all egg layers and he started a small hatchery that had a capacity of about 5,000 eggs and he started culling out and developing a strain of chickens that were good egg producers. He decided that the old way of letting chickens drink water out of a pan that was on the ground floor was not a very good thing to do because chickens had their droppings in there and they drank the water and he felt that that was a good source of diseases. So, he developed a patent application for a fountain. During the winter the fountain was running all the time so it never froze. During the warmer weather, it was set up so when a chicken would jump up on a little ledge it would trigger the mechanism and the water would flow, and the incidence of disease was reduced by almost as close to a hundred percent as you could get. … He wasn't able to follow through because he became ill, didn't follow through with the patent. I**t** just stayed as an application. But what he did do, he sent to Vineland, they had an egg laying contest, and this makes most people laugh because, "an international egg laying contest," like a track meet. You selected a dozen of what you thought would be good producers and you competed against maybe hundreds of other farms with the state, or some association monitoring. Well, our flock set all kinds of records and with that everybody wanted to buy the baby chicks from our flock and my grandfather added to the hatchery, so now he could incubate 25,000 eggs at one time, and the orders were coming in, everybody wanted baby chicks. There was another person in Vineland by the name of Elmer H. Wene. He became a Congressman and he wanted to get our baby chicks. Then my grandfather became very ill, and so he couldn't really handle it, and I was just a little kid and there was no one else to come in. But, they thought of my father, even though my father had been separated and divorced from my mother, they called him. He said, "Call Dave," and my father left his business. He was in the furniture business with his father and his brother and he left them and he ran the hatchery. He's very mechanical and he figured out how you do it. He got a very high percentage of the chicks hatching. So we got through that particular hatch, and then they couldn't take any more orders, because he couldn't stay there beyond that point. When the word got out that we had such a good record, everybody wanted to find out how we did it. So, I guess, it was the county agent and the State Agricultural Extension Service, who made arrangements for poultry farmers from all over the State of New Jersey, that was a focal point, and they came there, and I came home from school one day, and I saw all these cars and, "My God, I hope the place didn't burn down." There was my grandfather explaining how he took care of the chickens, their nutrition, and he had some wild formulas, using cod liver oil and oyster shells, and bran, and all sorts of different items that were not the norm, and what he had done to curb diseases. He was always willing to share and that's what he did that day, two hundred and fifty farmers came there. Then another time, there was an organization that took care of the Jewish

poultry farmers, I forget what they called themselves, and they had arranged for the Jewish farmers to come and they came from New Jersey, Delaware**,** and Pennsylvania, and it was the same. They wanted to find out, and the orders kept coming in for more baby chicks, and we were shipping the eggs. Every week we made two shipments to New York, to a company called Schechter and Schechter, and nobody paid much attention to them. But, during the Roosevelt era there was an NRA, The National Recovery Act, and they filed a claim, a case against that, and they went to the Supreme Court and Schechter and Schechter was responsible for breaking it, the court saying the NRA was unconstitutional, and it's a different NRA than what we're talking about today [The National Rifle Association], in today's news. Then my grandfather passed away when I was about twelve years old or eleven going on twelve.

SH: What was his name?

IB: His name was Samuel

SH: And the last name?

IB: Baevsky and he, I guess, had the greatest influence on my life.

SH: When he passed away then what happened to the farm?

IB: Well, my grandmother ran it for four years. She was tough. We had workers there, and she would see that they did. She really ran the farm while my grandfather was alive because he was always studying. She was like the foreman**,** he was the superintendent. So, she had no problem running it, but then, she felt I should go to high school. I could have stayed there, been driven to Pleasantville. I would have to travel to Pleasantville by bus, which would have been maybe a half hour ride, or something like that. But, she thought that it was time to leave the farm, and I think they rented it at that time, and we moved to Atlantic City and I lived with an aunt. My grandmother went with another daughter and then a year later, that daughter moved to Atlantic City with my grandmother and then I lived with them.

SH: What did they do for a living in Atlantic City?

IB: My uncle got a jitney, one of the jitney busses you buy and franchise and you have the rights, and you own it, and you fit it to a certain schedule. They set a schedule that, in fact, later on, my father decided that it was a good way to retire. He could be his own boss. He had to work, if he was scheduled to work from say, eight to four, he couldn't work beyond four, but he didn't have to work between eight and four, or he could work three hours or two hours, and so, that's what he did until he was eighty years old. He decided it was time to park it, so, he gave up the jitney.

SH: I'd like to ask about your father. Did he talk about his military career in World War I?

IB: A little bit. My father was stationed at Fort Eustis, Virginia, and he was a very good boxer. In fact, he was the camp champ of Fort Eustis and, I guess, he weighed about one hundred forty-five pounds. That would probably be a welterweight. So, he was the welterweight champ at Fort

Eustis, Virginia. He came back and he thought he would be a professional, because he was good; he was undefeated. My grandmother found out, she says, "I will not have any box fighters living in my house." Well, she was an awfully good cook. So, he gave up being a box fighter and went into the furniture store, with my grandfather.

SH: Did he see any action overseas?

IB: No. He was not sent over there. The Armistice was signed, I think they were getting close to being shipped out, but, for America that was a short war so that he never got overseas.

SH: How did the family wind up in Akron, Ohio?

IB: Well, it was my father and my mother. My father, I guess, had a moment of independence. He wanted to see if he could make it without working for his father, and so, we had a relative or two in Akron and they said there were a lot of opportunities out there, and so he went up. We all went for a better job opportunity and we only stayed, I guess, they were there a month or two before I was born, and they only stayed for about six weeks after I was born, maybe two months, and he decided it wasn't the place. Atlantic City looked better, the climate was better, and so he went back.

SI: What kind of a town was Atlantic City when you were there?

IB: It was a wonderful town. It was a town for families. You had people coming down and renting rooms in someone's home with kitchen privileges, so that they would make a schedule, and you had people with rooming houses who rented four or five bedrooms or more. It was delightful. You walk down the street and you hear all languages, Italian, Greek, and Russian, and Jewish, and everything as you went by, and the boardwalk had stores. You had beautiful hotels, the Marlborough-Blenheim, the Traymore, and Claridge, is still there, as it was. I think the one where we had, Haddon Hall, I think Haddon Hall is still there. One of the casinos, I think, is in Haddon Hall. But, everything else is new, they knocked it down and rebuilt, and, so now, you don't have stores. People just loved to walk the boardwalk and window shop. I don't know if they bought anything, but they window-shopped. Well, I think I mentioned the comparison between the old Atlantic City and the new Atlantic City and we had about 65,000 people as year round residents. Now, you have maybe 35,000. We had 2,800 in the high school and that was a real experience, coming from a one-room school in Estelle Manor, where we had all the grades, eight grades. But, we generally had six, because, if you had one kid who should have gone to the seventh grade, but there were no other people in the seventh grade, that kid stayed in the sixth and worked with that group. So, you never had more than six, and then, coming in to Atlantic City High School with all its levels, I was lost for about a month. I never got to the right class on time, and so, a couple of people, who became my friends, sort of escorted me and made sure that I got where I had to be and I was very shy. My first time I raised my voice was when the English teacher said, "This class is too crowded and I'd like to get a volunteer. I need three or four volunteers, to go to such and such class. It doesn't have as many students," and so I raised my hands, and she said, "Oh, you are alive," and I was glad I did because I got a very young teacher, just out of school, and she sort of brought out the shyness and helped me get through that period of my life. I wound up being president of the graduating

class, so, I fooled them. In fact, my campaign manager became a physician in Atlantic City, when he campaigned, he said, "This is a fella' who came from the sticks, the one room school, a little red school house." That's what got me elected, little red schoolhouse.

SH: When you talked about your English teacher, who had an influence on your life, what activities were you involved in? Did you have summer jobs or after school jobs?

IB: Oh, yes. I had to work because I started working at the beginning, before I started school, that summer, because I knew I had to save money for college. So, I worked every summer in a restaurant because I felt I wouldn't have to pay money for food. I'd get my food. I always enjoyed food and I did that and also, during the year, I worked Saturdays and Sundays, which was really tough because in those days kids didn't have eight-hour days. You put in ten or twelve hours and Saturday and Sunday I would have put in twenty-two or twenty-four hours. So, when Monday rolls around, I was really not in the best shape to get to school. But, most of the time, I managed to get there on time and had difficulty staying awake, particularly in the morning. I remember one of my teachers, a Miss Stanburg, who asked me a question and, I guess, I was like this, and dozing, and I remember her saying, "Closer, closer," and bang! I'm here, and I looked up, "What's the matter?" She says, "Can you do this problem?" And you know I got up and I did the problem. She said, "Go back to sleep." After, she said, "I want to talk you after class." So, we talked, and I told her my problem and she says, "Okay, see if you can work less hours on Sundays, so you can get more sleep." She was very understanding. Teachers were very understanding, and very helpful, and willing to go the extra mile for somebody. If you had to go after school because you didn't understand, they never rushed off. They give you as much time as you needed. They are wonderful people.

SH: You knew you had to work for college. Did this mean that your family just expected you to go to college?

IB: No, I expected to go to college. That was my goal, and I knew that if I, and I guess, yes, they, too, expected, but, they weren't able. We were just coming out of the Depression and I knew that the resources were not too great, and so, I knew I had to make, and I had only decided to go to Rutgers, because, I decided I was going to enter the College of Agriculture at that time. In fact, I used to regale my classmates with books on poultry husbandry, and then when I got to Rutgers, I decided I wasn't going to study poultry husbandry; I knew all that stuff. So I took the preparation for research in soils, agronomy, and I had a wonderful adviser, Dr. Jacob Joffe. He was an outstanding soil chemistry professor, known all over the world. The Russians were leading soil scientists, and he was able to translate, because he had come from Russia, and he would translate, and then taking what he learned from them and what he learned on his own, he was a great help.

SH: To back up just a little bit, back to Atlantic City and to your family. Did they speak Latvian or Ukrainian in the home or did you learn to speak English right away?

IB: No, English. They all spoke English. They only spoke Yiddish or Russian if they didn't want me to know what they were saying.

SH: We've heard that story before. About your high school, what were your extra curricular activities?

IB: Well, I was on the track team. I don't know where I found the strength, but by Wednesday it sort of came, and I was on the track team then, and I was in the French Club and I was in the Current Events Club, and, I guess, there were a few others. There was Latin, I took Latin for two years, I think there was a Latin Club. I liked clubs. So, I joined as many as I could and then, there was also, in those days, you had fraternities, high school fraternities, and it was really like a club, and I was asked to join by this one friend, who was one of those who was guiding me around when I first came, and I was glad I did because it broadened my contacts with people, because I wasn't just acquainted with those in my class but I met everybody.

SH: Were there certain high school teachers that guided you or mentored you towards or were you already self-directed heading for Rutgers and the Ag College?

IB: No. They didn't guide me but they were helpful once they found out that's what I was going to do. I had a chemistry professor who got a doctorate developing a procedure to determine diabetes. You run a blank on names, but, he could have gone to any college, but he said that he got a pleasure out of seeing one of his students making number one at some other college. He said, "You can get a certain amount," and he said, "Water tastes the same way if it's a lead pipe or a gold pipe."

SH: Did you visit Rutgers campus before you came here as a student?

IB: No. I came up for my interview.

SH: And who interviewed you?

IB: Dean Metzger.

SH: And how did that go?

IB: Well, it went pretty well. I came up, I bummed a ride with two other people, … with the parent of one of the two, and he interviewed the three of us, and I was the third. … He had a reputation for being anti-Semitic, so I didn't know what I was going to find out but … he knew. We came together, and the other two fellows had Jewish names, one was Abrams, Billy Abrams, he is since deceased, and I forget the other fellow, and then I came in with a name, Baker, which, you know, but he figured that since I was with them I had to be, and he asked me what synagogue I belonged to in Atlantic City. I didn't belong to any, but I cooked up a name, one that I knew. I'm glad he didn't ask me the rabbi's name, because I would have been cooked. He's the one who said, he looked over my grades and he said, "You should try for the State Scholarship." So I did, and one of my classmates got it, and his father was very friendly with State Senator Hahnaman and he got a letter from Hahnaman and I didn't even know Hahnaman's janitor, so I didn't get the State Scholarship. But, at the end of my freshman year, I knew I was going to be out of money and I couldn't make it into my sophomore year. So, I went back to the Dean, and I tried to float a loan and there was an assistant dean, [Edgar G.] Curtin, very nice guy,

and I told him, "I'm running out of money and I won't make it. I cannot earn enough this summer." So, he asked me what I was involved with and I said, "Well, I'm on the track team." He said, "I'll call the coach." So, he called the coach and we had a coach named Bernie Wefers. He was an old gent, about my age now, and he was still coaching and I could hear, he had a gravely voice, he said, "There's a young fellow here by the name of Baker. He needs money," and I heard him say, "You give him all the help you can. I want him for the mile relay," and they did, and they gave me a Dean's Scholarship, and he walked me into Dean Metzger and he gave him the story and he said, "Okay," and they gave me the Dean's Scholarship so I didn't have that to worry about. Going here was cheap, you know, it's unbelievable, and for my sophomore year I moved into Winants Hall with two other fellows, my friend from Atlantic City, and another one from Paterson, and I think it cost us $100.00 a semester and we had rooms. The floors were crooked, the building had settled, so that if you had a can of soda and it tipped over, the door was open, it went out, and it would go down the steps. They fixed it since then. I was on that committee. We fixed it.

SH: Really?

IB: Yes.

SH: Do you remember your roommates' names?

IB: Abe Wilson and Joe Webber. Abe Wilson I just talked to this morning. Joe Webber travels a lot. He's a retired chemist. He was vice president of Hoffman LaRoche, retired a number of years ago. I don't talk to him as often. … I've been chairman of my class reunions for the five years, I've had three, so that's fifteen years that I've been, and in the course of that, I call people and my wife will testify that for our fifty-fifth, I was so depressed because I'd call so and so and he said, "Gee, I got macular degeneration. My wife has to drive me down and she's not doing too well. She can't drive." Another one has got something and another one had a couple of new hips and his wife had macular degeneration, I made about six or seven calls, and everybody was in such bad physical condition, I was really depressed and felt a little guilty that I was feeling so well, you know. But that's the way things are.

SH: Where did you live in your freshman year on campus?

IB: I lived off campus in back of the gym**,** about three blocks, on Delafield Street. My mother found this place. She was looking for a clean place. Well, she found probably the cleanest place in New Brunswick. … You could eat off the floor, it was that clean, a Hungarian family, was the sweetest people and I rented a room for $4.00 a week. She gave me Sunday dinner. Then I got a job at the College Farm. I hadn't quite separated myself from poultry husbandry. So, I got a job in the poultry farm, cleaning the stuff out, and … I had to go to class after that and people I'd sit down and people would move. So I quit that job, and I went over to agronomy. I worked in the agronomy department for whatever, fifty cents an hour; I think it was, NYA. [National Youth Administration]

SH: Did you have any interaction with Helyar?

IB: Yes, yes. He was the sort of student adviser for everybody, and … when I had a question to ask, he would direct me and so, in fact, I think before I changed my mind, because freshman year was identical no matter what you want to be and so, before I made up my mind, I went to see him and asked him who should I talk to and so, he directed me to the right people and that's how I got into preparation for research, because it really prepared me. I could have been a chemist, had I wanted to be, because you had chemistry through, physical chemistry, organic and physical chemistry, all the analytical, two analyticals, and then you took courses in the course of your interests and mine was in soils, so, he was very helpful.

SI: Were there a number of people working there under the NYA?

IB: Well, in the agronomy department, there were just a handful, maybe four or five, and in each group there were maybe four or five. We all had to work, everybody. There were just a few who had money and didn't have to worry. We used to benefit by getting a lift from that campus over to here, with those people.

SI: Was there any other way that any New Deal programs affected you at all, either when you were in high school or in college or even on the farm?

IB: No. Nothing directly until Social Security.

SH: What did your family think of the political parties in the United States then? Were they Democrats?

IB: They were Democrats. My grandfather was a Democrat. My mother was a Democrat, my father was a Democrat. My father was a Democrat, but, he also**,** because of his business**,** had to become a Republican. So in Atlantic City, you had to be a Republican or you were stuck in Absecon or something.

SH: I just wondered if, around the table, were there any discussions of some of FDR's programs and the effect of the Depression?

IB: Well, my grandfather**,** on the farm**,** was very astute and very aware of what was going on. Of course, he passed away just at the beginning. I think it was 1932, so that he had hopes, and he, I remember, was upset. He liked Al Smith, and was very upset at the issue, the Catholic issue was brought up. In fact, something very interesting about my grandfather and his egalitarian attitude, when I went to this little grade school, it was all white and they were going to bring in some black children, we called them Negroes in those days, and they were going to bring in three, and there was a lot of resentment, and the kids were talking about it. They got it from their parents, and I told my grandfather about it. I said, "They're gonna bring in these colored kids, three colored kids," and I said, "They're against it," and he said, "Well, you got to talk to them. Everybody in this country is entitled to an education, no matter what." He said, "I don't care what color they are, they're entitled to an education, so you tell them that for people who have to live their life in this country, they have to learn, and the other people have to learn to live with them and deal with them and work with them and study with them." So I told them. I didn't get very far in the beginning but I said, "We can't be mean to them when they come. We don't have

to share our food with them if you don't want to, but, you give them a chance," and the three kids came and we had no problems. He was very ahead of his time.

SH: There had been talk that there was Klan activity in that part of Jersey.

IB: Well, it's funny you brought that up, but I am old for my class because I was not able to start school when I should have started. We lived 1.8 miles from the school and the school bus driver, went by our farm, would not pick me up because the law said I had to be two miles, but the bus was half full, and he didn't pick me up and he didn't pick my friend up, Joe Giaconda, who was Irish-Italian Catholic. So, he and I were kept out of school. My grandfather said, "Look, we just got a car," in those days, everybody didn't have a car, "and we could take you to school, but I don't want to do that. I want you to stay home," I lived with my two aunts who were not married at that time. "They will teach you what you learn in the beginning. You will learn your ABCs, know how to count and do everything," and he took legal action, and it took almost a whole year and that man's contract was not renewed. They gave it to his son, with a proviso that no matter where a person lived, if he had a space, he had to pick up that person, he could be right around the corner from the school, and so, but I lost a year and my friend lost a year, because of the Klan, and this man hadn't changed because around 1952 or 1953, we were visiting Atlantic City, I took my wife and my mother-in-law and, I guess, our daughter who was just an infant then, and I went to show them the little school house, and this bus driver lived next door to the school house. His wife was a wonderful person. I don't know how she could live with this man, and so, I went over to see him, and he came out, he was still alive, and mean, and he said to his wife, "You know, these Jews are nice looking people." He didn't learn a thing at all. I didn't hit him. I controlled myself. The Klan was active.

SH: Had you seen anything else?

IB: Well, I had confronted, beyond him, about three days a week, I had to fight somebody over the Jewish issue, and it was mainly that I killed Christ. I was known as the Christ-killer of the school. There were thirty-two or thirty-four kids in that school. I'd go home with my clothes torn, and I had a neighbor, who was about seventeen or eighteen, he didn't go on, I think he went to high school for a year or two, and he's working as a mechanic, and he was Catholic and I went to him and I told him what was happening. I said, "They're accusing me of killing Christ, I don't understand it, I didn't know the person." I didn't know anything about religion. He said, "Well, I'll tell you what you tell them." He said, this happened to be a Polish family, three brothers, and he said, "You tell them this the next time they raise the issue, you say, 'somebody had to kill him. The Poles didn't have the guts to, so the Jews did'." I mean it's a stupid statement, but I didn't know enough to evaluate it, and then sure enough, the next time I went to school, "There goes that Christ-killer," and I said that, made that statement, and that stopped. They had other issues, but on that particular one I was no longer the Christ-killer.

SH: Did your grandfather recall the activities of the Klan in that area?

IB: No, no. I don't think that's why he had a revolver there. It was maybe for a purpose. There was always somebody trying to steal chickens. In fact, I had a friend who came from a very large family. He had about ten or twelve brothers and sisters, and they were very poor, and

every week, I gave them about five or six chickens. He would come out and catch this and he'd take them. Then, one day, he decided what I gave him was not enough, and he attempted to get some on his own and he was caught and so that was the end. I told him in school, I said, "You know, if you told me you needed more, I would have given you more, but not now," and this is after I gave him well over one hundred chickens.

SI: We talked about your religion, what role did that play in your family growing up?

IB: Not a strong role except the, I'd say the Ten Commandments were the guide, and that was important. … I was not involved with the synagogue until I got married, that's my wife's doing. But, I knew who I was, and what I was, and we celebrated holidays and that was pretty much the extent of it.

SI: You didn't keep a kosher kitchen or anything like that?

IB: No. No.

SI: Did your grandparents and your family have any opinion on Zionism?

IB: No, not then. But, then, you know, the life on the farm was pretty hard, and I remember my grandmother always saying that it's tough to be a Jew, when things started disintegrating in Europe, she said it was very tough to be Jew, and from that time on, they became conscious of then Palestine, but the British had restrictions. They made it very difficult to allow people to come through.

SH: Were there letters exchange between family that was left in either the Ukraine or Latvia?

IB: Yes, there were some letters. … My wife and I were in the Ukraine in 1989 and I wanted to go to City Hall in Kiev and the guide said, "What do you want to do there?" I said, "I want to look up in the phone book, if you come with me, to pick out the names." She said, "It won't do you any good, they don't have phone books. Only the officials have phone books. They know whose phone is whose," so I never could find out. But, I don't think there are too many left. On the Baker side, there were some. I guess, on both sides there were some, and on the Baker side, there were a number who would have gone to Norway and settled in, and I think they were all killed. … Recently, about eight years ago, I met a man who is a second cousin of mine, who is from that family, and he lives in Jerusalem, and I had been there a number of times and wasn't aware of him until I came home, and someone called me and told me he's working on a family tree, and he was collaborating with this cousin in Jerusalem and so that's how I found out about him and we later on another trip, met him.

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

SH: Did your father's family come through Ellis Island and was the name Baker your name?

IB: They came through Ellis Island and the name was Becker, and when my grandfather was interviewed they asked him "*Vas ist stein Nomen?*" And he said, "Becker," and they took it as

Baker and that's how it's been. There are some people who became, stayed with the name Becker and there were others who were Bakers. There are all kinds of names.

SH: To come again back to Rutgers, in your freshman year, were you involved in any sort of initiations or had joined the fraternities?

IB: I didn't have the money to join a fraternity, but, I was invited to all of them. In those days you had, I think, three Jewish fraternities, and the rest was Christian, and I had a friend, one of my dearest friends, was a member of the Kappa Sigs, and he says, "I want you to join my fraternity," and I said, "No." He says, "We won't tell them." I can't live like that, so, I never became a fraternity member, but, living in Winants, you didn't need a fraternity because we had camaraderie. We had a Winants Club, we had our own Glee Club, and it's a poor man's fraternity.

SH: Well, I must ask the question about mandatory chapel and Dean Metzger?

IB: I went to the office, and you have to understand I used to have a bushy head of red hair, in fact, a lot of people still call me Red, and so, I went in the office and I said, "I want to be excused from chapel." The lady said, "Why?" I said, "I'm Jewish." So, she wrote it down, as I left she said, "You can't tell by looking anymore." So I got excused. I didn't go to chapel. I could sleep in that day.

SH: You said you ran track in Atlantic City and, obviously, you ran track through your freshman year, had the coach here known about your track experience in Atlantic City?

IB: No. Actually, my record in Atlantic City was not that great, but, when I came in we had to fill out the form, and so that's how I got involved in freshman track, and then I ran varsity for one year, and then the war came, so that I kind of lost interest. I ran in my sophomore year, I ran on the mile relay team in numerous games and we took a second place. We were robbed. To my dying day, somebody, I was ready, I was number two man, I was ready, the hand of the lead off man was at that point you relax the baton and you're to grab it, it was perfect timing, and the fellow from Seton Hall gave him an elbow, and it went flying, and I had to run back and picked it up. We were in last place. So, I had to run fast to catch the guy, and passed one, and then the next man had to pass another, and the difference in time, we would have won, but we lost. But, it's not so important these days.

SH: Did you participate in intramural sports?

IB: No. I worked. Across the street, which is a bookstore now on Somerset, there was Stollman's Restaurant, and I waited on tables. I got my food, and then anything that worked over with the meal ticket cost, $5.00 a week, dinner for fifty cents and she used to cater weddings, Bar Mitzvahs, big birthday parties, celebrations, anniversaries, and so, I got a job and I got my friends from Winants, and they, there was one time, there's a very lavish affair and we had wine, Manischewitz wine, sacramental wine, and this fellow, Manion, he says, "Boy, I never had this." I said, "Well, we got to serve it, taste some." We took it, by the time we were taking out the soup, a few people got spilled on, you know, and Ma Stollman said, "Red, what are you

doing to me? You're putting me out of business." She, incidentally, was more helpful to Rutgers students than the State Scholarship. She had more people on the cuff, people started school, she'd write it down, every week, and when they finished they'd pay her. Nobody ever stiffed her for a dime and there were two brothers who became ministers, and every Mother's Day, they sent her flowers. She was wonderful.

SH: Do you remember their names?

IB: Smith, the Smith brothers. Fay Smith and I don't remember the other one, but they were a little ahead of me. But, she must have had at least, every year she probably had between fifty to one hundred kids on the cuff.

SH: One question I wanted to ask you, your freshman year would have been 1941, what was the climate here? I mean, how much did you hear about what was going on in Europe here on campus? How aware were you?

IB: You heard quite a bit because the Nazis had already invaded, been in Poland, and you had groups here, pacifist groups, who tried to say, I remember right down near the gates, down by the gate on Queens Campus, I remember having a meeting by a group of pacifists and the theme was you don't fight, they can't kill all of us, we just welcome people, sort of be, you don't have to embrace them but just stand off and kind of ignore them and there weren't too many people who subscribed to that particular attitude, and these were students; a few of them were graduate students, who were the leaders of this group. But they didn't get very far, and then the war came.

SH: Were there isolationist groups other than the pacifists or were they one and the same?

IB: I don't recall isolationists. I only remember the pacifists.

SH: Did you ever hear Norm Thomas speak?

IB: Norman Thomas. I don't remember Norman Thomas coming to an assembly at the gym, the old gym. We used to have various people. We had the all-American fellow who became a well known singer, Paul Robeson. He gave a concert and in the course of his concert, he would inject his personal feelings about things, which were legitimate. We also had J. Edgar Hoover who is an entirely different type of person. So that was all part of college at that time.

SH: In waiting and watching what was developing in Europe, what were your professors saying on campus?

IB: Well, the only professor who spoke a lot about it was Capt. Klinsman who was a Mili-Sci professor, and he wanted everybody to apply for Advanced ROTC so that he would have more people to choose from. I guess there was a limit on how many they could accept, but he probably, if he had a bigger pool, he could get a better group. The other, I had a professor of economics, Dr. Keller, Professor Keller, and he was severely wounded in World War I and he used to bring up the fact that they called him a "warmonger." He said, "They're calling me a

warmonger," because he wouldn't sign up for any of these pacifist groups. He says, "And here I am with I don't know how much lead in this one leg that you see me dragging along." So that was pretty much the main discussion. Then the students, then when the war broke out December 7, 1941, everybody is deciding what they were going to do, they called a convocation, with President Clothier and Dean Metzger, and they said that "You do your service to your country, by not rushing off, but staying put, that's the word we have from the Navy and the Army," we didn't have an Air Force, there was a Navy and an Army and there was an Army Air Force, "and they all feel that's what you should do. You will have your chance." And so, March 20th of '42, I was walking up College Avenue and my friend Charlie Gantner who, by the way, was a national champion swimmer, breast stroke champion, he would have gone to the Olympics had we not had the war, he said, "Hey Red, the Marines are here. We ought to go see what they have to say." Because they were recruiting for platoon leaders, to be second lieutenants, so I said, "Okay, we'll go." Because about a month before I told my mother I was going to go in the Air Force, be a pilot, she got hysterical. So I said, "Okay, I won't be a pilot." So then after I went to this meeting, the next thing I remember a man is fingerprinting me. After I had said, "I do," I said, "Why are you doing that?" He said, "Well, you know, we like to match the fingers with who they belong to." So we, Charlie and I, we're Marines, a small group of us and the officer who inducted us was a Princeton graduate, a young second lieutenant, and we were waiting, they said, "We'll tell you when we need you," and we waited. I had a big organic chemistry test that came up that fall and I had trouble concentrating, and so I went to the Brooklyn Navy Yard and I said, "You know, I can't understand it. I signed up in March and here it is September or October and you haven't called me. What's going on? I want to be called up." He said, "Son," this old sergeant, "Son, you go back and take that test. It won't be so bad." He said, "We know where you are, and when we want you, we'll get you." So he said, "Don't go try to run off." So, we waited and that's when we got into the V-12 program. When we signed up we didn't know anything about V-12. We were just in this, you had the Navy looking for deck officers, they had a program; and you had people in the Army Air Force, they had a program; then you had ROTC and then the Navy also. Well, the Marines had theirs, and then later when they set up the V-12, they had Navy and Marines. Sometimes the groups were, we were ordered to different colleges prior to going to boot camp. I was sent to Princeton for sixteen weeks and there was a large contingent from Rutgers.

SH: What does the V-12 programs stand for?

IB: I don't really know. It was just a designation. The Navy had a [V-6] and then this was a V-12, I don't know what the …

SH: They will train you in a specific area?

IB: This was an officers pool. They wanted you to stay in school and then they take you out at certain stages. Since we had completed three years at Rutgers, we were only there sixteen weeks. People who went in as sophomores were there longer. So, we were kept there and we were in uniform, like the ASTP, Army Student Training Program. We were in uniform and we had military discipline, we had corporals and sergeants, we had a captain, who had just come back from Guadalcanal, who was commanding officer, and we did drilling and we learned bayonet fighting, hand-to-hand, and then you took courses, and I took a course in engineering

drawing, which I found to be helpful and also an aerial photography course given by the geology department. So we could look at an aerial photo and determine what was growing there, could you get heavy vehicles on it, things like that, those were practical courses, then from there we went to Parris Island for basic training.

SH: Before we go on to your Marine career, the summer between your freshman and sophomore years, what were you doing?

IB: The freshman and sophomore year, I worked at a restaurant in Atlantic City.

SH: You went back home then?

IB: Yes. I was a short order cook and on weekends I also was a waiter.

SH: Now when you came back to campus then in September of '41, what were you doing then, I mean, were you focusing on your research?

IB: Then I decided I was going to take the preparation for research, and with my elective, would be in soils department, and so I took analytical chemistry and qualitative and quantitative chemistry, and, I think, we had to take math and then I took a soil chemistry course at the Ag school, a couple of courses at the Ag School, and I worked waiting on tables.

SH: Do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

IB: I was in Winants Hall. We woke up and we had a friend who lived below us, his name was Toshio Hashizume [RC '44], Japanese fellow who came from Atlantic City. We were in the same high school class and we had to protect him when he went into town because they started getting soldiers, draftees, in Camp Kilmer and they see a Japanese fellow, so that, in fact a friend of mine who was a wrestler, Tom Murray, stopped a soldier from attacking him and stuffed him one of those big garbage baskets that they used to have. He said, "That's no way to treat an American."

SH: Did he stick it out here? Did he finish the term?

IB: He finished the term and he, I think he went to ROTC and became an officer in the engineers, he was an engineering student, and he is since deceased and he served in Europe, not in that particular Japanese, all Japanese regiment, [Editor's Note: 100/442nd Regimental Combat Team] but he was in the regular Army, yes.

SH: To continue then after the war began, then you would be in the second semester of your sophomore year, did you see any changes here on campus, as to the campus getting ready or losing men?

IB: Well, there were some people who didn't want to be officers. They just wanted to go and fight. The people who recruited us said, "We can get all the high school kids we want but we need people to be officers because we're expanding," the Marine Corps was going to grow from,

it had one division at that time, they were forming a second and they were going to grow into more divisions, "and we need second lieutenants to lead the troops, so we want you to stay."

SH: So then you were completing your second year of ROTC in '42?

IB: Yes.

SH: What did you do that summer?

IB: That summer I got a job on a farm, managing a farm in Pennsylvania, for part of the summer.

SH: Whereabouts in Pennsylvania?

IB: In Bucks County. I worked there for a couple of months. The school was out early that year. Then my roommate told me there was a good job, it's kind of lonely, I was there by myself. I worked with the farmer next door. It was owned by a doctor, and the farmer next door used his equipment and I worked with him. So I left that and went back to Atlantic City and worked at Childs Restaurant as a short order cook.

SH: Moving right up. Then you came back to campus then in September of '43?

IB: September '42, because in '43 I went, I was called up.

SH: I'm sorry. September of '42, you came back to campus, what were the changes that you noticed then?

IB: September '42, that was the beginning of my junior year. People were more serious because they knew that they would be getting called up because a lot of people, like myself, we expected to be called up any day and had difficulty concentrating on our work, and we got to feel like we were doing something; many of us got jobs out at the Raritan Arsenal, and I used to go out there and work. We had routine stuff; sorting out inventory, counting little parts and stuff like that, but everybody was waiting. It was a waiting game.

SH: Were you getting reports back of how the war was going in Europe and in the South Pacific?

IB: Well, you got it in the newspapers and in August of '42, the Marines had landed in Guadalcanal and so we were kept abreast, and the Marines were in contact with me, and people like me, through a correspondence course of study, and they would send us on a regular basis, problems, military problems to work out. That's what we did until they called us up.

SH: Were you able to continue running on the track team?

IB: I didn't. I did a little bit in my junior year but working out at the Arsenal, I used to get off the bus and run back to campus and running on the pavement didn't help me. It took all the

spring out of my legs and I wasn't interested anymore, so that was the end.

SH: You finished your junior year, and that's when you went to the V-12 program?

IB: We were called up on July 1st, they called us up, and people from all over the country went to different places.

SH: Well, before we leave Rutgers, I need to ask about NJC and your activities there?

IB: I liked NJC. It was a very nice place. They called it the "Coop."

SH: It took us a while to figure out what the "Coop" meant when we started doing these interviews.

IB: In my third year, my future wife was enrolled as a freshman and my roommate, college roommate was also a mutual friend, because my wife's brother was one of our very close friends in high school and at Rutgers and so, I said, "We better go check on her and see that she gets settled and everything," and that was the relationship that we had. She was my friend's sister. Little did I dream that she would become my wife.

SH: You hadn't dated in high school?

IB: No. We used to go down the beach, she and her other two sisters sort of hung around, and we never dated and then to jump ahead, coming back after the war, I decided to call up her brother, and he was home from the Navy, so I came over. Didn't think to ask if she were home but she was there and she'd changed so that I couldn't keep my eyes off her, and I told my mother, I said, "I met the girl that I'm going to marry." She said, "Oh, come on, I've heard that story." "Nope, this is it." … When I came back I didn't enroll right away. I waited; I got a job at Seabrook Farms down in Bridgeton. They had 20,000 acres of vegetable farms and a frozen food plant. So, I was working down there, and then I was going to start in September, so, while I was down there, I hadn't been going through the mail, "Who's gonna write to me?" There was a letter inviting me to a spring dance and it was like a few days from that time and so, I called her and said, "No way can I get a tux, do this and do that." So she said, "Okay, I understand." I said, "I just don't pick up my mail. I figured nobody is going to write to me," and so she said, "Well, how about, there is a big dance at the end of the year at the music building?" I don't know if it's still the music building. I accepted that and then I was hooked from that time.

SH: You should have borrowed that tux. Let us go back and talk about the V-12 program a little bit at Princeton, having a Rutgers man at Princeton must have been interesting.

IB: When we arrived, there were people there from the University of Virginia, from the University of Pennsylvania, from other schools, Panzer College, I don't know if it's still in existence [Editor's Note: Merged with Montclair State University in 1958], I think Hofstra, and we were told that, "You're here in Princeton but you'll never be Princeton men." None of us appreciated that, and we were never Princeton men. It's true.

SH: Where did you stay? Where were you housed?

IB: We were housed in dormitories. The Marines had a dormitory, the Navy had a dormitory and I don't recall if they had an Army, I think they had an Army ASTP, like Rutgers had an ASTP, mainly studying engineering.

SH: Did you get up to Rutgers campus at all while you were there?

IB: Yes, when we had liberty on weekends. I came to visit Capt. Klinsman and he pumped me to find what we were doing and he said, "See that, you guys are always complaining, hear what he has to do." They ran us ragged. "You want to be a Marine or you want to be one of those things over there?" He'd point to the, he couldn't even say Army. He says, "When you get through with us, you'll be as good as anybody who is a sergeant." Well, there were a lot Marines who got beaten up because they thought they were as good as a sergeant.

SH: When you were at Princeton and there were Navy men there, were you taking the same courses together?

IB: In some cases, yes, we were taking the same courses.

SH: Did you volunteer for anything at this point, like saying that you wanted to go one direction or another or were you just in this course and awaiting orders?

IB: No, I didn't have that option unless I flunked out, then I had the option.

SH: From July to October, then you went to Parris Island and can you tell us about that?

IB: Well, Parris Island separated you from humanity. You got your head shaved and you had a drill instructor, whom I thought came from Mississippi, but he was really from Rhode Island but he spent twenty years in the Marine Corps and he talked like he came from Mississippi and we were less than human.

SI: What kind of influence did Camp Kilmer being there have on the Rutgers campus?

IB: I don't think it had any influence. It was a transit center. It wasn't a training base. I think the influence on campus was from the ROTC people.

SI: Were there a lot of troops in town, that sort of thing?

IB: Yes. There were a lot of troops visiting. They had a station set on Albany Street for people who needed treatment.

SH: Going back to Parris Island then, your training there was just as intense as if you were an enlisted men or you were …

IB: Worse, because they knew this was a group, a whole battalion of people who were destined

to become officers, and so, they rode us harder and made things more difficult.

SH: Were there any Rutgers men with you in this?

IB: Oh, yes. There were a few Rutgers men. There is Charlie Gantner and there were a few people who transferred out of Marine V-12 and went into Navy, a few of them. But … they tried to break your individuality. You had to be a part of the team and you were no longer an individual. The food was terrible. We were always hungry and my friend Chuck Gantner and another friend by the name of Lou Bonnani from Rider College said, "We got to get something to eat or we'll die." So, we looked for a drill instructor, you can't go to the Post Exchange without permission. We couldn't find him. We couldn't find the assistant drill instructor, so we took a chance and we went and I had a sandwich in each hand and whom should we bump into? There he was, and he used a few choice words and said, "Who gave you permission?" Well, he knew, because he's the only one who could give us permission. He said, "Now you stand outside and everyone of your excreta bird buddies." See they had to stop using certain profanity, so we college guys, he says "Give me a word that means the same thing." We said "excreta." So, we were excreta birds. "You get your excreta bird buddies, and remember I know who they are." So … there were seven of us who were caught and that night you have a knapsack and a haversack, two sections, and we had to go to the wettest spot and fill them up with wet sand, and we marched from then, it was like seven to midnight, up and down, up and down and he sat in a folding chair and he listened and if we stopped, we took turns throwing the thing off, there was an empty tent at the end of the row and there were no lights, we threw it down and you rested for maybe a half a minute and he'd say, "I don't hear noise." Someone would stamp their feet like they were walking, and then four o'clock in the morning, we had to get up to go to the rifle range. We weren't in very good shape that day, and they would hound you. The idea was to break you, and if you answered back, you were through.

SH: The geographic make-up of the people, from just the East Coast, or all over?

IB: No. We had people from the Eastern half of the United States, from Wisconsin east, and those in the west went to San Diego, and we called that the Hollywood. We lived in old Quonset huts and tents that were not heated, bitter cold, and when we finally finished up, the drill instructor, he wanted to be sure that we knew our left foot from our right foot, but since we had all gone to the V-12 program he couldn't handle it. We weren't like the other boots. We knew where our left and our right and we do everything that had to be, knew all the drill and everything, so that he just made us do it longer and more than we had to … Some of us were scheduled to go right to Quantico from there, which was OCS. Because I had gotten caught at the Post Exchange, the three of us were sent to, were kept back, we were sent to New River, North Carolina, which wasn't bad, it was a combat school. So we got further training, infantry training. We lived in real barracks, and we had good food except they always put half a peach on top of your meat or whatever you're eating. I don't know why they did that, always right on the top, or right on top of your mashed potatoes, I guess it was part of their instructions. But, that was good training, then from there we went to Quantico and Quantico was tough. It was physical and mental, because they kept you busy all day, and you had field problems at night. But, there they try to break you, and I was the shortest guy in my squad. We had a lot of Notre Dame football players in my group and I kept getting shoved, my sergeant would give me a

shove, "Keep up with them, Baker." I was keeping up, but he was waiting for me to say, "Oh, leave me alone," or something like that and so one time near the end when I knew it was over, I said, "You know I knew what you were trying to do." He says, "What was that?" "You're trying to get me to sass you back." He said, "That's right and after a while I realized it wasn't going to work so I let you off." We became good friends. In fact, we got out on liberty in Washington one time.

SH: What is your most memorable memory of Quantico?

IB: Well, one of my buddies was killed. We don't know whether it was suicide or accidental. He had an upper bunk and in his sleep, we feel he went to the bathroom and maybe thought he was getting into his upper bunk, but he went over the rail and landed four flights down. And there were two, he was engaged to two girls that came to his funeral, two girls were crying ,we don't know if that was the reason. That was a sad day. And a three day war, we had a three day war, which was like a war, except the people were shooting blanks at you, but the explosives were nearby and going off to get you used to the noise and shaking. It was good training. I was very impressed, we did it. Then, when you finished, the Marine Corps wasn't through with you. You got your commission, and about half of the group flunked out, and in New River, we lost people. So, we kept losing them at each stage. So, half of the class flunked out, and they went different directions. Some could stay in the Marine Corps, some became sergeants. Some left and got commissions in the Navy, in small boats. Some got commissions in the Army, but they were no longer in the Marines. Then you go into what was called Reserve Officers School as a second lieutenant and here, in OCS you learn the tactics of a platoon, squad and a platoon, and the Marine Corps felt that you were a good sergeant, they wanted to make you an officer. In this training, you pieced everything together so you saw how your unit fitted in the company, and how the company fitted into a battalion, and so you got a little extra training, and that was very important.

SH: Where were you sent then? Where did you go?

IB: That was at Quantico.

SH: Oh, you stayed out in Quantico?

IB: Yes, so we were in a six month tour of Quantico, and the sad part was that even then there was a small group who flunked out, and here they had written home as "Second Lieutenant John Brown," and now he's out, or a sergeant, and that was always tough, but it was a small, maybe a few percent. Since I was very mechanically inclined, I did very well in my mechanical aptitude. I was sent to Amtrac School, it's amphibian tractors and tanks, in Camp Pendleton, Oceanside, California, and I spent ten weeks there, very intensive training.

SH: Did you have a chance to come home?

IB: I had some leave, yes. I think I got a ten-day leave before I shipped out.

SH: They sent you on trains then across the country?

IB: No, you made your own. We went down to Parris Island on a troop train, then we went to New River on a troop train, and, I guess, we got to Quantico on a troop train, but from there on, we, I think we got some sort of an allowance, I forget, allowance to get us where we had to go. But at Oceanside in the Amtrac training, you trained along in the operations of these vehicles, along with the men you were supervising. There were three of us second lieutenants with seventy-five men, and we had to discipline them and see that they were cared for if they got sick, or hurt and at the same time take whatever courses in the operations of these vehicles.

SH: To back up a little bit, we always ask the question, for a young man who was raised in New Jersey and you talked a little bit about the races and the experiences in Atlantic City, what was it like to be then in the South? Did you see or experience any culture shock?

IB: Well, you see, when we were in the South, we didn't go on liberty very much. In Parris Island, you had no liberty, you had no freedom, and you were lucky if they let you breathe fresh air and so you didn't know what was going on. You would learn from people who came from the South, from discussions, you know. When we went to New River, we did go on liberty, but you didn't have much time, except you notice that there was the separation as a people. You saw colored, you saw white his and hers, I mean, that was something. But then when we got to Quantico, we went to Washington and Washington was a wild town.

SH: About Washington during the war, what was it like?

IB: Oh, it was wonderful.

SH: What did you do, up to a point?

IB: I can't tell. [laughter] We partied. One time two Marines who had just come back from Guadalcanal were in a tug of war with a group of policemen. They had crossed against the light. You're not supposed to do that in Washington. These two Marines were fighting a whole bunch of cops and this Colonel said, "Get in there and help your buddies." He stood there. We ran out there, we helped our buddies. We almost all got locked up. They stopped beating up on these kids. Washington was a party town.

SH: We've heard some stories of what it was like to go on liberty in Washington, hoping you had a good time.

IB: Oh, yes, everybody had a good time. You went back to base, you were weary but it was, everybody was pleased and kind of glad to get back to the base. People were very kind to us in those days.

SH: Were they?

IB: Yes, people were very kind to servicemen.

SH: To go on then to California and this training unit, were these the men that would stay with

you then?

IB: Some of them did. We were training, you know. I had, some of the fellows were, I was the old man, I guess, I was twenty-three then and I had kids who were eighteen, nineteen. I had a few who were seventeen with parent's permission. So, I was referred to as the old man, and the other two guys were the other old men. So we had night problems to do and nobody had liberty. A few of them were married. They lived nearby. So, I got a call from the gate, "Lieutenant a Mrs. So and So is here. She'd like to talk to you." So I said, "All right." I went down, before the problem, and she said, "I understand you're not letting my husband out." I said, "Nobody is out tonight including myself." She said, "Well, since he is not going to do me any good, how about you coming along?" And I said, "You know, your husband is such a nice young man, I hope you're kidding." "Yes, I'm kidding." She wasn't kidding; because I heard after we left she was a wild woman, and he was a nice, really nice kid. I had a problem with him one time. He cheated, going over a wall. He ran around it. So, I made him do push ups and then I said, "You know, to show you that I'm not really chicken, I'm gonna do push ups," I forget what number I had him do; "I'll do five more than you." So, I did five more. From then on, he went over the wall. He's a good kid. But, then when I went overseas, I was supposed to join an Amtrac unit, but when I got to the Fourth Marine Division in Maui, the commanding general had more pull than the colonel who was in charge of the Amtrac battalion, and so I was with the infantry, I was an infantry officer, which was okay, because I had been trained longer to be an infantry officer. But, I joined the Amtrac because I like being in water, having been to Atlantic City, that kind of thing. One of my infantry friends, who had come back to Quantico, who had served in Guadalcanal, he was an officer, he got a field commission and they polished him up by going to the Reserve Officers School, he said, "You're crazy, because with the Amtrac, you're always in the assault group. At least with the infantry, you have the odds, the one you maybe opted to be reserve and then go in later." So, I said, "Well, I like being in the water." Then, here, all my concerns, I was with an infantry group.

SH: How long were you in Camp Pendleton before you were sent overseas?

IB: I was in Camp Pendleton for about ten weeks, twelve weeks, I think, it was ten, I was getting organized, about twelve weeks, so I was overseas in late August and we started training.

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

SI: This continues an interview with Mr. Irvin Baker on May 26, 2000 in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Shaun Illingworth and Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

SH: You were telling us about going then to Maui …

IB: To Maui, and we started training for a landing somewhere and everybody would guess. It was going to be the island of Truk or Formosa, nobody knew where we were going to go. The division had already been to Saipan and Tinian, and were refitting and getting ready, and so we left, we were ready to board ship, New Year's Day 1945, and having New Year's Eve to celebrate, and for some, they thought it might be their last New Year's Eve, somebody got hold of a machine gun and started firing it into officer's country and fortunately nobody got hit. He

was either a bad shot or just wanted to scare people and fire over their heads, and a friend of mine who was scheduled to load, be responsible for loading our ship, as a transport quartermaster, because you had to load the ship very carefully, the last thing on would be the first item that you needed, so, he came to me and said, "Bake, you can do this, I'm sick and I won't be able to do it." So I said, "I've never taken a course in this. You'd taken a course." He says, "You'll do it. You're a college kid, you'll do it. You work it out." So, he gave me a fistful, the size of Sears and Roebuck book, of papers and the next thing I knew, I was down at the dock and there were, I don't know how many trucks, a long line. You couldn't see the end of the trucks, and, fortunately, everything was marked, so we got it loaded and after I had gotten it all loaded, and we got the last crate of ammunition in the hold, they just closed the hold. It barely made it. An army officer who outranked me, he was a 1st Lieutenant, I was just a second lieutenant, and he came up and he had a bunch of tents. He said, "I'm supposed to go on this ship." I said, "I don't know where you're gonna go, unless we can strap them on the deck." He said, "No, you got to find room." So, the Colonel came up and I said, "Colonel, this officer has a whole bunch of tents." He said, "You got room for them?" And I said, "No." "Then blankety blank," looked at the officer and I said, "Sir, you heard what the Colonel said." I have no idea whatever happened to his tents. As far as I know, it's still over there.

SH: He didn't get on board ship?

IB: Not on ours. He never made it. I guess he wouldn't go on without his tents.

SH: What other incidents do you remember in Maui, because it would have had troops coming back that had already been fighting?

IB: Well, the troops, we were the only Marine Division on that island. There was another island, Hawaii, that had the Fifth Marine Division, and this was going to be their first invasion. So we had, you know, you had gatherings and get-togethers, and some confrontations with people from the same division. You're dealing with, say, 20,000 people and you had a couple of Navy bases; you had some Army bases. We were busy working and then when you went on liberty [you went] to have a good time.

SH: Were there any people from the European theater now coming in?

IB: No. They didn't start coming until later, after Europe was secured. There may have been some divisions that were going to go to Europe and were stopped and turned around and moved in. But by and large, they didn't. … When we found out that we were going to go to Iwo Jima, it didn't mean anything. When you looked at the maps, a little dot.

SH: You knew this before you actually embarked from Maui?

IB: No. This was when we were aboard ship. We were underway for a while, and, finally, they started talking about it, making plans, and letting us look at the photographs and everyday, we got new photographs, things were different. New positions were shown and uncovered, and we were told this is going to be a five day operation, and we'd be off there the fifth day, and we're going aboard ship and rest up a couple of weeks, and then be reserve for Okinawa. Reserve

means you go in the area that needs you most. So, the fifth day comes along and my men said, "Mr. Baker, you said," like kids, you know, "You said that we'd be going out of here." We had a long way, we had twenty-five more days to come, I said, "Well, they gave me the wrong information." So they accepted that.

SH: How long did it take you to go from Maui then to Iwo?

IB: We were aboard ship for more than six weeks, zigzagging and maneuvering, and practicing getting off loaded, and, off Saipan, we had a scare because a submarine was picked up in the middle of our convoy. I was really scared because you're defenseless, here you are on the ship, and we were zigzagging all over the place and destroyer escorts were flipping out the ash cans. The ash cans, the explosives, and finally they saw oil so they knew, we said, "Well, maybe he's tricky, you know how they are, they're tricky and they had some oil, they let it go." "No, there was too much oil." So, we were relieved, and then we had a meeting. I was given the command of this replacement rifle company, and I had a hundred fifty-six men and officers, and we had to meet … All company commanders had a meeting on a regimental commander's ship, so we climbed down the net over the ship and got in a little landing craft, went over, climbed up, and I got there. While I'm there waiting for the meeting to start, I see a fellow that I knew from Atlantic City High School coming up, fellow named Art (Pesco?), he was an artillery officer coming to this meeting and we had a nice reunion. I didn't know that he was part of the outfit that had been there these months. So, they were giving us what we could expect, but they're still talking five days. So, I don't know. How could they know actually from intelligence about an island? It was pretty tough. We had very heavy casualties. The dead were piled high. Before I went ashore, my regiment was in reserve and the battalion that I was traveling with, it's a battalion landing team, it's like a little army. You have some infantry, you have artillery, it's basically the infantry battalion with an attached artillery battery, motor transport, a tank platoon and auxiliary units, and so, the infantry group went ashore at eleven o'clock and by noon, the wounded were coming to the ship. We had a medical team who were still aboard ship, and I hadn't been given the word yet to go ashore, and the wounded started streaming in, which really gave my guys a lot of encouragement, you know, to see these guys with, oh, messed up. They couldn't take care of them on the beach. They were under fire. One of them died, and he was the first Marine I saw who was killed, and we had three chaplains who were with us. One chaplain, a rabbi, said, "This is a Jewish Marine, so please, in deference to his religion, leave your helmets on," and we buried him at sea. He was only eighteen years old.

SH: You had to do that before you went ashore?

IB: Yes. So I told them I said, "You know the odds, I guess, it's one, there's going to be 50,000 of us." I don't know if they listened. They were nervous. I was nervous too, and then we went ashore the next day.

SH: Can you tell us about the landing?

IB: Well, since I missed the initial landing, I know that the casualties were terribly high, a lot higher than D-Day, in Normandy, on a percentage basis. Ninety-five percent of the wounded required major surgery, whereas in D-Day it was a much lower percentage. Of course they had

more people but on a percentage. The first couple of nights, they moved forward, so, when we got there they were a few hundred yards away from us, and Suribachi was still not taken, and we were getting fired on by both the fat part of the pork chop, and then Suribachi was at the end. It was like a shape of a pork chop, or an airplane, that's what it looked like from the water, and Suribachi was the tail of the airplane. Our job was to protect the supplies that came in from infiltration, and while we thought everybody was knocked out, there were still people underground. Yes, they would come out and then we found that there was a beached Japanese LST that had been beaten up by our artillery, by our bombs, and they would send frogmen over and they would tell them how to change adjust their artillery and their mortar fire. We bumped them off, and then somebody else would come, and we'd blow it up again. Since we didn't have an atomic bomb, we could never make it disappear, so it was always a source. That first night, I had never experienced, training was never prepared me for all that. You rocked in your foxhole; you rocked from one end to the other. Your people are yelling for corpsmen, and we had passwords, because there were times when you just had to get out of your foxhole, and you had to do your password, and one of my men left his post, he was at a strategic location, and a piece of shrapnel or a sniper shot, I don't know which one, he was in his foxhole. He had his rifle like this, and it splintered the stock and he lost it and he ran down the beach to get on a landing craft, and when he finally came back, and I told him, I said, "You know, if you live through this, I may have to have you court-martialed because you put in jeopardy a whole group of people here." But I didn't have to; he got killed. I wouldn't have court-martialed him, but I scared the hell out of him. We were down there for one week on the beach, and one night, as we changed our location, I found where to set up my CP, in a fuselage that was buried, a Japanese airplane fuselage. It was buried underground. It was a tunnel and I set it up there with my first sergeant, so we can tally our records, who was injured, who was hurt, who was killed, and at night I heard this scratching, like that, on the fuselage. We had these land crabs, crustaceans, I figured it must be a whole bunch of land crabs and then when we left that area, I found out from the people who stayed there, that there were Japs hiding, it was an air pocket, and they would come out and forage for food. If they had to, they would slice somebody's throat. Here they were, just a thin fuselage skin away, and I thought it was the land crab.

SH: Did you have to go searching through caves?

IB: Yes. We had to make sure that the pillboxes we thought were empty, were empty, and then my outfit was broken up, and I was transferred after the first week, I was transferred to an infantry battalion up on the line. Two of my officers went with me, there were three of us and they were also Amtrak, we're the only three Amtrak, and the others, I had one warrant officer who was in armament and so he went to artillery. Another one was a quartermaster, another one was infantry, he went to a different infantry group. So, we reported up there, and we had different duties. They would go through an area. We gained a hundred yards in a day and then, at night fall, we'd have to pull back, because, maybe, that the topography wasn't right, so, we couldn't keep a line in and if you had an opening they could come in, so, we always pulled back. We gain a hundred and pull back fifty, and then there were times when somebody got caught, wounded, and he was left there, they couldn't get out, so, I volunteered, with the corpsman, to go with some riflemen to protect them so they could get them out, and we did that a number of times. Those fellows I hope all lived through it, because they came back and they go aboard a hospital ship, probably, from then on. One day, one of my friends, one of my officers, heard

some voices. We had a problem that night. Oh, we'd be on a telephone, we take turns starting with nightfall, and I'd be on the battalion telephone connected to all the units, and if I get a call, "If your machine gunners don't stop firing on us, I'm gonna turn my guns on you." I said, "Our machine gunners are not firing on you." So, the next day, the Colonel would say we didn't clean that area up, so, we always had to go clean an area up, so, part of that, what we were doing, was this search and destroy kind of business. This fellow, Ray Duncan, hears voices and he said, "They ain't speaking English." I can't see anybody. It's just a little fissure in a rock wall and a big boulder. So, we moved the boulder, pried it but kept our distance and we could see steps going down, so, we got a satchel charge, it's a hundred forty-four sticks of dynamite, and we could hear it go bump, bump, bump, bump and then boom, and they were still chattering. They were down that deep. So, I called down to regiment, I said, "You better send us a smoke generator, we've got a bunch of people here and we can't get to them." So, we got a smoke generator, and we poked the hose down, and everybody did everything very gingerly, you know, you didn't want to look in, straight down, because you'd get killed, and so, we smoked them. We could see smoke coming out hundreds of feet away. This was like the headquarters of this particular area, like an octopus, and all of these tunnels, and that's where they were feeding those tunnels and coming up at night and shooting at us, from the back. This was in an area where the 81mm mortar people had their mortars set up, and they got trouble from these guys, and I said, "We got to get prisoners." We were told to keep the prisoners. "Don't kill prisoners. Stop killing prisoners because you have got to get information, got to know where there's more places, locations," and so I had to threaten them. I couldn't blame them. You know, these guys a minute ago were killing, trying to kill your buddies, and so they came, eight of them came out, and one of them was a corporal, or a sergeant, and he had his blouse out of his pants, and another guy was brown nosing him, by tucking shirt in, and I was ready to shoot him, just on general principles. We sent them down. They were escorted down to the division intelligence and I hope they got a lot of information from them. We had things like that happen. One day, talk about caves, we liberated a cave full of foodstuffs, and they found this big can, and we weren't supposed to, they said, you know, "Don't touch the food, they probably poisoned it." There's a sealed can, I figured, "They didn't make it here, why would they poison it? They have to eat it themselves," so I opened it up with a bayonet, and little cubes of meat, evidently horse meat, had no fat, and we've been living on K rations, and so, this looked good and some of the kids said, "Lieutenant, you told us, you were a short order cook. Please, start cooking." So, I got some plastic C-2, which is a plastic explosive, it burns, and so, we put the can, and we scrounged around and I said, "Look for these," the Japs had vegetable gardens and, of course, it's all trampled, blown out, "find anything that's green." So, they found some scallions, and we rinsed them off with our canteen water, threw it in there, and the sergeant major was leaning against a rock wall, like that wall, and he had a handlebar mustache. He was a twenty year man, and I said, "Top, you get the first taste," and he leaned over, he took his taste, and then he keeled over. I mean, "My God, it was poisoned. I'm going to be court-martialed." Then I looked behind him, he had six bottles of sake, he got to the cave before we did, and disposed of all the sake. He was stone drunk. But, that was the best meal we had. They loved it. They kept looking for more. That was the only time we had a chance for hot food.

SH: How long were you on Iwo Jima?

IB: Thirty days.

SH: Thirty days?

IB: Yes. The night before I left, it had been declared, the commanding general, "Howling Mad" Smith, had declared it secured a few days before and we were just mopping up. They always did that, secure, and then people keep getting killed, you know? So, my commanding officer said, "Since I heard you had experience in loading a ship, tomorrow you're going to go aboard ship and we'll load up." I said, "Okay." So, that night, we were in a shell hole, with my ship loading partner, and I looked up, and I see a figure, and it's not an American figure, and he's got a grenade, he's going to hit his helmet, and that's how they detonate it. They didn't pull, like we did, pull the ring, and so I didn't, since they told me it was secured, I was too careless. I didn't have my .45. It was lying over here, I couldn't reach it, I had my carbine, it had a smaller shell, and I shot him, didn't bring him down, and I said, "Get my .45." So, my partner had his .45 and he hit him with the .45, knocked him flat, before he got a chance. Just like that. Didn't he know this is our last night? I had a lot of friends who were lost. I had a particularly good friend by the name of Chuck Drizin, who went to Villanova College. His battalion was having a problem, and the commanding officer said, "We can't find out where their positions are. They can't find them from the air, and so, I need a volunteer to crawl back there at night, and determine where they are," and Chuck volunteered to do this, and he came back and he gave them these positions, and, I think, the very next day, he was killed. We had an agreement, he and I: whoever came through, and the other didn't, would have to visit the parents. Chuck was a basketball player. Villanova had a crackerjack team that year, the day before he went in, they, I think, won the NIT. He was one of two Jewish guys at a Catholic school, on the basketball team, and he told me a story when he was, I remember him playing Atlantic City High School, he played for West Philadelphia, and he was good. He killed us. I told him, "You killed us; I shouldn't even talk to you." It's only a game. He had such a great sense of humor. So he was recruited after they won the city championship. A fellow came from Villanova and said, "We'd like to give you a scholarship." "Well, you know, I don't want to make people feel uncomfortable." "What do you mean feel uncomfortable?" He said, "Are you infectious?" He said, "No, I'm Jewish, and I'm in a Catholic school, people will say things, and they find out I'm Jewish, they would feel badly," he said, "I don't want to do that." So, the guy said to him, in Yiddish, "Don't be a dope. I went there, played football, and it was fine**."** He went. So when I came home, I was very fidgety and my mother said, "Something bothering you?" "Yes," I told her. "Well, if it were the other way around, I'd want to see him." So, I went to visit them, his parents, and his father was a tailor and he was measuring somebody for a suit, I was still in uniform, and so, he dropped what he was doing and got the mother. She came out, and she had had a stroke, one side, and when, the day that they got his telegram of his death, they got a telegram that his brother was seriously wounded in Europe. He was buttoned down with a machine gun and so these people asked me questions. It was tough. I still get emotional.

SH: I can understand why.

IB: Funny things are like one of my guys said, "Everybody got a souvenir but me. I had one and somebody stole it." I said, "Well, you got to be careful. It's booby trapped." So, he crawled by a little hole, there's a rock wall, everywhere there's a rock wall, and he reaches into a hole, there's a helmet. "Oh, I got a souvenir," but the Japanese soldier who owned that helmet didn't

want him to get it. He snatched it out of his hands. So, I didn't realize what had happened, and I see him flipping grenades in there, enough to kill an army, I said, "What are you doing?" He said, "I had a souvenir and he took it back."

SH: Never mind the man was still alive and armed, right?

IB: We caught another prisoner one day, he said he was a Korean … He kept saying, "Korea, Korea." I don't understand Korean, I don't understand Japanese, but I got two guys to take him down, to the regiment and I wish I had a camera, because when he slowed down they'd give him a boot, he flies like a comedy, an *Abbott and Costello* type thing, and that's how they got him down. I don't know whether he was Korean or not. We didn't take too many prisoners. Out of twenty-two thousand, I guess, we took a few hundred.

SH: What kind of air support did you receive?

IB: Very good air support. The air support, the naval gun support, we had tremendous support and it scared you sometimes, because, they were, the support, was so close. It's only a couple of hundred yards in front of you and these shells, that weighed a ton, were zipping over your head, and you hope that the boat wouldn't rock too much, and that they'd hit their target, and the planes bombing, dive bombing, and Navy, from the aircraft carriers, they were dive bombing, and, I remember, one poor fellow had his tail shot off, and he parachuted, and luckily managed to get in to our lines. We saw the airbase was finished, an airstrip, and the first B-29 made its landing there, limped in, and would have never made it back to Saipan, and I told my guys, I said, "Well there and, you see, that's why we're here." They needed a fighter base, and also a base to give them a halfway point that they could land, and the numbers of those we saved are about equal to what we lost in deaths.

SH: At that time did you have any idea that taking out Suribachi would become such a symbol?

IB: No. It was just another place. You know, the PR people made it, because, that was, I think, Suribachi was taken in the fourth day, and we had a long way to go. What it did do, we didn't have them shooting at our back, because we had turned and were going up the, but, we had no idea. It was nice to see the flag there, and we didn't realize that we could see the flag … I didn't realize, too busy to see that they took it up. A friend of mine from Rutgers, who was a Marine aboard a ship, Tom Murray, he said, "I saw a flag go up, and I see the flag go down, and I see another flag. What's going on?" We didn't know any of that. We weren't paying attention. You had so many close calls. I had one very close one, where I had been, I had some concussion, and I was taken down to an aid station on the beach, and, I guess, I wasn't there very long. I was just in bad shape. I don't think I was out completely. I knew, and I saw where I was, and I saw people who were in terrible shape, and I got up and I walked out and started walking back, and when I got maybe a quarter of a mile away, I heard a bump, and where I had been there was a CB bulldozer working, and I see it getting lifted up like it was a toy, and the guy is flying up and everything. It was right next to where I had been, I'm sure everybody there was destroyed, that could have been me. That's why I consider myself lucky.

SH: I wanted to ask about the make up of the men that you were in command of? Where were

they from?

IB: They were from Brooklyn, from New Orleans, from Pennsylvania, all over. I don't think I had anybody; I didn't have anybody from New Jersey. My first sergeant was from Utah, and on the fourth day, the third Marine Division came ashore, and he spotted a friend of his, who was also a sergeant, and he was from New Jersey. He said, "Lieutenant, there's a buddy of mine who is here. He's from New Jersey. You got to know him." So he came over, his name was Phil Berger, he lived in Highland Park. Isn't that something? So Phil came over. We were getting shelled, "We better go. This is a new hole, as it was just built, constructed, a few minutes ago and the odds are a billion to one that they're not going to hit another one in that hole, so let's go in there and talk." So, we talked, and what did we talk about, for ten minutes? He was a swimming buff. He went to all the swimming meets at the Old Gym and my buddy Charlie Gantner, was a champion swimmer, so we talked about Charlie Gantner, about Ralph Buratti, who was a diving champ, and then there was Normie Siegel who was an individual medley national champ, and that's what we talked about. Shells are going over us, and, then, about fifteen years later, I had a garden center, as a sideline business, and I was doing, it seems like a disjointed story but I will piece it together, and I used to design landscaping, and I had a crew come in from a nursery friend, a Rutgers friend of mine, and he supplied the plants. I did the design and I supervised on weekends, because, during the week I was busy in the chemical business. So I had met the wife, I had never met the husband, and this time I'm there with the husband, I had my Marine Corps dungarees on, he says, "Oh, you're in the Marines?" I say, "Yes." He says, "I was in the Marines." Then it hit us both, and we pointed at each other and he said, "You're that Baker?" I said, "You're that Berger?" Isn't that amazing after all those years? I said, "Do you remember what we talked about?" He said, "Yes." He said, "I told people and they can't believe it." And the fellow from Utah was a very nice guy. They were all good people. I lost a corporal who became a father before we made the landing …

SH: I'd only ask you to recall what you wish to talk about.

IB: Happy stuff. When we got aboard ship, I always was a storyteller …

SH: Well, I must say, we are enjoying the stories.

IB: If you could get me another glass of water, I'd appreciate it. Can we take a break?

SH: Sure.

IB: After that episode with the Japanese who wanted to prevent me from loading the ship the next day, thankfully he was unsuccessful, and so I went out and I did load the ship, and we got everybody aboard, and we landed as one battalion landing team. But, we left with two battalion landing teams, the remnants of two because of the attrition, and the injuries, and the deaths, two battalion landing teams plus auxiliary units to fill the ship, and after a few days, I started to discuss different stories, and one of the officers, by the name of Burns; I can't remember his first name. It wasn't George, I don't think, who eventually wound up in Hollywood as a B or C bit actor, liked my stories. "I'm putting together a happy hour." You always have to have a happy hour to bring people up because everybody lost somebody, very deep. So, I did stories in dialect,

and I'm telling this story, and I looked and there's a brigadier general, he was the deputy commander of our division, and I never had much to do with brigadier generals.
I didn't travel in those circles, and so, he really sobered me up, but I continued the story, and he laughed. I got a good chuckle out of him, and I met the people from an Amtrak battalion that I thought I was going to join when I first went overseas. They said, "Where have you been? We thought you went AWOL. We were short." I said, "Well, you didn't have enough pull. A general had more pull than you guys." So, when we went back, instead of going to Okinawa, which they had originally planned, we were in no shape to go anywhere, so, we went back to Maui, and one of the officers from the Amtrak battalion said, "We're getting you back. We're gonna take care of that." In fact, they're going to wire from the ship to Honolulu and get, there were three of us, get the three of us back, and he said, "What I want you to do, I like what you did, I want you to organize a show when we get back for the whole group, the four battalions." He said, "Build up the morale, and then they'll be off for a week or two. They'll get their break, and then we'll start training for the next," because the next was Japan. So, I put out a notice and a sergeant came in with a script called, "That's My Pop," and I loved it. I said, "This is great. Now, we got to get the talent." We started getting the talent, and I was Tony, and they dressed me up with a beard, mustache and a hat, and I was Tony the Barber, and spoke in different dialects, that gave different stories, and somebody got in touch with the people, USO people on the island, and the lady in charge came over and she auditioned our shows. She said, "I'd like to be involved with this," because we didn't know about booking. I was thinking just for ourselves. She said, "This is too good for just you people here," because how many times can they listen to it, you know? "Hear it once, you hear it maybe two or three times, they'd like it, but," she said, "You got a lot of troops here and if we can arrange it after you're through with the island we'll go out to other places." So, we had our performance in our theater and everybody loved it. They had a good time, and then we went to the Naval Air Station. We went to another Naval Air Station, we went to Army, some Army camps. I had black troops because there was segregation, and in the black troops there was one black fellow who, when he started laughing he banged his head on the back of the bench. These were all outdoor theaters, we didn't have any indoor, and I said, "Fellow, that's government property." Well, I thought they'd fall apart, you know. They laughed, they were so hungry that no matter what I said, if I said, "Duh" they'd laugh. We kept making the rounds, and finally, I guess, we performed for about a hundred thousand people, and this one night in August, and we were ready in a couple of weeks to go aboard ship to start rendezvousing for a landing on Kyushu, which was to be that fall, and I had just done my bit, and this was for my old regiment that I had been on Iwo with, and there were about six thousand Marines, the regiment and other units. There was just a sea of cigarettes in the night, and they had a good time. They enjoyed it. When I finished I went backstage, and this major came to me, and he said, "I have this message we just got from communications about the atomic bomb and the Japanese are suing for peace." I said, "Do you want me to make this announcement?" He said, "Yes." So, I made the announcement and they stood there, stoned. I said, "Don't you understand? Instead of going to Japan, you're going home," and they went wild. They were beating up on each other, you know, and then a colonel came by, a lieutenant colonel and he said, "Who gave you the authority to make that announcement?" I said, "Some major from communications." Well, the bird colonel is very upset. He sent guards to protect his liquor supply. That's all he was interested in, his liquor supply. That was an exciting moment. I'll never forget that.

SH: I guess it's a moot point, but did you get transferred back to the Amtrac division?

IB: Oh, yes, yes. I was then in the Amtrac, and we were preparing. It's a good thing we didn't go to Japan because I had the orders. Our instructions were to go inland so many miles, and hold it, and then the Army was supposed to come in, and then we were supposed to pull out and go to some other place. Well, after finding out what the Japanese had in store for us, we would have been lucky to have gotten ashore because of the little one man subs, guys manned torpedoes, we probably would have never made it. So, it was a lucky break. So I don't feel badly when people say we shouldn't have dropped the atomic bomb. I'm selfish.

SH: Since you were able to go in front of all the different services in your comedy routine, what kind of competition, maybe, say between Navy and Marines?

IB: It's friendly.

SH: Is it?

IB: Yes. It's not like in the movies, you know. We all had friends who were Navy. Although the first day aboard ship, here we have been, except for that one stew that I made, been on K-rations and we had this thick roast beef and a Naval officer across the way from me says, "Roast beef, again," and on a reflex, I took my fork and I reached in, I took his and put it on my plate, "You don't want it, I'll eat it." That's the only, why I reached out there.

SI: I was wondering, what did you think of the Japanese as an enemy?

IB: I hated them. But, I hated those that I was fighting, but I never killed a prisoner. In fact, I saved those eight, and I had friends, who are Japanese, and I made friends in Hawaii, people who were Japanese, and I think they got a raw deal, the American Japanese got a terrible deal, disgraceful.

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

IB: Black marines were kept in support units such as motor transport or in ammo dumps, a very dangerous job, but they all had white officers. I only saw one black Army officer, and one of my friends used a derogatory word when he saw him, and I said, "He must be a good man, he's a major. You're just a first Lieutenant, you better be careful." So, it was there.

SH: How long did you have to stay in Maui, until you were sent back?

IB: Well, MacArthur had all the ships tied up with the occupation army, and so, we were there dismantling camps. Some people with more service went home earlier, on aircraft carriers, and I came back, I think, it was January, so the war ended in August, and I came home right after New Year's.

SH: Was MacArthur discussed?

IB: MacArthur was discussed often, and Marines were not too happy with him, because, they felt that he resented the publicity that the Marines got. He was such an egotist, that he was the only one that should be given the publicity, and then, finally, in the Korean War, the Inchon landing, he finally said, "This is the finest hour of the Marine Corps." But, I think, we appreciated the fact that he was a brilliant strategist, but we knew that he couldn't walk on water.

SH: Did you have any interaction with the Australians?

IB: Yes, in training, out in California, I had a friend of mine who was an Australian Captain, and I had to take care of him because two beers and he was ready to take on the house. "There's not a blooming blither in the building that I can't whip." We had to drag him out because there was, there's always somebody. One time, I decided I'm going to let him get beaten up, but, not too much, and so, we did, and some guy bumped him one, and then we broke it up, and I said, "Now, will you stop?" He couldn't hold his liquor. He was an awfully nice man.

SH: What did you do for R&R? Did you have any R&R in all of your time in the South Pacific?

IB: Well, in the South Pacific, when we were in Maui, you had some time. When we were aboard ship, and you watched, oh, we spent a lot of time aboard ship, like, oh, six weeks going out to Iwo and then coming back it took us about three weeks, that's about nine weeks, and then going out on maneuvers we'd be aboard ship, so you had terrible movies, which we enjoyed. Now, they'd be terrible, but, you know, black and whites.

SH: Do you remember the name of any of the ships that you rode on?

IB: Yes, the USS *Henry* is one and then there were a few LSTs. They had numbers, I don't think they had names, and they rolled. I never got seasick.

SH: Really?

IB: No. I'd feel a little queasy, then I eat some crackers, and then I was okay. That's a problem we had when we go on a cruise, my wife gets seasick. She has to take a patch.

SH: When you came back to the States, I assume you came into the West Coast.

IB: I came in the West Coast, I was there for a week, and then I took a train, *Super Chief*, back, and I met Joan Bennett, the actress, in the club room, lounge car, and I was telling her about our last party, and I slipped a couple of words, and she said, "Better not say that in front of your mother." "You're right." She was very nice. Her husband was a colonel. He was with her.

SH: Do you want to tell us about that last party?

IB: I don't remember it. [laughter] I do. It was a party where we were at our Officers' Club, and some people, uninvited naval officers, came in, and for some reason, they didn't like one of our captains, and he, people do that sometimes when they get drunk, and I was upset about that and I said, "You shouldn't speak that way to one of our officers." He was senior to me, so, I

couldn't do anything about it, and the major said, "Let it rest." So, I let it rest, and then my buddy, John (DePalma?) said, "Let's go home." Home was our tent down the street, and so, I'm going home, and I knew I'd get him excited, I said, "John, I'm going back and beat that guy." "No you don't." So, he told everybody the next day, he had a terrible time with me, and I did it purposely.

SH: Where were you discharged?

IB: I was discharged from Philadelphia Navy Yard.

SH: So, you just had to come cross-country?

IB: I had to come cross-country and got discharged there. They gave me three hundred dollars, which is nice.

SH: When was this? When were you discharged?

IB: This was, I was discharged, I had time, I had like, I guess, it was sometime in January, February, when I was discharged.

SH: To go back a little bit, do you remember when FDR died?

IB: Yes. I remember and everybody was, a somber cast over the whole day**.** We used to censor the mail, and everybody wrote like they'd lost their father. Sad, we were all sad. Some of them used to try to butter me up, by saying nice things about me, "We got a good officer this time."

SH: How good was your mail service?

IB: I thought it was pretty good. It probably took a few weeks, or a month. I don't think it flew. I think it all came by boat, so, if we got mail in a month. When I was on Iwo, I got a letter, there are some letters, it must have gone by air, because I got a letter from my, like a mailgram, from my father saying, "I know where you are." So, that was pretty fast.

SH: Did you keep any kind of diaries, or any of your letters, or anything?

IB: I wrote a letter to my roommate, two letters to my roommate, one before combat, and one after, and he saved them, and he gave them to me. He gave it to me about five years ago, and I found them touching.

SH: I'm sure. Did you join any reserve organization?

IB: Well, I was in the Marine Reserve, inactive reserve for ten years. That was automatic. I wanted to become active, in the active reserve, but, I would have had to have gone to camp in the summer time, and that was my work season, because I was in the insecticide business and so I just didn't do it.

SH: Was there a chance that you would have been called back for Korea at all?

IB: Well, before I changed jobs, I called the commanding officer of Brooklyn Navy Yard, and he said, "What's your name." I said, "I'm not telling you. I am not telling you my name. I'm not giving you my serial number," I said, "But I'm changing jobs, and I know the law says that you have to be hired back, so, if I'm changing jobs, that I don't want to change, if there's a problem." So, he said, "Well, when did you get your date of rank," and I told him, he says, "You're okay." He said, "There are three classes that are ahead of you so you'll be all right." There were the three classes that were a buffer, they stopped with the three classes and then mine. So, then I changed jobs.

SH: When you came back then to and you were discharged from Philadelphia, what did you decide to do then?

IB: Well, I knew I had to go back to Rutgers to get my degree. I went to visit. I visited Professor Helyar, and I found that I had twelve credits, from Advanced ROTC, in getting my commission, and I got credits for the engineering drawing, and for that aerial photography, and geology course, and I had about eighteen credits, so, it was one semester, so, I only needed one semester … I decided I had to go to school and go back to Rutgers just to get my degree. My adviser had a fellowship for me out at Indiana, at Purdue, in soils. I said, "Well, I'm planning on getting married, and I don't want to spend five years getting my doctorate. I want to be able to get it in three. Now, these people want me to do, because there's an influx of GIs coming back, am I going be given an opportunity to take as many credits as I can handle, or, there would be a limit so that they want me to do labs?" He investigated, they wanted me to do labs, and so it would take five years, so I let it go. Then I started looking for jobs, and I had eight jobs before I graduated … We wanted to go abroad, my wife was a language major, so, we wanted to go to South America. So, I checked with Firestone, wrote to Firestone, wrote to Dole Pineapple, and a man from Firestone responded very quickly, a treasurer, and he said, "I'm going to be in New York and meet me at this hotel," expensive hotel. We had lunch, and he starts describing this Shangri-La and a bungalow. "You just bring your silverware, that's all. You need not bring linens, a swimming pool, library, tennis courts." I said, "How close to Rio or Buenos Aires is this?" "Oh, oh, this is Liberia." I said, "Liberia, that's the West Coast of Africa." He says, "Yes. My wife and I, we loved it. We were there eight years." Then, I noticed there's something wrong with him. When he looked, he didn't turn his head, he moved his whole body. I figured, "If that's what eight years did to him." I thanked him for the lunch, and never took the job. Oh, they had a good job in Liberia, I'd be in charge of fifteen hundred natives, getting the rubber out of the trees. So, we didn't go to Liberia. Dole Pineapple had a job on a plantation, pineapple plantation, in the island of Molakai. Well, Molokai, the only thing I knew about it was it had a leper colony, and so, I turned that one down. We decided we weren't going abroad. We're going to stay ashore, and I had DuPont, Allied Chemical, Rhome & Haas, there was a company, Agrico, a fertilizer company, and there were a couple of others, and I opted to go with Allied Chemical, because, they were the most generous with their expense account. The interview, the sales manager, who interviewed me, is the national sales manager, he said, "Where did you come from?" I said, "I came from Philadelphia." "Well, how much did the train cost?" I told him. He says, "Take a cab." "I took a subway." He says, "You took a cab." In those days, I made about fifteen bucks, at this rate, I'm just going to get interviewed, I figured "Geez, if they're that

way," because I heard people could be very tight on expenses. So, I went with them and I spent four years with Allied Chemical, and the only criticism I had about my expense account was I didn't spend enough.

SH: Picked the right company there. Just to back up a little bit, when did you propose and marry?

IB: I went to that, it was that May, graduation dance, and on our first date, in, I guess, it was in June, sometime in June, we were on the boardwalk in Atlantic City, and I said, "I'm gonna put a ring on that finger." I didn't think about it. I said, "Would you like this?" She said, "Yes." …

SH: This was in 1946 or 1947?

IB: It was '46, then. We became engaged in the Fall of '46 then, we married on September 13th, '47.

SH: You graduated earlier.

IB: I graduated. I finished the first semester, and then I had worked. I finished the first semester, and I got a job with Allied, and I said, "Can I get the day off? I want to pick up my diploma." They said, "Sure." It was one of the hottest days in years. People were fainting. It was terrible, in that old bandbox.

SH: What were the differences you saw in the Rutgers you left in '43, and the Rutgers you came back for graduation in '47?

IB: Well, the students, the ex-GIs, came back, and they were much more serious, a lot less fooling around. People came back with a goal. The goal was to finish their studies, and go out, and some of them had families, some of them were going to start families, and there was a whole seriousness …

SH: Where did you stay on campus when you came back?

IB: I lived in the old Quad, the Quad, Hegeman? Was it Hegeman, or Leupp? One of those. I shared one big room, we were crowded, there were three of us. My old roommate, and then another friend.

SH: Abe Wilson was your roommate?

IB: Abe Wilson was my roommate then, yes.

SH: Were there a lot of discussions of what went on in the war when you came back?

IB: A little bit. We didn't get into details. We talked about the funny things, but I think, it took a number of years before we started talking about the serious things of what happened.

SH: When you and Mrs. Baker got married, were you married here in New Brunswick or Atlantic City?

IB: Atlantic City. We had a small wedding, and we went on our honeymoon in New England. I stopped off in Connecticut. A fellow says, "What kind of license plate do you have?" I said, "They're New York." "Okay, we don't allow sports here, but you're out of state, you're all right." We visited one of our French teachers, whom we both had in high school, Miss Dow.

SH: You said you worked for Allied and then what did you do?

IB: I worked for Allied, and I was in sales, tech sales, and one of my problems that I had worked out for somebody, I used to make house calls with a farm supply dealer, going to a farm and walk in the fields and look for problems and then tell them what they should do, and to get it from this man. So, there was this one problem a fellow had. A competitor's product, and something wasn't working right, and I had to have physical chemistry and it had dealt with emulsions, and so I could give him the answer. I said, "This is the problem, and you tell whomever you got this from that this is the problem, and that's how they can remedy it, and he should replace it. That's the way this batch is, they should check it and replace it for you." This man had a lifelong customer, ever since, and, in fact, it was the same fellow, when my wife was pregnant with our daughter, our first child, I was making house calls, and she was close, and I kept checking in, and his office was supposed to, she was supposed to call, and so I checked at his office and they said, "She says you better come." So, I gave this guy the wildest ride. I went through potato fields, I took all the shortcuts, and he had seven children. He said, "It's nothing. I'm going to die. I am going to die. I have seven children, you're gonna kill me," he said, "The first one, they never come when they say." "I don't believe you; I'm not taking a chance." I got him home, and he was perspiring, Charlie Gregory, he couldn't wait until he got out of the car. He says, "You better take it easy when you take your wife, don't get give her a ride like that." So, we had to go to the New York hospital, St. Francis, St. Claire, and we got there in the afternoon. The baby didn't come until the next day. He was right. He said, "I told you, you wouldn't listen."

SH: So your first child was born then in New York, while you worked for Allied?

IB: We lived in Levittown, Long Island, and my wife, before the daughter came, my wife used to travel with me. Sometimes we'd go to trade shows, and we made friends, other salesmen from the company, or other companies, and their wives and it was kind of nice. Then, I think, after the first year, she got kind of tired of it, you know. So, after four years, I was calling on a company in New York City, that used to be a formulator, Seacoast Laboratories. They would buy the concentrates and dilute them, and make powders, they called them, insecticide dusts, and so, I was calling on them, never was able to get an order, and one day I got a phone call from him, "I'd like you to come in." I said, "Boy, finally after four years, I finally may get an order." But, he offered me a job, because the fellow who had been his sales manager died, and so he wanted me to come in. So, I did and it was a big, like going from the rural school to the high school, going from an Allied Chemical to a small family company was a big change. I had to do a lot of things by myself. Didn't have other people to do it. But, it was a good experience, and, eventually, we reached a point where we couldn't stay where we were. We were in the fringe of Greenwich

Village, just off West Street, which is along the river, and the only dwelling, there was one apartment that is occupied in our block, everything else is garages or business, and every time we made something that had an odor, those people would call the Health Department, and I tried to coordinate with a coffee grinding plant. When they ground coffee we made smelly, and then if they stopped too quickly, we were in trouble, because the batches had to be finished. So, I say, "You know we can't grow this way. We've got to do something, we got to move." "Well, at my age," he said, "I don't want to; maybe you can go around, and see from your friends, we can make a marriage, with some other company." So, I did. I went to one company and the guy, in twenty minutes he had shafted the old man, and I figured, "In twenty minutes he shafted him, and in three months, or six weeks, he's going to shaft me, after he gets all the customers," and then I went to somebody else, and they said, "Well, it looks good, but, suppose you can't bring this business, and you lose it, too many supposes." So, I went back to him, I said, "You know, can't make a marriage. I think maybe you and I should talk." So, we did. We talked for a year. Finally, when I was ready to chuck the whole thing, he said, "Don't get excited." In one week we had the agreement, it's hard to let go, and so, I moved the company. I had already started the construction of a building in East Brunswick, where I had a garden center. We attached a steel building to the garden center, and we moved all the equipment out, and added equipment. There was a Sherwin Williams plant in Bound Brook, and they were closing up, and so, I bought some of their equipment and then we started to grow and my son, the second kid, Richard, graduated from Lehigh, and it was a bad year for jobs, that year. I don't know what year that was, that's '75, jobs were tight, and he got one with American Cyanamid, but, it wouldn't start until next March, and I said, "Richard, you know, big companies that I know, the Vice President, who thought that up, could either be out of a job or change his mind, and here you've wasted all this time, and you didn't even know if you like the business." So, he was supposed to do something, some research work for them. I said, "Take your car, and go to Pennsylvania, and give me a market survey for a week, who's doing what to whom." I told Elaine, I said, "I don't know, you know, when he comes back, he's going to say, 'You take this job and shove it.' " But, he came back and he said, "The only way you can get rid of me is fire me." So, he eventually took over the company, and now he is part of ConAgra, and he's working for them. It took getting used to for him, being his own boss until now, but he has adjusted. He's doing well.

SH: Did you sell your company then?

IB: To ConAgra.

SH: Oh, to ConAgra. Did you keep the garden center?

IB: No, no. We had to move from there, before ConAgra's got involved. There was a trucking company, who had been next door to us. There was a gas station up on the Highway 18. Are you familiar with that area?

SH: A little bit.

IB: So, there's a Lohmann's Shopping Center on the other side, going toward New Brunswick. The GAP store chain wanted to use the property that the trucking company had, to build a shopping mall, and they needed the property that we were on, and we were a tenant. It was built

to suit, and I had gotten three ten year segments on my lease, and so there was a ten year segment that they had to deal with, and they bought us out, and we no longer manufacture chemicals. We used to formulate and make liquids, and all sorts of things, granules for a lot of name brands, people in the industry. We got involved with the Environmental Clean-up Act, and that was a horrendous experience. I was going to move and have another plant built, in an industrial site nearby, and then I saw what was happening, and, fortunately, it was the cost for the GAP, and not for me, except it gave them a nice deductible, that I thought was generous, but, it turned out that I slipped by in one day. It cost them seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars to have our area, and we weren't a dirty place. Three months later, they could have saved three or four hundred thousand, because New Jersey would have accepted Federal standards. But, anyway, I decided that was not the business to be in. We became a distributor and then that's what we did.

SH: You have a daughter who is the oldest and then a son. Any other children?

IB: Michael would be, he's the youngest. Michael is a lawyer, also Lehigh. He went there. He was a wrestler. He's got two bad knees to prove it, and Susan went to Simmons College, in Boston, and Richard went to, biological sciences, in Lehigh. Nobody wanted to go to Rutgers. "Why don't you go to Rutgers and save a lot of money? It's a good school." "No, Mom would come in, and say 'look at your room.' " I say, "She won't do it." "Yes, she would." She would, I would. So they enjoyed it.

SH: I know that you stayed with your class, Class of '44.

IB: I was involved with the Headley Research Council. It's defunct now, and for many years, it was sponsored by industrial companies, for basic research in entomology, and we gave fellowships. We've had some very outstanding fellows who went on. One of them was Ordway Starnes, he became a Dean at the College of Agriculture and Environmental Science, and there were a whole group of people who have gone on into the field. So I was involved with that for about ten years, and I finally became chairman, and that was the end of it.

SH: One thing we usually ask is the reaction of our veterans to the Vietnam War, especially those who had children that were coming up during that period. What did you think of it?

IB: I thought it was a dirty war and we had no business being there.

SH: From the get go?

IB: From the get go. The French couldn't handle it, and they were there before us, and we had no business being there. It wasn't necessary for our security, and it turned out to be a rip off, a compilation of lies, and fifty eight thousand men are dead for nothing.

SH: Another question, I'd like your reflection on the GI Bill?

IB: I think it was wonderful. I'm sorry I didn't go for an MBA at their expense.

SH: Did you buy a house using the GI Bill, from the VA?

IB: Oh, sure. Four percent mortgage, how could you not, yes, in East Brunswick. We lived in it for forty years.

SH: You said that your wife had gotten you involved in your synagogue.

IB: Well, we joined the synagogue in South River. The rabbi is Joseph Maza, whose brother is Jackie Mason, the comic, and the rabbi had a good sense of humor. He's retired now, and I had never had any formal training. Most Jewish boys are Bar Mitzvahed when they are thirteen. I was Bar Mitzvah when I was seventy-something, when my grandson was Bar Mitzvahed. He asked that I be Bar Mitzvahed, which I thought was very nice of him, to be willing to share, and we do keep a kosher house. I think it started because our grandchildren are kosher, and we want them to be close to home. So, we'll do anything for our grandchildren.

SH: During one of the breaks, we discussed a few more anecdotes about the one-room schoolhouse you went to school in?

IB: … My first week in school, I saw kids were behind, there was a trapdoor that opened up in the outhouse. I saw kids with sticks, so I got a stick, and I saw that there was no light coming through one of the holes and I poked and I looked, there's a light, and then all of a sudden there was the teacher, and he caught me, sort of "twig handed," and he said, "Hold out your hand." Like that and I pulled it back and finally he grabbed it and he hit me and my knuckles swelled up. I went home, my grandfather saw the red swollen, "What happened?" I said, "Teacher hit me." Oh, he got so angry, he was gonna really let, then he stopped, he said, "What did you do, a little kid, that would make a teacher do that?" So I told him. He said, "You're lucky he hit you." Funny things. I think I told you about the black children coming in, and our recreation was climbing trees, the tall trees, and sometimes your foot would get caught in the juncture, and you need help, and you call for help and they would say, somebody would say, "Stay there, we'll tell your folks." But, somebody would always come up, and help you out. We had a cemetery that was next door, and we had a cemetery that was next to our farm, just on the other side of the woods, and we had some colored workers, and I told one of them, I said, "Don't go too close to that cemetery when you're plowing. There are ghosts there." He said, "Oh, you don't believe that." I said, "Yes. I've seen them," and then that night, they had a bunkhouse, and at night I went out and I went, "Oooooh, oooooh" and I took an egg, and the poor guy, I felt badly because he packed up, and walked home. He lived about fifteen miles away. My grandmother couldn't understand why he left. "He was such a good worker." I never told her. To the day she died, she never knew. One thing she found out about thirty years later, I had a rifle, .22, I used to go rat hunting in a chicken coop. One night I killed fifty rats. You had a flashlight strapped to it and they blind, the light would blind him, and I'd shoot him. So, my country cousins, the city cousins, come visit the country cousin, and we do target practicing, and the chickens were all out the field behind the drum, where we had a can, and I'd would shoot, and you'd see a chicken go "pop!" So, I said, "We got to get those, and put him in the incinerator," and so, that day, in the evening, my grandmother happen to, I guess, it was a legitimate death, and she threw the thing and says, "I can't understand, why the healthiest looking chickens are in that incinerator." Well, thirty years later, I told her. She was in an old age home. Maybe, it was more than thirty years later, and I said, "Do you remember those chickens?" She said, "Yes, I remember it." So I told

her. She said, "You know I can still hit you."

SH: Well before we end this story, I just want to make sure to ask Shaun if he has any other questions?

SI: This morning we talked about how your family knew about Palestine and Zionism, did you ever follow that afterwards?

IB: My grandfather used to subscribe to the *Philadelphia Record*, it was a newspaper, it's no longer in existence, and in *New York Forward*, which is a Jewish paper and that's where he would get it. But, I didn't really get involved until I was in high school. I had a friend of mine, whose father was a Zionist, and he introduced me to the whole subject, and he said that it's not that all Jews should go there to live, but all Jews will need a place that they feel safe and can live. I remember that. Then when I got married, my wife got involved in an organization called Hadassah that has hospitals, and a medical school in Jerusalem, and a lot of other things like villages, youth villages, and they restore lives to people. Now, they're doing stuff that's cutting edge, on stem cell, and bone morrow transplants, and she, when she got involved in that, that was a real introduction, and then I got involved in the United Jewish Appeal, and the Raritan Valley Federation, that later became Middlesex Federation. In fact, my last office, I was president. I always become president. I like to be a boss. In fact, I'm president of my condominium, which is a crazy thing to do, but I took it, two hundred and ninety-seven bosses and they all are experts in everything, law, engineering.

SH: Well, since you already become a president, I have to go back and find out did you ever continue with your theatrical bent?

IB: Only when I'm asked to be master of ceremonies. I have served as Master of Ceremonies. Of course, in every five-year reunion, I had a captive audience and then I go to my Marine reunion and they ask me. When we went out to San Diego in 1992, there were three of the people who were there, who were in my group, and oh, we had a wonderful time. One was a trumpet player, one was a dancer, I said, "You were such a great dancer." He says, "Say it again, so my wife will hear it."

SH: Are there any thoughts that you'd like to leave for the record before we finish.

IB: Well, I'd say this about Rutgers. I've always had a warm spot for Rutgers, except for one year. One year I was so angry at them, and it was the year that they started the college, Livingston College, with open enrollment, and I felt they didn't treat my son properly, and so I was angry. But I got over that, and I've enjoyed working with the Winants restoration, and working on the reunions, of course, the Headley. Well, I remember, and I appreciate the hundred and five dollar scholarship per semester, that I got from Rutgers, from Dean Metzger.

SI: All the years of your involvement as alumni, what did you think of the various presidents that you had to deal with?

IB: I like Bloustein. I thought he was very innovative and open. I haven't formed an opinion

yet about Lawrence, he hasn't been here long enough. Before him, you had a fellow who used to be on television, Mason Gross. I like Mason Gross, and then before that was Clothier, during my time, and he was aloof. He was from the Strawbridge and Clothier family, mainline, but he was, evidently, a good person.

SH: All right. Well, we thank you very, very much.

IB: Well, thank you.

SH: Glad that you're staying involved with Rutgers.

IB: Well thank you. I enjoyed expounding.

SH: I thank both of you and Mrs. Baker and thanks, Shaun.

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

Reviewed by Kevin Bing 6/2/04
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 6/17/04
Reviewed by Irvin Baker 7/12/04