

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JAMES BORBELY

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH

and

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NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with James Borbely in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on March 27, 2009, with Shaun Illingworth and ...

Jordan Richman: ... Jordan Richman.

SI: Thank you very much for having us here today.

James Borbely: You're certainly welcome.

SI: We are sitting in your office where you have a lot of great photos on the wall. We will probably talk about some of the stories behind those photos as the interview proceeds.

JB: Okay.

SI: To begin, where and when were you born?

JB: I was born January 31, 1921, in Perth Amboy, but our folks, really, were originally from New Brunswick. That's where my older brother was born, and then, they moved to Perth Amboy, opened a candy store, didn't work out, came right on back to New Brunswick, and they had a candy store on French Street, across the street [from] where Washington School used to be, and, now, there's another big building there.

SI: Okay. Your family background on both sides is Hungarian.

JB: Hungarian, they were. My father and mother were both born in Hungary and, at the time, we belonged to a Protestant church and they had a summer school, so that we could go there ... to learn how to read and write in Hungarian. So, I can stumble a little bit in Hungarian and, also, write a little bit ... in Hungarian.

SI: Do you know approximately how old your parents were when they came to this country?

JB: Yes, my mother was about eleven, and she lived on Redman Street, initially, and my dad was about twenty-seven when he came to the United States.

SI: Did they ever tell you any stories about their lives in Hungary before they came over?

JB: Yes. My dad was in the Austro-Hungarian Army. ... Of course, Hungary was always on the losing side, if you recall, both in the First World War and the Second. So, he didn't like the way things were going, so, he left the Army and came to the United States while [he could]. He decided this was not for him, and so, I'm happy that he did do that.

SI: Was he in the First World War?

JB: In the First World War; no, he wasn't in the war. In other words, he was supposed to go and he jumped ship and he came to the United States, so, yes, and his name is the same as mine, yes.

SI: What was your mother's name?

JB: Julia, Julia Kara, K-A-R-A, and she was a cousin to Peter and Julius Kara, who had the Kara-(Nemeth?) Orchestra in New Brunswick, and they used to play every Sunday on WCTC. [Editor's Note: Peter Kara, for over thirty years, has broadcast on WCTC's program *Hungarian Melody Time*, where he shares his taste in modern and traditional Hungarian music.]

SI: Wow.

JB: Yes, and ... they asked me to [perform with them], because I had been on WCTC, with a radio program called the; shut that off.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JB: Oh, okay, it was called *The Sentimental Journey of Songs with Jim Borbely and Russ Locandro and His Men of Rhythm*. So, what I'm leading up to is, since they played Sundays, on the Hungarian hour, they asked me to sing *The Anniversary Song* in Hungarian, which I did, on WCTC one time. [Editor's Note: *The Anniversary Song* was made famous by Al Jolsen in 1946, but was actually a remake of the Romanian song *Waves of the Danube*.]

SI: Wow. Did either of your parents ever tell you any stories about what it was like to come to the United States at that time?

JB: Well, actually, what had happened [was], my mother was [from] a family of about six and all of them came because my grandfather worked in the coal mines in Pennsylvania. I recall the word Drifton, that my mother would say, "Drifton, Pennsylvania," and she was left in Hungary and this, as always, ... it kind of hurt her that she had been left behind. ... When she came, she came as a little girl, about eleven years ... of age, and that after they moved from Pennsylvania, they were on Redmond Street, ... and, years later, when she got married and my brother and I came along, we lived on the corner of Codwise and Redmond Street, which is now Joyce Kilmer Avenue and Redmond Street. So, she was not far from where she [grew up], about a block from where she actually lived originally, yes.

SI: When you say she was left behind, how much of the family was in Hungary at that time?

JB: She was the only one left behind and she had to stay with, technically, friends, but she felt that she was abandoned, ... but she finally came and she was quite a gal, yes, yes.

JR: I was wondering how sports affected your life, because you said that you got a scholarship.

JB: Oh, yes, yes. Of course, you've seen the article in the *Duke Magazine*, haven't you? [Editor's Note: "We Were Soldiers Once and Young" by Bridget Booher, an article printed in the January-February 2009 issue of *Duke Magazine* (Volume 95, Number 1) and in an expanded version online at the *Duke Magazine* website.] Yes, and, actually, what had happened [was], my dad died when I was sixteen and Mom worked in the cigar factory, for eighteen dollars a week. ... I knew, at that time, that I wanted to go to college, but the only way that I could get there

would be to get a scholarship, but I wasn't doing too well. In fact, if you recall in ... the *Duke Magazine*, they tell a story where the coach, who his name was [A. Chester] Chet Redshaw, terrific coach, but I just wasn't making out. I was trying real hard, but ... I couldn't make the grade, and ... he once said of me, "Borbely, you're like a mackerel in the moonlight; you both shine and stink," and the other one was, and it's in the *Duke Magazine*, "Borbely, you're the rotten tomato of the pack." ... I can remember ... things weren't working out for me and, luckily, I think the good Lord said, "I've got to help that kid, because he's trying real hard." Well, I didn't take English, so, they couldn't graduate me, and I was nineteen. Back then, you could play when you were nineteen, in high school, and, at that time, New Brunswick High was a Group IV, which was the top group. ... I think they're Group II or III now. Anyway, so, the guy that was going to start the game, even after I stayed this extra year, he broke his leg in practice, ... over at Johnson Park [in Piscataway]. So, then, the coach decided, "Okay, I've got to start Borbely, because the one that I really wanted broke his leg." Well, we played, we opened, ... we dedicated the stadium or opened the stadium, against St. Peter's, and we hadn't played them for years. ... Now, is it okay that I'm telling you this?

SI: Absolutely, yes.

JB: All right, okay. So, we were going to be playing them for the first time in many years, because St. Peter's High School and New Brunswick High, they would always fight among themselves.

SI: True rivalry.

JB: So, we luckily beat them, 3-0, with a field goal. So, the coach said, "Oh, Borbely is just; hey, he's not for us." So, I didn't start the second game, against Camden, and the guy that played had an attack of appendicitis. So, the coach had nobody else on the bench ... to use for tailback but me, and I can remember, we were playing South River. I looked up in the sky, it was a night game, I said, "God, please, help me." Well, luckily, I made a touchdown. So, then, as I told you, that the good Lord said, "I've got to help that kid, because he's trying real hard," now, remember, the coach would say, "Boberly, like a mackerel in the moon[light], you both shine and stink?" Well, all hell broke loose, because we played Woodbridge, who beat us the year before, and I made five touchdowns and threw a pass for the other one, and I averaged about five yards every time I carried the ball, and then, my life changed from that moment on. ... When my wife and I drive up Joyce Kilmer Avenue, we pass the stadium, I say to her, "[If] what happened in that stadium, one night, didn't happen, you wouldn't be sitting there," and she said, "You've told me that a thousand times." ... Then, of course, the interesting thing was that the team that beat us was Asbury Park, for the State Championship, and even though, as great as Chet Redshaw was, my coach, ... a guy by the name of Dan Hill was an All-American at Duke, on the '38 team, okay, that was unbeaten, untied. ... He went to see if he could sign up a guy that was All-State by the name of Jack Netcher, in Asbury Park, and Jack's, apparently, grades were not too good, and then, Dan Hill ... said to (Nick?), the coach at ... [Asbury Park High School], "Can you recommend anybody?" He said, "Yes, there's a kid over in New Brunswick that's pretty good." So, Dan Hill came to New Brunswick and left a card in my mailbox, ... on Codwise Avenue, now Joyce Kilmer, said, "Would you be interested in coming to Duke?" and I certainly said, "I certainly would," but, if it hadn't happened that night, my life would have been entirely different.

So, from there, I was able to get a scholarship to Duke and met Wallace Wade, at Durham, Duke University, and he said, "You're welcome to come to Duke on a football scholarship," and, of course, as I tell everyone, back then, because they had been to the Rose Bowl in '39, in '42, my freshman year, they were good, as good then in football as they are today in basketball, yes. ...

SI: Before we get into Duke, I wanted to ask you more about growing up in New Brunswick.

JB: Okay, in New Brunswick.

SI: To go back to your parents, did they meet in New Brunswick or had they met some other way?

JB: No, I think they actually met in New Brunswick, yes, and Dad was ten years older than Mom, and it was interesting, because she often told me that, "You know, I married your father because he had a nice nose. I figured all of the children in my family would have a nice nose." Well, you can see what happened to mine, but my brother, elder brother, he's passed on now, he was four-and-a-half years older than I, he did have a nice nose. So, Mom did get at least one of us with a nice nose.

SI: You grew up on Codwise and Redmond Avenue.

JB: Redmond Street.

SI: Okay, Redmond Street.

JB: Yes.

SI: What was that neighborhood like?

JB: Well, there were some Italians and very few, actually, we were probably; no, there was another Hungarian family a block away, but it was just an Irish [area], but it was a mixed neighborhood, and, actually, some of the people had lived there many years. So, it was a combination of English, Irish, and very few Hungarians, at the time.

SI: Which ward was that?

JB: That was the Fourth Ward. Yes, that was the Fourth Ward.

SI: Did you have many ties with the Hungarian community in New Brunswick?

JB: Well, you see, ... the church that I [went to] was on the corner of Bayard and Joyce Kilmer. I would [say] it's just about four blocks [to walk] there. So, naturally, we used that as our [center], to go to church, to be in plays and go to summer school, and so that that was our [social network], the people that we really associated with, at that time. Now, I don't know whether you want [me to go on], because I became a Catholic, eventually, because I married a Catholic, and I'll just throw this in. When I was on Guam, we were going to be preparing, I knew, eventually,

for the invasion of Japan, and I decided that since the children are going to be ... reared Catholic, because that's the promise you have to make, I decided I would convert to Catholicism. So, I contacted a cousin of Marie's, who was on Guam at the time, in the Army, and he was going to be my sponsor. So, I converted to Catholicism on Guam and I became a Catholic, and the interesting story [is], I was a second lieutenant in the Marines and, naturally, we had to go to, on Guam, to ...

SI: To the officers' mess?

JB: To officers' mess, and he was a private. So, here, he came about six o'clock; seven o'clock was going to be the affair. So, I had a couple of extra bars [a lieutenant's insignia] in my locker. So, I put them on him and I made him a second lieutenant for a day, [laughter] and we went through the mess line. He had a nice meal and we went on from there. His name was Harry Barr, lovely man, and I correspond with his daughters now, and tell them the story about how I made their father a second lieutenant in the Marines for a day. [laughter] ...

SI: I want to ask more about your childhood, but I want to stick with that story for a moment. What was involved in converting? In the middle of getting ready for an invasion, what did you have to do to actually get ready to convert to Catholicism?

JB: Well, naturally, when you [convert in peacetime], you've got to go to quite a few sessions, but, because of the essence of time, the priest was very good and I think I just met him once, and then, the next time, they saw your intention, and time was of the essence, and so, there wasn't any problem and I became a Catholic. ... The interesting thing, here, I was reared a Protestant, my wife was a Catholic, I converted, and our firstborn, with the same name as mine, is a Jesuit priest, yes, and ... Jim would be ... in his sixties. We have about three or four children now, of the ten, in their sixties, so, yes.

SI: Which church did you grow up in, though?

JB: ... Back then, it was called the Second Reformed, because I remember seeing my [baptismal certificate], the document ... that you get, but I think, today, they call it the Bayard Street Presbyterian Church. [Editor's Note: The Bayard Street Presbyterian Church is located on Joyce Kilmer Avenue, while the Second Reformed Church is now located on College Avenue, both in New Brunswick, New Jersey.] ... I remember, because the minister would speak one session in Hungarian and one session in English, ... I would notice that when he was speaking Hungarian, even though it was Second Reformed, at the time, he would use the word "Presbyterian" in his sermon. So, I figured there must be a very close relationship between the Second Reformed, because, now, they're ... the Bayard Street Presbyterian Church.

SI: You said it was a real center for social activities as well.

JB: Oh, yes, oh, yes. I don't know whether you were aware of this, but, back then, and a little bit later, there were more Hungarians in the City of New Brunswick [than] anywhere else in the world, except in Hungary, because Johnson and Johnson brought them over to work ... in J&J, the plant. ... If you couldn't speak Hungarian, and this I got from Dr. [August J.] Gus Molnar,

[President of the Hungarian American Foundation in New Brunswick], from the museum over on Somerset Street, Hungarian Museum, that if you couldn't speak Hungarian, you couldn't be a superintendent in the plant, because most of the people working there were Hungarian, yes.

SI: Were there a lot of Hungarian traditions kept up in your family?

JB: Well, of course, Mother would make stuffed cabbage and chicken paprikash, which is creamed chicken, and then, ... on Easter, there's a tradition of some kind where you'd sprinkle something on a girl, or something, but I never went through any of that. ... So, they tried very hard, and my mother would insist that I spoke Hungarian. She would stop me, say in Hungarian, "Stop stuttering," in Hungarian, "Speak a little better than that." So, Mom kept after us to try to speak the language, yes. ... Although, when I listen to the Hungarian radio now, on my computer, it's a foreign language, because it's supposed to be one of the most difficult languages to learn, because they're speaking the Hungarian that, say, [a person like] the President of Rutgers would speak, and I know the "country" Hungarian. In fact, one time, when I was talking to this one person in Hungarian, "Gee," the fellow said, "what part of Hungary did you come from?" and, apparently, I can speak the peasant type pretty well, pronounce the words properly, but, when I listen to the radio, or, sometimes, if I go to a Hungarian church, where the priest has come from Hungary, it's almost like I'm listening to a foreign language, because the words that they're using, the peasant wouldn't speak that way, yes.

SI: Do you have any questions about growing up in New Brunswick?

JR: No more about growing up.

SI: When you were growing up, would you be involved in any organized activities, like Boy Scouts or sports?

JB: No. Actually, you know, we were poor and my dad was a fur dresser. ... He had to go to Paterson, initially, and then, I think there was a place on Water Street in New Brunswick, where the salt brine just does havoc on your hands. So, we didn't have [the time or resources], and then, of course, as I said, when Dad was fifty-one, he had a heart attack and passed on. So, Mom, ... who made eighteen dollars a week, was the one, so that we were kind of strapped, but we never were hungry and we were kept as clean as [anyone else], and we owned a rather nice house. ... Interestingly enough, they bought that one, of course, back then, for ten thousand dollars, and it was a lovely home on the corner, and it still is very nice, corner of Joyce Kilmer and Redmond. So, we had a nice home, yes.

SI: Did you have to go to work early?

JB: No, my brother did, because Mom could see that there was potential where I was concerned, and I'm sorry that my brother didn't continue on, because I remember him playing up in Codwise Park, which is now Joyce Kilmer Park, in New Brunswick, and I saw that he was playing fullback. ... He was probably fifteen, so, I was about eleven, and I watched him carry the ball through the line, and I said, "Boy, I wish I could be that good, that I could run as hard as he could." ... It turned out that he could have been a pretty good football player at New Brunswick

High, if he'd continued his education, but he didn't care to, and he went to work at the hotel. It was called the Woodrow Wilson Hotel, then, ... it became the Roger Smith Hotel, and, today, now, that's where the big apartment building is, across the street from the State Theater, the Heldrich Conference Center. So, it went from Woodrow Wilson to Roger Smith and, now, it's the Heldrich Center. So, my brother was a bellhop there, and he just was very proud of the way things were going for me. ...

SI: Did you have any other siblings?

JB: No. He was the [only one]; there was one ... that would have been between he and I, and, at a very early age, maybe one or two, my brother, Ernest, passed away, and that's why it made my mother rather timid. When my children came along, she wanted them to bundle up in July and to be sure that ... nothing happened to them that happened to her second born. So, I was the third.

SI: Do you remember how the Great Depression impacted the area, any effects of the Great Depression in New Brunswick?

JB: Technically, my mother and dad were part of that whole thing, and I don't recall any problems of any kind. People worked hard and they were good family people, and I really could find no problem that I could really say to you, "I remember when things were really, really rough," but I know that we would, my dad and I would, walk from ... Joyce Kilmer on down to Burnet Street, which is now where Route 18 is. ... For a nickel a pound, you could buy enough meat for the chicken soup on Sunday, or the beef soup on Sunday, and you'd have the soup and the potatoes and you would take the meat out of that and that would be your meal for, like, ... twenty-five cents. In fact, I've got to tell you a cute story, if you want.

SI: Yes, please.

JB: Yes. The girl that you're going to be speaking to, [Marie Borbely, his wife], that you can see her picture over there, on that [wall], that's down at Duke, a very cute story, that I've told many times to my family. [Through] the coach, Chet Redshaw, ... during the time of the [Depression], just before the war, and, for six dollars a month, if I swept out the locker, that's what I got for pay. So, I was going [with her]. ... My wife was, at that time, she graduated from St. Peter's High School and she was only sixteen before, so, they told her at Douglass, which was NJC at the time, "If you go somewhere for a year, you won't even have to take a test. We'll allow you to come back and enter the college." So, she suddenly appears at New Brunswick High, first day of school. I said, "What are you doing here?" So, one thing led to another, but, so, we started to be friendly. So, I had the six dollars. I said, "Would you like to go to New York?" I said, "I'll give you three, but don't come over on my three, okay?" So, for the six dollars; are you sitting down? Okay, we took the Trailway [Bus], the two of us, to New York, and, if you got there at a certain time before, you could see the movie and Benny Goodman and his band. ...

SI: The actual band or a film of the band?

JB: The actual band.

SI: Wow.

JB: So, we saw the movie and Benny Goodman and the band. Then, for lunch, we went to the Automat and put a nickel in and you get some food. Then, we went to the Strand Theater, after the Automat, and we saw Jimmy Dorsey and his orchestra, [then], the movie, Bob Eberly, the vocalist, and Helen O'Connell, the singer. Then, we lived it up. We went to Schrafft's for supper, okay. That was, like, a dollar or something. Then, we didn't have enough money to go to a show and a live [performance], so, we just went to a movie, and then, we had enough money that she had hot chocolate, I had hot chocolate and we split a cream cheese and (date nut?) sandwich or something, and we did that all, and then, the trip on home, we did that all on six dollars, okay. So, that's the story I've told to the children, [I would] say, "Hey, do you want to hear the story of what your mother and I did on six dollars?" [laughter] True story, I mean, check with her; I might lie a little, but that girl will tell you, "Oh, my God, did he tell you that story?" Yes, it's true, six dollars.

SI: I cannot believe you saw Benny Goodman and the Dorseys and all these others on six dollars.

JB: Benny Goodman, yes, yes, but we didn't have enough, because, ... you know, the six dollars was fading out. We couldn't; we just went to the movie at, you know, nine o'clock, ... yes.

SI: It seems like, growing up, music played a large role in your life.

JB: Yes, and, of course, I couldn't read music, and what had happened [was], I liked to sing and, of course, I was a big fan of [Bing] Crosby. ... A fellow that was in my high school class, a fellow named Russ Locandro, who was the orchestra for the [radio station], it was only about five pieces, guy by the name of Jack Honeywell played the trumpet, and so, we started at the *Home News*. They had a radio station, FM station, at that time, and they said, "Oh, you want to broadcast? Sure." So, they gave us a half-hour show and, apparently, we were doing [okay], and they named the thing *The Sentimental Journey of Songs with Jim Borbely and Russ Locandro and the Men of Rhythm*, and WCTC heard our broadcasts. So, ... Jim Howe, who was the president of WCTC at the time, invited us to come over. So, we ended up ... playing over there on WCTC, same program. ... Then, it turned out, because the announcer would do the announcing at the FM station, *Home News*, and then, I did the announcing of the songs, and then, I sang some of the songs, and they would play one instrumental, ... we would time the thing so that it would begin and end at the proper time. So, ... I can show you an advertisement ... that the *Home News* ran when we were on the FM station. In fact, I think it's right [here]. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: Okay. You are showing us the advertisement that ran in the *Home News Tribune*.

JB: Yes, and you can have that, too, if you want it. ... I forgot to tell you that, then, when I was at Duke, I continued doing music. ... I was the vocalist for the Duke University Band, okay. In fact, she came down at the May Dance, and, because of the war; now, this is now, I'm suddenly

in the Marines, in the V-12 Program, and, as you can see, it says, "Jim Borbely and the Marine Chorus." Well, there wasn't really a chorus, about five guys. We met in the bathroom and we harmonized. So, they were my back-up, and this was a girl, a woman vocalist on CBS, Joan Brooks, and that's her picture there [pointing to the advertisement]. So, this is Durham, North Carolina.

SI: The Carolina Theatre?

JB: The Carolina Theatre, and you can see that.

SI: Can you describe for us what it was like to do these recording sessions? How long would the show be? How frequently would you do these sessions?

JB: A half-hour, and we would meet and just practice one time, and I would try to time the thing so that when we got together, they filled in with the instrumentals, the music, and the interesting thing is, I know nothing about music, to be quite honest with you. I could sing, sounded pretty good, but I couldn't read music, and so, ... it's almost hard to believe that I was involved on the radio. ... When I got down to school, they'd have a Sunday night thing over at the girls' campus and this guy, ... a guy by the name of Charlie Switzer, that had the band, ... he said, "Hey, you want to be the vocalist for our band?" and the only problem was, I would have to sing the song in the key that they were playing in, not my key, because, you know, ... for a vocalist, they put the song [in their key]. So, I had to really knock myself out in reaching some of the notes, but, apparently, it worked out, because I was the vocalist for the band. ... Years before that, not too many years before that, the fellow that was at Duke, I can't recall his name right now, but he was the band that would go ... overseas with Bob Hope. Les; well, I just can't think of it now.

SI: That is all right. We can look it up later. [Editor's Note: It was Les Brown and his Band of Renown.]

JB: Yes, I can look in the thing, ... but, anyway, so, this Charlie Switzer was the one that ... took over, and then, so, here I was, a football player, singing, the vocalist for the Duke University's Orchestra, Band, yes.

SI: Was it the Big Band style of music?

JB: Oh, yes, oh, yes. He played the [Big Band style]. In fact, I don't think I have a picture, no. I was trying to think where [I had that photograph], because what I did do is, I had a picture made of me sitting with the orchestra, and we were playing a job somewhere in Durham, in this area. I think it was a high school prom or something, yes.

SI: Was this a part-time job for you when you were a teenager?

JB: No. Actually, what had happened [was], because I was hurt ... playing football, and so, I didn't make the training table, okay, so, when Charlie heard me sing, he said, "Hey, I can get you the meal ticket," because that's what his [orchestra], all of his band and he would get their ... meals, ... you know, that you would buy ordinarily. So, technically, what I was doing is singing

for my supper, yes. [laughter] So, it turned out that, for a few [weeks?], when I didn't make the training table, Mom used to send me the money, out of her eighteen dollars, okay, so [that] I could be on a meal ticket, and then, when I made the band, ... then, the University then gives you your [meal ticket], but you have to play for the different things, like the May Dance, and every, I think it was every Wednesday night, for a few hours, we would go over to the [East Campus]. See, ... Duke has the East Campus and the West Campus, and the East is the girls and the West is the boys, and so, you take the bus, you know, about a mile away, or less than that, and so, then, we would play in the center, the Teen Center, for the girls and the boys, and so, that's all I had to do, is just sing that one night, and then, I got my meal. [Editor's Note: The Teen Center still exists on the West End at Duke University.] So, I wrote to Mom. I said, "Okay, Mom, you don't have to send me more money. I'm now singing for my supper." So, that's how that worked.

SI: Wow.

JB: Yes.

SI: Going back to when you were growing up in New Brunswick in the 1930s, were you aware of the New Deal in this area, if any New Deal programs affected New Brunswick?

JB: Well, the only thing that [I can note is], I was aware of it, and, of course, one of the things that did happen is that I got the six dollars [for] sweeping out the lockers, which was all part of the, I think it was called the National Youth, something or other.

SI: Administration?

JB: I think so, yes.

SI: Okay, the NYA.

JB: NYA, yes. So, in other words, that's how I got the six dollars, and that the coach got [it] for me. So, that was all [NYA]. ... It wasn't until I got to Duke, in my freshman year, and my roommate and I, Benny Cittadino, he was from Long Branch and he was there on a scholarship, too, and it was Sunday and we walked down to the theater. They had two. They had the Center Theater and the Carolina Theatre. The Center was a little newer theater and, that Sunday afternoon, we walked out of the theater and that's when I learned that ... Pearl Harbor had been attacked, yes. So, I was a freshman then, but, before that, so, to get back to high school, the different countries that were being invaded, you know, we knew about them and we knew that there might be trouble someday, but it wasn't until that I got to Duke as a freshman and learned that ... I'm going to have to join the service, because war has broken out between Japan and the United States. So, at that time, Duke had a Naval ROTC, and then, the Marines, [as well as] around the country, Harvard and Notre Dame and Yale and a few other places, and Duke University. Talk about being on the right street corner at the right time, here I am, a civilian, and I went two years as a civilian at Duke, and, suddenly, I could join, which is the equivalent, the V-12 Program was equivalent to the Army ROTC, where you go through the program, you continue on with your education, which I did for a ... little over a year, at Duke, but, now, you're

in uniform. You're in the Marines, and, of course, you can't wait for graduation, and then, we head to boot camp. ... So, for two years as a civilian, one year and a few months ... in the Marines, which was the equivalent of the ROTC, the V-12 Program, and then, the cute story, you know, I was so proud. I finally went through Parris Island, and then, Camp Lejeune, and then, Quantico, you get your bars, etc., and I was so proud to think, "Gee, whiz." I became a second lieutenant, eventually, a first lieutenant, in the Marines, and then, a book came out, after the war, years later, [that] I read, and one of the chapters, which I can show you again, it said that if you were a football player, you were halfway home in getting your bars. So, it wasn't my intelligence, [it was] because you were a football player and you were tough and you ... could take orders and you were a team player. That's where they looked for a football player to be. If he made the grade, you'd get your bars, and that's what happened to me. I thought it was my good looks, but it wasn't that. [laughter] It was that you were rough and tumble and you would be a good man to lead your men. ...

JR: Did you say something before about your graduation being interrupted by the war?

JB: Oh, yes. You see, I ... never got back. So, I had a little over three years, like three-and-a-half years, and I could never, ever get back to [college], because I could have either gone [on] the GI Bill or continued [as a football player]. My roommate, and other fellows that were in our same class, Duke University honored their football scholarships. So, I could have gotten back, but, by then, we had several [children], one child and one on the way, and it just ... wasn't in the cards to [do so], but, interestingly enough, that Duke University treats me as though I was graduated, because the football, I get all of the documents from [Duke University]. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

JB: I've got a cute story to tell you about it.

SI: Okay. We are looking at the *Blue Devil Weekly*, which is the sports periodical for Duke University.

JB: Yes, and this happens to be an All-American by the name of George McAfee, who just passed away. [Editor's Note: George McAfee died in March of 2009 at the age of ninety. McAfee had a shortened career in the National Football League playing for the Chicago Bears due to an injury he received during World War II.] ... I'll read you what George Halas, who was the coach of the Chicago Bears, [said], this is a quote, "The highest compliment you can pay any ball carrier is just to compare him with McAfee." Okay, now, I went to a sports affair down at, well, the Cameron Gymnasium; it's now called, I think, the Krzyzewski, after "Coach K." [Editor's Note: Cameron Gymnasium still exists as the Cameron Indoor Stadium. The gymnasium is called Card Gymnasium, but there is also the Michael Krzyzewski Center for Athletic Excellence.] ... He was coming in the door, George McAfee, and, at that time, I was three inches taller and thirty pounds heavier. So, I was talking to him on the same [level] and I knew, being the great football player that he was for the Chicago Bears, and, also, an All-American at Duke University, so, I walked up to him and I said, "George, can I have your autograph for my grandson, Jeffrey?" and he writes his name. Of course, it mentions here that he had a sense of humor, in the obituary. He writes his name and he says a few words, "Good luck,

Jeffrey," and he leans toward me and he says, "You see? I can write," [laughter] because, back then, I don't think you had to be a Rhodes Scholar to get into Duke. Today, I think it's a lot tougher to get into Duke, but, for him, you know, many a truth is spoken in a jest, and I believe, at the time, you didn't have to be quite the scholar you are today to get into Duke University. So, that's a story that I usually tell, too.

SI: You were telling us before we started recording about how the Rose Bowl was played at Duke in your freshman year.

JB: At Duke, yes, yes.

SI: Can you tell us again about how that came about and what you remember about that?

JB: Oh, yes, oh, yes. They were not going to have the Rose Bowl that year, because of the war, and Wallace Wade got together with the different powers-to-be on the West Coast and he said, "Look, why don't you have it at [Duke]? Since we've been picked and Oregon State has been picked, why don't you have it at Durham, North Carolina? You can have it in our stadium," and the powers-to-be, whoever the officials were in charge of the Rose Bowl at the time, said, "Fine." So, here, Duke had been to the Rose Bowl in '39, four years before, and [this is] '42, and I think it might have been, like, the 3rd of January, that I could look it up if you want the exact date, that the powers-to-be decided the Rose Bowl will still be held, but it'll be held in Durham, North Carolina, in the Wallace Wade Stadium, and that's where it took place and, as I said, Duke lost to Oregon State, 20-16. [Editor's Note: The Rose Bowl of 1942 was held in Durham, North Carolina, at Duke University, instead of Pasadena, California, where it is usually held, due to fears that the West Coast could be attacked by the Japanese, less than one month after the attack on Pearl Harbor.]

SI: What do you remember about being at the Bowl? You said you could not play in the Bowl.

JB: No, no. You see, back then, that was Christmas holiday. So, naturally, we all came home. So, we had to listen to the game on the radio.

SI: Okay.

JB: Yes. So, we didn't bother staying, because, since we couldn't play, we'd be sitting in the stands, ... because, back then, freshmen were not allowed to be on the team, yes. So, it was Christmas and I went home for the holiday, to New Brunswick, New Jersey, yes.

SI: You said you helped the team prepare, though, for the Bowl.

JB: Oh, yes. No, you see, I was, at that time, ... first-string tailback, and it was interesting, because New Brunswick High had a single-wing formation and so did Duke University. So, it was very easy for me to not have to learn a new kind of formation. ... I was the first-string tailback at the time and I think the fellow's name was Jordan who was the tailback. So, I had to be Jordan against the varsity, running the plays against [the varsity]; we were the Oregon State team, running the plays against the varsity, yes.

SI: Can you tell us a little bit about your first few days and weeks at Duke, what it was like coming in as a freshman? Were there traditions that they put you through?

JB: No, no, there was nothing out of the ordinary. At that time, there was a freshman quadrangle at Duke. So, all of the freshmen all got into the freshman quadrangle. Now, the interesting thing that you might want to know [is], you could either have a room above which is now Krzyzewski Gymnasium, I'm sorry, it's right next-door, you could be there, which was ... a gym at that time, the old one, with all the other football players, or, if you wanted to, either on Sundays, work ... to hand out little leaflets at the church, at the cathedral, [the Duke University Chapel], ... then, you could be with all of the other freshmen in the freshmen quadrangle and not with the football players, where you're segregated. ... My roommate and I, we chose to hand out the leaflets at the [cathedral], to be with all the other freshmen. So, we were never branded as football players. We were like the other students, and my roommate and I, who was the best man at my wedding, when we got married, down in Raleigh, North Carolina, I was in the Marines then, V-12, and so, he was our best man. So, here, to move back to our freshman year, the two of us, ... we could actually exchange clothes, we were the same height and everything, and I loved the man enough to make him my best man at our wedding, yes.

JR: You were married during the war, you said.

JB: Oh, yes, oh, yes.

JR: Do you think the way the wedding went or the timing of it was affected by the war?

JB: Yes. Well, you know, we loved each other and we felt as though [it was the right time]. I asked her father for her hand, via the mail, and he said, "Okay." ... Actually, my father-in-law was connected with Rutgers, because he was the Thatcher-Anderson Printing Company, who did the *Targum* [the Rutgers University newspaper] and he also did the football programs for Rutgers, before they were a state [university]. So, I married his daughter, his youngest daughter, yes.

SI: To go back to when you were growing up in New Brunswick, being so close to Rutgers and NJC, did they have any impact on your life? Did you do anything on campus?

JB: Oh, yes. Well, see, actually, we would scrimmage, in high school, we would scrimmage against [Rutgers]. Right in back of the old gymnasium, there was a football field and we would scrimmage the 150-pound team or whatever. ... We were connected with Rutgers that way, ... and, actually, the stadium, at that time, the original stadium, was Neilson Field, and that's where we had to play football, which was part of the Rutgers campus, and that's where Rutgers played their games. So, ... we felt rather comfortable with the University, yes.

SI: New Brunswick High would play at Neilson Field before their stadium was built.

JB: Oh, yes, oh, yes. That's where we played ... Columbia High School, South Orange, was in ... that stadium, because that was the year before New Brunswick built the stadium out [on]

Joyce Kilmer Avenue. So, any time we had to play a team, that would be the place where we would play, yes.

SI: Regarding your education, what were you most interested in while in school?

JB: I took pre-law, yes. ... Then, when I came home, ... the insurance company was called the Farm Bureau Insurance Company, and they were big auto [under]writers in, like, thirteen of the states, they were the top auto writer, Pennsylvania. They were the largest, more than All-State, more than any, State Farm, any of them, and so, I took my license and I became an agent for Farm Bureau, and then, the name was changed, years later, to Nationwide Insurance Company. So, for twenty-five years, I sold their insurance and they sold auto, fire, life, mutual funds, yes, and then, they pulled out of New Jersey, and then, I had to make other plans to sell car insurance and fire insurance, yes.

JR: You said that you knew early on that you wanted to go to college. Was that an expected norm? Did your mother expect you to go to college?

JB: Oh, she was hoping against hope that I could do something, but, gee, it would have to be with a scholarship, yes, and, you know, talk about, and I know it's repeating, ... I mentioned the phrase that "many a truth is spoken in a jest," the bit about the coach, not my final year, but the year before, he made those statements, "Borbely, like a mackerel in the moonlight, you both shine and stink." ... The year that I didn't take English, ... they said to me, they called me down to the office, ... the guidance counselor, "Why aren't you doing your work in your English class?" I said, "I don't want to graduate." [He] said, "Okay, just drop out of class," and that's what I did, and then, when I wanted to graduate, and, of course, I took English again. So, I was able to play one extra year, and then, things didn't go, as I told you, too well, and then, the good Lord said, "I'm going to help that kid, because I want to see that he gets a fair shake," and then, the heavens opened, ... but not right away. It wasn't until about the fourth game that, suddenly, there's an article, if you ever wanted to have a copy, a guy by the name of Jack Casey, who later went on to write for one of the Hollywood companies, and so, he really laid it on in the article. It's unbelievable, when you read it. It's like I was the greatest thing that walked the Earth and, when I realized, back when, [I was] saying, "God, please, help me," and how things weren't going too well, and then, suddenly, ... to read something like this, he really outdid himself and made me look a lot better, but it might have helped me to get into Duke University, when they sent the article on down to the college and said, "Hey, this kid has some potential, so, take a good look at him," and it worked out fine, yes.

SI: You said that you were in the theater when Pearl Harbor was attacked and you were coming out of the theater when you found out.

JB: Right, my roommate and I.

SI: How did the town react to the news? What do you remember about that day?

JB: Very quiet, very quiet, you know, it was, "Oh, my God," which, you know, you're suddenly saying, "Hey, my God, ... we're going to war." Yes, so, it was more or less of a [reaction of], "Oh, God, I've got to pray and hope that things work out for everyone," yes.

SI: Had the war been discussed much on campus?

JB: ... No, no, not really. My roommate was in the ROTC, Naval ROTC, and ... he later became an ensign in the Navy, and he had to come back, too, but he didn't have any children at the time. So, he and his wife came back, and he was on the football team again, after the war, ... but we were concerned about our lives, you know, yes.

SI: When you went down to Duke for the first time, was that the first time you had been to the South, or outside of the Northeast?

JB: Yes. No, that was the first time that I went down South, and I can remember, my freshman year, that I walked to the back of the bus, the bus that you go [on] from campus down to [town?], and then, back up, and they said, "Hey, you've got to go to the front of the bus;" no, turn that off.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JB: ... Okay, you can turn it on.

SI: Sure.

JB: Not knowing, I went [to the back], there's a seat back there. "Hey, you're not allowed back here." The bus driver said, "You've got to [move up]." So, that was my first taste of [segregation], because, with me, the guy that I owed my life to, coming to Duke on scholarship, he was a Negro by the name of Tops Brown who led me through that same hole we went through all night long, five yards at a clip. So, I owed my life to [him]. When he died, my number was forty-one, I went up to the black undertaker, I forget what their name is, up on Lee Avenue, I think, [Anderson Funeral Service], and his casket was up there. It was just a wake.

SI: Do you want to take a break?

JB: No. I started to walk up to his coffin, and I knew what he had done for me that night, and I'm going to give you that copy so that you'll know what I'm talking about, and I gave an envelope, of forty-one dollars, back then, to his daughter. ... Years later, when he was inducted into the [New Brunswick High School] Hall of Fame, which I [am also a member of], that's that thing up on that wall, down at the Hyatt, ... I met his daughters again and I said, "You know, I put forty-one dollars in the envelope, when I [went up to pay my respects]." I was a basket case walking up to his coffin, when I think [about it], and she said, "Oh, it was you." I said, "Yes, it was me." I said, "I wanted to give that to your father." ... I'm going to give you that article, because he's the guy that led me through that line. The five touchdowns, I owe to him, so that my life changed that night, and everything, you know, as I told you, many a truth is spoken in a jest, as I say, "You wouldn't be sitting there," to my gal, but I was thinking [that], and I'm trying to explain something to you. Here's a father [Borbely's father-in-law], they've got money, they

can do the printing for the school. Here's this Hungarian kid from the Fourth Ward, coming up, "Wants to marry my daughter?" or, "Going with my daughter?" At least, if this kid didn't have some potential, then, he said, "Yes, you can marry my daughter," because, then, I was on my way to college. [He said], "So, this little Hungarian kid from Codwise Avenue, suddenly, is going to go to a pretty good university; yes, I think I'll let him marry my daughter." So, this is why I say to her, "He wasn't going to let me marry you if I was just a nobody. I had something happening in my life." ...

SI: That is pretty remarkable.

JB: Yes, so, but, then, the good Lord said, "Look," and I tell everyone this, too, "Don't let this go to your head. I want you to be a regular guy. ... I helped you out, but just be a nice person for the rest of your life." ... I was All-State in 1940 and my [life] just became another world. ... I'll get that article for you, ... and, when you read it, you'll see, "Hey, this is what that kid was talking about," and, you know, from "a mackerel in the moonlight" to "the rotten tomato of the pack," and then, years later, when I was on the Board of Education, Chet Redshaw was the retired director of athletics by then and I was now put in charge of the athletic department. I was the rep, I guess, the liaison, between the Board of Education [and the athletic department]. So, my assignment was the athletic department. So, I would oversee [them]. So, naturally, if there's a sports banquet, they invite the board member who is the representative to speak. So, I got up and made a speech, you know, I write it out, and then, I memorize it, and Chet Redshaw was, naturally, invited to the same affair, up at the high school. It was a dinner, and, afterward, if you ever wanted to see the card, the letter that he sent me, saying that, "What a credit," etc., etc., it was from "the mackerel in the moonlight" to this beautiful letter, saying, he's comparing me with the different guys, like Joe Marino, who ... became the principal of the junior high school, and Bill Lindstrom, who was the principal at the high school. He was putting me in that same category with guys that had made something of their lives. So, I forgave him for all the things that he used to say about me, but, you know, some guys would have walked off the field and said, "I quit," but, you see, there was more in my life, that I had to swallow my pride and know that, some day, I think I can come through, and the good Lord was good to me.

SI: That is really quite amazing.

JB: Yes. Oh, my God, when I think of what transpired, and then, the children. [Referring to a photograph of his family] Now, this guy, he's in China there. One of them is a Jesuit priest. The other guy, the youngest guy, is a director at the University of Michigan, in the Engineering Department. ... One guy has a very good job at AT&T, and another guy, he now works for the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] in Washington, and the other guy, his twin brother, is an executive, a vice-president, in Towers Perrin [Foster & Crosby] and something or other. It's a consulting firm, very high up, and the girl, the graduate of Duke, who still lives in Durham, she's a paralegal and she works for a concern called Self-Help that makes loans to people who have a problem getting a loan. In fact, the guy that runs the affair, in Duke, he was called to Washington and received a commendation from [the President], when Clinton was the President of the United States. So, she works in that firm. In fact, he was in school with her, the head of this outfit that's just off the wall, called Self-Help, yes.

SI: All of your children have had successful careers as well.

JB: Yes, you know, and I kid everybody, I've got to tell you this, because it's a true story. My math [was] very poor, so that ... to get into Duke, you had to have algebra and I flunked algebra, and I had to go to summer school until I found out, in August, if I passed, that I would be entered into Duke. So, this girl that I'm married to, the mother of my ten children, she's a whiz at algebra and, when we were going together, she tutored me. So, I tell everyone, "I cannot leave this girl, because she helped me get into Duke," and I passed summer school. ... It was junior high; that's where they had the summer school at the time. So, I didn't know I was getting into Duke until August, but I told you the story about George McAfee, "You see, I can write." So, maybe, back then, some of the boys would be allowed into school with a little bit of help from the coach. ...

SI: How quickly did life on campus change after Pearl Harbor?

JB: I really didn't; you mean when I was then in uniform, or before?

SI: In that first year.

JB: In the first year? Not really, not really; we didn't say, "Oh, my God, there's a war on," nothing. ... You know, you just [went on], things rolled along and ... you weren't too concerned about [it]. You felt sorry for some of the things that were happening, but, then, when you walked out of the theater and said, "We are going to war," then, your life, now, you were in it, and it was up to you to help to do what you could to make things right for the country. ... You know, of course, not that we're any different than anybody else, but as far as a Hungarian is concerned, you look at life and whatever it has to offer. In other words, you'd give your life for your country and that wasn't a problem. That was not a problem, no.

JR: Was there a worry or concern that the United States would be attacked again on our soil?

JB: I don't know if there was any concern about that, but the fact that the Rose Bowl, that they didn't want to hold the Rose Bowl ...

JR: Out there [in California].

JB: Somebody was worried about the Japs, and, you know, finally, ... we go to Topsail Beach in North Carolina every summer, for a couple of weeks, and that's when ... we learned that the subs were coming in North Carolina, yes, so that they had these bungalows built, soldiers were in them, to watch the coast, where we go now to swim, yes. That was North Carolina.

SI: You knew that at the time.

JB: No, no, [laughter] years later, yes, ... "Hey, see that?" There were about two or three of these regular houses, and some of them were converted now to civilian use, but that's what they were used for, to watch the shore, shoreline, yes.

JR: You said before, if I remember correctly, when you heard about Pearl Harbor, you knew that you were going to join the war?

JB: Well, see, at that time, we didn't know about the V-12. ... I'm a little rusty on whether I knew at that time whether I couldn't [finish school?], because you're going to be drafted if you're [not already enlisted], and, luckily, talk about being a "lucky Pierre," I mentioned before, here, the different universities suddenly had this program where you could be an officer in the Marines if you continued on, "Until we're ready for you. When we ... lose too many second lieutenants, buddy, you've got to leave school. ... We'll let you go to your end of it, but, then, [you will be taken into the Marine Corps]."

JR: It could have been whenever.

JB: Yes, and my whenever came, like, in 1944, I believe. I believe that's the date, and then, off you go to Parris Island, and that's when I told the story about the first night that I was there, you got that, about the bedbugs. ...

SI: Do you want to tell that story now or shall we wait for later?

JB: Whenever, yes, yes, because you have the ...

SI: Yes, it was in the *Duke Magazine*.

JB: Yes, yes. No, see, what happened [was], it's not in the magazine. Because there were so many guys sending stuff back, they had to put you on the computer, you know. This is the thing. [Editor's Note: Mr. Borbely pulls out the *Duke Magazine*]. ... That's me there.

SI: Okay, this is the *Duke Magazine* article.

JB: This is the *Duke Magazine*. ...

SI: February 2009.

JB: Yes, and that's the same thing, and then, because there were so many, they can only put so many stories in, so, then, if you go to number eleven, on the [web] page, then, he comes up first, and you can have this, if you want. You have that. ...

SI: Is there an abbreviated version in the magazine?

JB: No, no, there's nothing in the magazine. See, this comes up on the computer. See, they ... only used about three in here. ...

SI: Okay, you are in the online version.

JB: Yes, yes. So, I saw [it], I looked at the community [center computer], the other day, it mentioned, because that Bridget Booher, [who wrote the article], whatever her name is, [said],

"Because there's so many, you've got to go and you can get it online." It tells you how to do that, yes, but that's the thing that you see on the [Internet], yes.

SI: Was there a formal induction process or did they just say one day, "Now, you are in the V-12 Program?"

JB: Oh, no, no, you've got to take a test. Oh, you've got to take a test at the college, you know, and then, they look at it, if you've got any [aptitude for the program]. It's a regular test that you [might take], you know, different [questions]; it might be a true and false. ... I can't recall, but it was a test to see whether you make the grade to be in the V-12 Program, and, apparently, I must have passed, because, then, suddenly, May is ... the end of my sophomore year and, like, July 1st, "Come on down," and then, you get your uniform and you fall out in the morning. Now, you're in the Marines, yes.

SI: You were in the V-12 Program, then, you went to Parris Island, and then, you went back to Duke. Is that the order?

JB: No, no. You're at Duke, all right, two years, civilian, one year and a few months [in the V-12 Program], ... in other words, because you're going to go July and August, and, usually, school starts in September, but you're starting here. ... Then, for that whole year, you're in the Marines and you fall out, like you do there, and parade on [a field], but you're taking the regular courses, but they insisted upon, and, unfortunately, they made me take algebra again. So, I don't have to tell you what happened on that one. Anyway, so, for one whole year, then, now, you're in uniform. Then, they say, "Okay, we need you, because we're losing a lot of second lieutenants," and you get aboard ... a train, yes. You took the train down to South Carolina, Parris Island. You're in the Marines and that's ... "graduation day," in Parris Island.

SI: Okay. It was at the end of your junior year that you went down to Parris Island.

JB: Yes.

SI: Okay.

JB: Yes, oh, yes, and then, because you have another year, if you want to get your diploma, yes. Now, the interesting thing [is], because, if you go through officer's training, then, you go to Quantico and you're getting regular courses and different courses, some of the schools, like Oregon State and a few others, because you were a lieutenant and took all of those courses, they sent you your diploma, even though you didn't graduate. Duke never did that, and that was a bone of contention with some of us, because I felt that to go through OCS [Officer's Candidate School], because, then, you go through; that's when they separate the men from the boys, to see whether you are officer material. ... Then, you get your bar, but, then, you have another session to see whether you're going to keep them, and then, when you passed that, more courses, and then, after that, you became a lieutenant, then, [they] send you back down to Camp Lejeune, and, interestingly enough, you're in Camp Lejeune; you went to Camp Lejeune first, after Parris Island, boot camp. Then, you get some more, and then, you go to Quantico, and then, back to Camp Lejeune, now that you're an officer. You've passed all your tests and you're going to keep

the bars and, now, you're back to Camp Lejeune, and then, I'm trying to think. Then, we were sent back down to Parris Island, and I believe that's where we took our troop train, from there, to Camp Pendleton in [California]. Yes, no, it was from the boot camp, it was from the boot camp. Let's see, no, no, it was after you were an officer, then, they sent you to San Francisco [San Diego], to Camp Pendleton, for a very short stay, and then, from San Diego is where we boarded, and we went to Pearl Harbor, and then, next stop was Guam, yes.

SI: When you were in the V-12 Program, they chose your classes for you.

JB: Oh, yes, oh, yes.

SI: How intense were the classes?

JB: ... Everything was okay, English, history, whatever, and they stuck you in algebra. That was the only requirement that you [had], yes.

SI: Was there a lot of stress involved? Were people worried that if they did not make it they would be out of the program?

JB: ... Our roommate, originally, in the [quadrangle], and the Marines went back to the freshman quadrangle, that's where they [set up], and I used to do my laundry there, you know, your underwear, etc. ... Supposedly, I had the whitest undershirts, etc., evidently, drying. I said, "Well, I'm Hungarian background, and that's why. My mother taught me how to wash." We had to scrub floors when I was a [child], my brother and I, the kitchen floor, and, anyway, what was I saying? ...

SI: You said the Marines took over the quadrangle.

JB: ... So, we took over the freshman quadrangle. ...

SI: We were talking about the stress related to the classes.

JB: Oh, no, no stress, ... you know, we were in the Marines and we're proud and we go to class, we march, we fall out [at] six o'clock in the morning, roll call. It's just that, instead of, here, ... two years, I was a civilian and my freshman year was there, and, now, all of a sudden, in my junior year, back in the freshman quadrangle, I'm in uniform, and we have a major and a warrant officer and sergeants as our head, yes. See, that's the major there and he's the warrant officer, yes. [Editor's Note: Mr. Borbely points to a photograph.]

SI: The two men in front.

JB: Yes, and ... one of these guys is a sergeant. So, we're in the service.

SI: Was there a lot of discipline?

JB: Not too strict, no. You had to [behave], you know, don't go crazy, don't come home drunk, etc., yes, you know, just behave yourself, ... you're in college, and "mind your Ps and Qs," yes.

SI: Were you allowed to have time off during the week? Were you allowed to leave?

JB: ... Yes, you could go to the movies and stuff. There wasn't any [requirement]; the falling out, roll call, and, from then on, that was it. Then, you were regular [college students], so that it wasn't as like you had to account for everything, because, just as you saw in the Marines, we were allowed to go down to the theater and perform, and you'd go to the movies, and our biggest fans were the Marines from the college, clapping for us, you know, even though we weren't very good. We were terrible, because, here, ... I can't read music, doesn't know music, can't read a note, and he's got these guys humming in the background for him and they're calling it a chorus; okay. It wasn't a chorus. [laughter] They hummed in the background, yes, but I tell everyone, I don't tell [everyone], "Look, we're on the marquee, hey, big time," but that's not true, you see. ... I think what they did [was], here, they're coming down from the CBS, New York, her [Joan Brooks'] husband was her manager; what better scenario would it be? "We're locking in with the Marines, and we got the;" so, really, I was dragged along, because I was in the Marines and they wanted to be able to show the world that they're connected with the Armed Services, but it was really a hoax, yes, but it was okay with me. I'm in the marquee, I'm up on the stage, these guys in back of me, who practiced with me in the bathroom, ... in the freshman quadrangle bathroom, ... and the guys in the audience, [Mr. Borbely imitates their applause]. We've got a packed audience with Marines. Hey, so, we had it made, yes.

SI: Was everyone in the program going to go into the Marine Corps or were there Navy guys mixed in?

JB: No, no, that's a separate [contingent]; my roommate was separate. In fact, ... once he was in the V-12 and I was a civilian, ... we could be together, because he was a civilian, too. He was just in the Naval ROTC, no falling out, etc. You'd just signed up with the Navy, with the promise that if I become [an officer], I can then go off and try to be an ensign. Then, of course, after two years, now, my junior year, now, he's still in the ... Navy V-12, he's no different, but I can no longer be with him, because, now, I'm in the Marines.

SI: What about military training, calisthenics and drilling? Did you do a lot of that?

JB: Oh, yes. See, back then, technically, if you didn't want to take gym, as a civilian, no problem; once you were in the Marines, you got gym, but, see, we were exempt, because we were football players. So, that was all the ... exercise we needed, to not to have [to be] part of the gym class, but, once you were in the Marines, I don't care whether you played football or not, ... you got gym. So, my third year, we had gym, boxing and whatnot, yes, all that, yes.

SI: Did the football program continue or was it dropped?

JB: Oh, yes. Then, even though, see, I was first string tail[back], freshman year, ... wingback [was a] guy by the name of Buddy Luper, and, when I got hurt in ... my sophomore year, at the start of the year, he became the tailback and he never relinquished the [position], but, then, when

the V-12 came in, then, you had football players from all over the country coming, and, now, you had a big squad. So, you had the regular squad, and then, this alternate squad. I was captain and fullback for that squad. We had a small schedule, but I used to [sit on the bench], and then, eventually, I did play, then. When that ... fullback left for Quantico, or for Parris Island, then, I was shifted over here for a few games, but, technically, I was the captain of this. It was the white squad and the blue squad, ... but that was the regular team there. ... There was a lot of football players, ... some All-Americans, from ... the schools that came and played on Duke[*'s* wartime team], yes.

SI: Do any of those games from that period stand out in your memory?

JB: Not really. I think Duke may have lost a game or two, I'm not sure, but it wasn't like the year before, where, our freshman year, ... although they were not like the 1939 team, unbeaten, untied, un-scored upon, they played teams like Pittsburgh, ... but, in that year, why, now, what was your question again?

SI: Do any of the games stand out in your memory?

JB: No, no, nothing, just a regular season, ... but they were a power. ... They won quite a few of their games, but I'm not sure, ... there wasn't anything about a Rose Bowl that year. It was only in our freshman year that the Rose Bowl then came back to Duke, yes.

SI: Tell us about going to Parris Island for training.

JB: Well, you see, you had to be very careful, because they're looking for reasons to wash you out, that you're not officer material. Of course, the story that appeared in the *Duke Magazine*, the first night that I was there, it's July, and you get blankets for South Carolina, "[In] July? Okay." So, you're in a Quonset hut and it's a cot and they're link fabric springs. That's a wire spring and helicals that hold it [together], and, all night long, I'm being bitten, just big [bug bites], and I'm trying to listen for the mosquitoes and I can't hear them. [It] turns out, in the morning, I realize [they were bedbugs], and I didn't know, because, ... as I mentioned, coming from a Hungarian family, I didn't know what a bedbug was, okay. Once they bite you, they're white, originally, or clear, and then, they become red with your blood. So, naturally, in the morning, I could see, every once in awhile, they were on you. Well, remember, if you look cross-eyed, you're going to get washed out, okay. You've got to be a good, little boy and mind your [manners]. I charged down to the sergeant's, [the] head, first thing in the morning, and I shouted, "You've got to do something. We're being eaten alive up there," and that's what she [Bridget Booher] wrote. So, they broke the camp out, our unit, and they blowtorched the helicals in [the cots], because that's where they were hiding, and then, as I mentioned in the magazine, they put the four legs in kerosene, okay, fill it with kerosene. So, before they could get to you, the bedbugs would have to swim the moat. So, that's what they mentioned in there, and so, I guess I mentioned [it], too, "Hey, this guy's got some moxie, he's got some guts. First night, he's charging down and he's giving us orders? Hey, I think he's going to be a good guy for his men." So, I guess, the first night, I passed the muster, as far as being officer material, and then, ... from then on, we knew what a bedbug was.

SI: How intense was the training?

JB: Well, you know, coming from a football [point of view], you know, calisthenics, etc., it was funny, because they would have us run, etc., and, of course, it's South Carolina, and do the different things, and I had to struggle, even though I was in shape. I thought I was, but they were giving you stuff that [utilized] muscles that you hadn't ordinarily used, or had stopped using them, so that you hurt, ... especially on that long [run] around the parade ground, jogging and doing the different calisthenics as you're running. ...

SI: How intense was the mental part of it, such as dealing with drill sergeants?

JB: No, no. As far as I was concerned, the fact that I even dared do what I did the first night I was there, as long as you did ... the things that you had to do in the training, no problem, no, no, and I suppose they take a look at you. ... I think I want to show you, because I use an expression that Peter Sellers once used, "I was not always as you see me now," okay. [Editor's Note: Mr. Borbely retrieves a photograph.] Now, I was twenty then, see. So, that's my girl. ... So, oh, this is Wallace Wade Stadium, yes, so that I was in pretty good shape, but even so, even though you're in pretty good shape, some of the things they're having you do, I say to myself, "Oh, boy, this is tough," yes, but they're getting you ready for [war]. "Hey, this is a piece of cake, kid. Wait until you get there."

JR: Is that how most people felt, that they were being prepared for war?

JB: No. You didn't talk to another guy and say, "Hey, I'm worried about myself. Hey, isn't this terrible? Isn't this tough?" Everybody just [felt], you know, you keep your mouth shut, you do your job and hope you're going to make the grade, hope that you're going to pass muster in there.

JR: What kind of relationship did you have with other people?

JB: Well, you're forcing me to show you something, but it's going to answer your question, okay.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JB: And it's going to answer Jordan's question.

SI: Okay, this is your yearbook.

JB: Maybe we should take this off the [tape].

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: Let us put this on.

JB: Oh, okay.

SI: We were looking through your yearbook and you were telling us that you wrote the class play in your high school class.

JB: Yes, and guys that were in the class, ... who were prominent later on in life, Sam Landis, of Landis Ford, and a fellow by the name of Dick (Meyer?), who became an electrician and contractor, and he did a lot of work for Rutgers, and so, they were in the play. Now, to answer Jordan's question about [getting along], I'll let you look at that. Now, this is the class [that determined these titles].

SI: You are listed as most chivalrous, nicest personality.

JR: Army sweetheart.

JB: ... Nicest personality.

JR: Nicest smile.

JB: That was before my Bell's Palsy, [a condition that causes facial paralysis].

JR: Most popular, (good race pal?), wow.

SI: Most respected. You were very well-known.

JB: So, I wanted to answer [with that].

SI: Do you think your people skills transferred to when you were in the Marine Corps? In Parris Island, did you get along with your fellow Marines?

JB: You see, you don't; that guy up there said, "Now, don't you let me down." So, what you see there, I tried to do that for the rest of my life.

SI: Okay. When you were at Parris Island, it was 1944, is that right?

JB: Yes.

SI: The war had been on for awhile and there was a lot of news about the Marine Corps in the Pacific, like the battles at Tarawa and in the Marshall Islands. Were you aware of how dangerous being a second lieutenant could be?

JB: Oh, yes, because, you see, the second lieutenant is up front and the first guy they'd like to pick off is the guy leading the men, so that the other guys become disoriented, and so, we were well aware that we were cannon fodder, ... but you see the American flag out there [in front of the Borbelys' home]. We had a job to do and, if it meant your life, so be it, yes. Now, I've got to explain something to you. You see, when I keep referring to being Hungarian, you see, Hungarians cry at the drop of a hat, as you can see, whenever I think of something in my life, like Tops Brown, who helped me get where I am today, and having ten children and twenty-three

grand[children] and nine great-[grandchildren], why, I've been a very [lucky guy], and [married to] the prettiest gal on the block. I'm a pretty lucky guy, for a Hungarian on Codwise Avenue. You know, I kid my wife and I say, "You know, I grew up on the other side of the tracks, because," I said, "you're 'lace curtain,'" well, she's Swedish background, "you're 'lace curtain,' Irish, and the Pennsylvania Railroad runs through [New Brunswick]." The Fourth Ward is on the other side and the Sixth Ward is where she grew up, where she was born, so, I say to her, "You know, I'm really from the other side of the tracks." [laughter]

SI: You have pointed out a few things that you associate with being Hungarian. Is there anything else, any other qualities, that you associate with being Hungarian?

JB: Well, I always kid my wife, too, ... because of the number of Hungarians ... that came [to New Brunswick], originally, largest percentage of any [American city], and this is from Dr. Molnar at the Institute. I said, ... "Okay, you're Swedish and English background," I said, "but, now, you take Johnson & Johnson, one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world; what nationality did they bring over from the other side? They brought the Hungarians, because they work hard, they mind their own business, and they're generally good people." So, naturally, she kids me that, "Well, the Swedes have a little more class than the Hungarians," and I have to agree with her there. We look a crude lot and they're a very special looking people, ... but, luckily, I was able to capture some of the beauty in the children. Oh, this is, this picture up here, was from Woodlawn [Mansion on the Douglass Campus]. It's our fiftieth wedding anniversary. Now, I'll show you, this is the Jesuit, this is the guy with Perrin Foster, this is the guy ... with [the] engineering department, director, at the University of Michigan, and this guy is with AT&T, that's me, at our fiftieth, and this is our daughter-in-law. That's a granddaughter. That's her at a marathon there, yes, down in Florida, and this is the girl at Duke. This is my son, Tom, in Ohio, and this is my daughter, Mary, in California and that's the other daughter. My son, Bill, he's in England with his wife, Jane, and this is over at Woodlawn, yes.

SI: You have a very nice family.

JB: Yes. So, you can see that this guy, they got their mother's beauty. So, I made out like a bandit in that regard. [laughter]

SI: How long did your training at Parris Island last?

JB: I guess it might have been a couple of months, yes, a couple of months, and then, they sent us on up to Camp Lejeune, and a cute story. I told you that when I was a kid, we had to scrub the floors and do the bathroom, etc. The barracks at Camp Lejeune was brand-new, brick. The bathrooms were; ... I'm trying to think of ... one of the big manufacturers that the bathroom [was equipped with]. Anyway, ... we had bathroom detail. We had to do the bathtubs and bathrooms and the sinks, etc., ... me and two other guys, and I made sure that everything was sparkling. Now, remember, you look cross-eyed, you're going to wash out. Now, this is the next step up. You're a little closer to Quantico. The Major comes through, with his swagger stick, etc., and he tries to criticize some of the work that we had done. I said, "Sir, you can eat off these floors." ... At first, he was criticizing and, when he heard me say, "You can eat off these floors," because he could look around and see, you could eat off them, he turned right around without saying

another word and he left. That's the other cute story I'll tell you, the first night that I'm here and when I got bathroom detail there; you know, if you're right, then, let the chips fall where they might, ... because he knew I was right.

SI: Do you think that they were particularly tough on people who were going to become officers, officer candidates?

JB: No, no. ... Everybody is treated the same way, and this is what the routine is, and, if it looks as though a guy can't meet that one little level, then, he's not going to get his bars, and then, the interesting thing is, once you get them, they're not for keeps. Then, you've got another month or two to see whether you're going to be allowed to keep them, and then, some guys did not make it over the next hump, yes.

SI: What stands out about your training in Quantico, in Officer's Candidate School?

JB: Well, ... I'd have to tell you this. You know that what you see on the air now, "Once a Marine, always a Marine," etc.? and even though they've indoctrinated you with this, you feel very special and honored, but, you see, to me, it's such a feeling of honor to be saying, "You made the Marines?" "Yes, I made the Marines." So, whenever you see something come up about the Marines, you can see that you get butterflies, yes. So, they made an impression, yes.

SI: Could you put into words how they went about making you into a Marine?

JB: No, you just go through the regular routine that they give you and, you know, some years ago, there was some[thing] you read, not too many years ago, where some of the sergeants were criticized for the type of training that they put some of the boys through. ... I'm not sure, I really can't say, that, "Well, that person just didn't have [it], and maybe they shouldn't have been in the Marines," or it could have been that, "This guy shouldn't be a sergeant, either, because he's going over the limit and shouldn't be doing what he's doing," but all I know is that when I was there and we had a job to do, ... it was going to be, one day, you're going to be facing the ultimate and say, "Hey, I'm here to do what I have to do." ... Then, as I mentioned in the article, we were watching the outdoor movie at night, in Okinawa, and I knew that it was going to be "next stop Japan," and they said the bomb was dropped. "Yikes," and then, they started the theater again, and then, of course, when they dropped the second one, and, you know, you have this, the people that criticized the bomb, when it was used, etc., but I always say to my girl, you know, we're watching TV, "You know the guy that's sitting on the other side of this room? If that bomb wasn't dropped, maybe I wouldn't be here," and, interestingly enough, President Truman says the same thing. He said, "We saved a lot of boys by dropping the bomb." So, I feel sorry for the people that, you know, were hurt, but this was war.

SI: Jordan has quite a few questions about the atomic bomb.

JR: Yes, I am actually writing a paper on that. Were you surprised by the decision to use it?

JB: You don't think about, "Hey, should they do this, should they do this?" I thank God that we had the man that we had for President at the time. He was a different kind of a guy, and I think

he's noted ... for saying, "The buck stops here," and he had to make a decision and the decision that he made, I'm still alive, and I know a lot of other boys are, too. ... As you noticed, that I feel very emotional about people and hurting someone, but, in this case here, it's either you or me and I couldn't have done a lot of things that I've done, and, corny as it may seem, you saw the book, he seems to be a pretty [good guy]. He's fooled a lot of guys and gals, yes, you know, to think that he's a nice guy. Well, I wouldn't be here, maybe, you know. ...

JR: You commend President Truman. Do you think that President Franklin Roosevelt would have made the same choice?

JB: I'm not sure. I don't know. I've not read anything [on] what he would have done. All I know is that he was behind [atomic] testing and all of that. So, I suspect, if he's putting money into ... that whole operation, he must have been for it.

JR: As you said, you were happy with the decision to drop the atomic bombs because it kept you from the invasion of Japan. Do you know what your family and friends thought back in the United States?

JB: Oh, no, ... no one ever said anything. I know that my gal, even though I say, "Hey, I wouldn't be sitting here," she feels more on the side of, "It shouldn't have been done," yes, even though it would've meant something to her. So, there were a lot of [discussions]; you have two schools of thought, here in one family. I say, "I thank God I'm here and I'm sorry so many people [suffered from the atomic bomb]. What a terrible way to go and to be inflicted," but she says, "We shouldn't have done it," yes. So, we're still together, still married, yes, [laughter] but she has her opinion and I have mine, and I'm sorry, it's a terrible thing, but ...

JR: Do you think the implementation of such a massive weapon changed the perception of the United States for you?

JB: No, no. It's a rough decision, rough decision, ... but I thank God that it ... saved me, and some people paid a price, a terrible price, and I can only hurt for them, ... but they went to war with us and it's no picnic when you go to war, yes.

SI: When did it sink in what the bomb meant? At first, did you just think it was a regular bomb, or did they explain that it was a different type of bomb?

JB: No, they kind of kept [that secret]; it was very secretive, but I cannot really admit to you when I realized what it's going to really do, "Yes, a bomb? Okay. Is it going to save my life? I won't [say], 'Hey, wait a minute, let's talk this over,'" no, no.

JR: You found out after it was actually dropped.

JB: Oh, yes. We're watching the movie, they stopped the show, ... and even then, yes, no, it was, "Oh, dear; well, you know, sorry, but maybe I won't have to go street-by-street," and, you know, they're a different [mindset]. Whether they are today, I don't know, but it would be men and women and children you're fighting. They'd be all [fanatical], yes, because you have guys,

as you know, the *kamikaze* guys, in a plane, "Whoosh," he's going into a carrier. They think nothing of [killing themselves]; as an American, as patriotic as I am, I certainly wouldn't do a thing like that.

JR: Blatantly knowing.

JB: Yes. Give me a gun, let me go into the trenches and take my chances, but, no.

SI: To put some of this in context, also, could you explain what they were training you for? Did they explain what you would be doing in the invasion of Japan? What were they telling you about what was coming ahead?

JB: No, no. It was just regular routine, you know, the gun, and we hadn't gotten to that point where [they said], "All right, now, it's going to be street-by-street and we're going to have to cordon off one section, and then, secure that and go on." That was in the plans up ahead, yes. ... You just knew, "Next stop, Japan," yes.

SI: Did they tell you things, like, "Children will be attacking you," or did you read about that later?

JB: No, read about it later.

SI: Okay.

JB: Yes, yes.

SI: How long were you on Guam before you went to Okinawa?

JB: Maybe a month, maybe a month, yes, and, actually, what happened [was], because when I was at Duke [University], the May Dance, my gal had come down, and I woke up the next morning, I had Bell's Palsy. [Editor's Note: Mr. Borbely motions towards his face.] This all had dropped. I had some headaches before, and she thought I looked like Quasimodo, the guy from [the] *Hunchback of Notre Dame*. She thought I was playing games. I said, "No." So, I ended up at Duke Hospital for a week and they tried to do injections, but [it] didn't help. Anyway, so, what was I leading into?

SI: Guam.

JB: Okay. So, when I was in Guam, I said, "Hey, let me try to see if they can do something, if something new came up for the Bell's Palsy." [Editor's Note: Mr. Borbely refers to a photograph.] Luckily, let's see, I can show you, ... even though I had the Bell's Palsy, it was on the right side. Well, that's shaded, but it doesn't look too bad, see, but, at that time, I was Quasimodo. ... See, that's when I was a lieutenant. So, time had elapsed. Anyway, I thought, "Hey, maybe they can do something in the hospital there." So, I didn't know we were shipping to Okinawa and I went into the hospital, and then, the word [came down]. I'm in there for about three or four or five days, and nothing is happening, and I learned that my outfit, the First

Division, is leaving for Okinawa on a carrier. Well, I've got to tell you how I felt. I said, "Holy smokes, they're going to think I'm a;" what's the expression I want?

SI: A goldbrick? [Editor's Note: One who avoids work or shirks responsibilities, a common slang term in military parlance.]

JB: Goldbrick. "They're going to think I'm a goldbrick." So, they're on the carrier, they've left. I go to the airport. I said, "I've got to get to Okinawa right away." They put me on a plane. So, I got to Okinawa before they did. So, I'm welcoming [them], "Hey, I want to get there. Hey, I've got to be part of my outfit. I don't want to be considered [a goldbrick]." So, that'll give you an idea, you wanted to know, well, what kind of a mentality [was there]? Well, that's what, "You were a Marine, your outfit is going, ... don't you leave them." So, I got on a plane, I flew, to be there when they got there. ...

SI: Before you reached Guam, were you just being sent over as a replacement or did you know you would be in the First Marine Division?

JB: Oh, no. I'm trying to think; no, ... you knew you were in the First Marines, or I'm trying to think when. No, you were assigned once you [left], because we had to leave from Camp Lejeune again, and then, you already knew you were now in the First Marines. So, then, you take the boat to Pearl Harbor, then, on to Guam, but you already knew that you're in the First Division, Fifth Battalion. ... Interestingly enough, when I got to Guam, [then], finally got to China, after the war was over, ... I wrote a follow-up on the play, *Murder at the Paramount*, that the Marines [put on]; of course, it mentions that ... there was a theater there that I was able to get. I went to Tientsin, [China], and got these [arcs], because you needed arcs to burn to be the illumination for the movie theater. So, then, the commander of the First Battalion, Fifth Marines, said, "You're going to be the recreation officer." So, I became the recreation officer. So, then, all of the movies that came in, from the Seabees, [CBs, US Navy Construction Battalions], the ships, Coast Guard, I would get them brought to [me], because the guy that was the operator was a Chinaman, who was there when the Japanese were there, and he couldn't speak [English], but I learned that, he told me, ... "I need these to run this." So, I went up to Tientsin and I was able to get these arcs, and that's how we opened up the theater in Tanku, and so, we ran the movies for the [Marines], and then, we became, ... see, the MPs [military police] for the town. So, I was in the Marines MP, and the recreation officer, in China, Tanku.

SI: How did it feel to join a unit, particularly a unit with such a history as the Fifth Marine Regiment?

JB: Well, you see, the Fifth Battalion, the guy that was ... the commander of the Fifth Marines, I should know his name, but, you know, as you get older, you start forgetting.

SI: That is okay.

JB: And his name was Pug something or other. Anyway, he was famous for being a rough-and-tumble head of the Fifth Marines. So, you were proud to be a part of the Fifth Marines, yes.

SI: How quickly did you form a bond with the men you served with?

JB: Well, you see, I'm glad I showed you that, so [that] you could tell, "Well, what kind of a guy is this guy we're talking to, okay?" nice personality, popular, etc., nice guy, etc., so that that was me, and I'm that way. ... I can't be any different than I am. ... You're not their officer, but you're one of them, and they never feel as though, "Oh, this guy, you know, he's crazy, being a lieutenant." So, I was just the nice individual that I should be to another human being. So, we got along pretty well, yes.

SI: Were you in charge of a platoon?

JB: Yes. ... This is my platoon, [Mr. Borbely brings out a picture], and that's me, oh, and we're liberating the embassy in, at that time, Beijing, which is the capital [today], but, then, was called Peking, ... and so, that's your men. ... Their original officer, he was awarded, that day, a medal for bravery, very nice guy, Phil something or other, very sweet, and you wondered how he ever was a Marine, because he was a very milquetoast, sweet type of a man, not a rough-and-tumble guy, yes.

SI: What did the training on Guam and Okinawa consist of? Did they have you going out to the landing craft and practicing invasions?

JB: No, no, because, see, being on Okinawa, when I got there, the island was just secured, okay. There were a few guys in the forests. In fact, if you read, years later, some of those poor guys were still thinking the war was still on and they were in the jungles, you know. [Editor's Note: Mr. Borbely is referring to Japanese holdouts who lost contact with the outside world and did not emerge until many years later, the last ones being discovered in the mid-1970s.] So, you just had to be careful not to get too close, because some guy, if he had a gun, he's going to shoot you. The big push was, "We're going to be invading Japan." So, there wasn't any more training about going ashore with a boat, etc. It was, "Okay, this is what's in the books and it's going to happen," and then, when they bombed [with the atomic bombs], they stopped everything. Now, then, what we had to do here, we didn't know a thing about being an MP, okay, say, "Okay, you guys are going to go to China, and, in that little town there, you're going to be the MPs." So, at ten o'clock at night, we had to get in our jeep and go through the red light district of the little town. It was a little, dinky town, and the Seabees or the Marines or whatever, "Get back to your ship." [laughter] So, here I was, I've never been to one of those places, [a brothel], before, and I had to knock on the door and say, "Let's go." So, that was an experience.

JR: Could you describe an average day overseas? What did you usually do? What time did you usually get up?

JB: You got up in the morning, okay, and what we eventually took over was this hotel, and then, the regular guys were in the barracks, okay, and this one incident will give you an idea, [when you] say, "Well, what were you like?" One of the Chinese civilians tried to steal something in one of the barracks, or compounds, and he was shot. ... At that time, there was no way that that civilian, a Chinese person, could be taken care of by the Marine contingent. He had to go to his civilian [hospital]. So, this hospital was really a storefront and we had to take this poor guy to

this doctor, Chinese doctor, and the first thing out of his mouth [was], "Now, who's going to pay for this?" "Okay," I said, "take care of him. We'll see that things are taken care of, okay?" Now, this is a story that I've told, too. It was, like, March. The March there is like the March here, could be cold. When we left and we went back the next day, we were told, the moment we left, the doctor took this guy, put him right outside, and that's where he expired. So, that's the story I'm going to my grave with, remembering. You know the Hippocrates [Oath] Code, etc.? When he wasn't sure ... how he was going to be paid, he just put that guy right out the door. That's what I'm going to go in my grave with. So, that would let you know the feelings that you had, the empathy for another human being, and, yet, you were in no position to say, "Okay, let's go to ... our [hospital]," because that was not the way things were done then.

JR: Do you know if he was trying to steal something, like information, from the military?

JB: Oh, no, no, maybe some food or something, yes, or something he could sell, you know, yes; no, no, and I don't know who shot him either. All I knew was, he was injured, he was shot, and he needed medical attention. So, we rushed him, and the only place we could take him to was the hospital, a storefront, and out the window, door, he goes, and he dies. So, here I am, a man of eighty-eight, I was then, like, twenty-four, twenty-five, remembering that, and I'm telling you about it today, yes.

SI: Did you have a lot of interaction with the Chinese natives?

JB: The guy that ran the theater and his friend. ... When we were suddenly leaving, I got a lot of stuff, tools and whatnot, and, of course, he was going to have the rest of the things, etc., and they would hire him, I suppose, at the theater, who owned it. ... He and his friend, and I had one of these pictures, with him and me, etc., ... they took me to dinner, to thank me for all the kindness that I had shown him, and I just remembered something. We had to put these Chinese [Japanese?] families, men, women and children, more women, I can't remember too many men, in the hold of the ship, on these mats, flat mats, and here I am, feeling compassion for these people who have to do this trip in this manner, to go back to Japan, their homeland. So, that gives you an idea what this guy; I can't talk of somebody else, you see. ...

SI: These were Japanese people being sent back to Japan.

JB: Yes. That was our job, to send them back now, but I've got to admit something to you. The good Lord was good to me. I got there when it [the war] was all about finished, okay. I didn't have a chance to kill somebody, have some of my close buddies killed, that might have made me a little angry at the enemy. So, I never had that hate for the Japanese.

JR: Did you have a lot of interaction with the Marines who had been there for awhile?

JB: Yes, but they never spoke much about [it].

JR: Yes, okay.

JB: No, no. That isn't something you'd brag about, you know.

JR: Not so much bragging, but could you get a sense of their feelings towards the Japanese?

JB: The men that I [knew]; see, I suppose, since you are like you are, you gravitate to people who ...

JR: Are like you?

JB: Who understand you and like you and respect you and feel like you do. So, you don't spew any hate or anger, that I was spared that. I was spared that, yes, I was spared that, and I'm not sorry. You know, I felt bad, [as evidenced by] the fact that I jumped aboard a plane to get there, so that I wouldn't be left behind. I was ready to do what I had to do, but, then, I could turn right around and say, "Oh, I'm sorry for the people who ... have to go through this ordeal in uncomfortable surroundings," etc., you know, the bathroom, etc., you know.

JR: Was it difficult to jump back and forth like that, in your head at least?

JB: No, no. I was me. I was [myself], see, and I'm sorry that I had to show you some of that stuff, because [you might say], "I don't know if I can believe that guy." Well, then, I fooled a lot of people, most respected, most liked, etc., etc., etc., best athlete, you know, yes.

SI: How long were you in China?

JB: I'm trying to think, might have been six months, yes, it might have been six months, yes, and I remember the one other incident, even though it's corny, but let me tell you.

SI: No, please.

JB: Yes. I remember, now we're going home, and you mentioned something about your men, and here are these guys, that [is] one of those guys that are in that picture there, you had to climb the rope ladders, you know, that are strewn over. ... He was having trouble, maybe he wasn't strong enough, whatever, and I took the trouble to help him up. So, I was still [myself], my compassion was, "I've got to help this guy [who] needs help." So, those are the things that I remember, helping him, and I was having trouble getting up that thing myself, but I wanted to help him, too, to get up, yes.

SI: Did you see examples of American personnel who were not as compassionate towards either the Chinese or Japanese?

JB: No, no.

SI: Anybody who mistreated them?

JB: No, because, you see, ... since you're the officer, a guy's not going to make waves, where you're going to call him down, and your fellow officers were just like you, you know, "The war is over, and we have a job to do," and you just do it. ... There's no ill feelings toward anyone.

... Like, I would be kind to the guy that ran the theater and the other guys were about the same. Yes, I never ran into any guys that [would say], "Gee, I remember him." Like, I remember one guy, but this was early on, where his head was inflated, because he suddenly became an officer, but, then, the officers would talk to themselves about, "Hey, did you see Charlie Jones? Oh, boy." So, they would be critical if they saw somebody not acting the way he should really act.

SI: Okay.

JB: Yes, yes.

SI: Did you see a lot of destruction in the areas where you were?

JB: No.

SI: In China?

JB: No, no. See, we got to Peking, Beijing now; in fact, I brought some things back. There's a sword in there. Oh, that sword was given to me by a sergeant in Tanku. Apparently, I said, "Would you make me a box, a big [box]? I can take some things home," and there were two Japanese carpenters in Tanku and they made a nice box, plywood, very strong, and I was able to pack a lot of the stuff. ... Then, to thank me for, apparently, me being the way I ever was, I just don't know what I did, he gave me his sword, because he wouldn't be able to take it. So, the fact that he gave me something that was part of his life, apparently, he must have thought I was a pretty genuine sort of a guy. Yes, I just thought of that. ...

SI: What was it like the day that you led the legation that opened up the embassy?

JB: To be honest with you, it's very vague. All I know is that we paraded in, and I don't recall any speeches being made, but, suddenly, we were told, "Okay, we are now liberating the American legation in the capital of China," and there was something in the paper there, but, once we walked through, we disbanded and that was the end of it. It was just a ceremony that went very quickly.

SI: Were there Japanese military there that surrendered?

JB: No, no, just a few of the officials who were part of the legation, just a few, yes, nothing extraordinary, yes. In fact, I don't know who snapped the picture. All I know is that, suddenly, the other lieutenant, who he was the one that had these fellows on Okinawa, I guess he was the one that gave me the picture, that [they] took coming through the entrance to the legation, yes. ... I would go downtown, in Peking, and I brought silk home for my wife to make pajamas, and a kimono and some lace. There was a monastery, nuns, who were taking care of little children, little girls, and they would [make] lace. So, I brought a lot of the lace things home, ... that I gave them money to [assist their work]. I'll show you some, and then, what happened [was], a guy came in, an antique guy came into the compound, and I'll bring you a couple things.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JB: Years ago, and this is a Buddha that I got, they let a guy come in, who was supposedly authentic, and this is the Buddha that I got from Peking, and that was the ...

SI: This is a bronze disc, which does not look like a mirror, but it was supposed to be a mirror.

JB: [laughter] Yes, it's supposed to be a mirror, yes.

SI: It is neat.

JB: And it dates back to, I have a little thing, it dates back to, I forget which dynasty.

SI: Really?

JB: Yes, yes. ... Somewhere, I've got the inscription, and we took it to a Chinese fellow and he read the thing, and he was able to tell us what dynasty it was [from]. ...

JR: During the war, did you keep a diary or journal?

JB: I did, I did, and it's somewhere. I can't find it. Each day, I would fill in, you know, the different things that were taking place, but I've got it somewhere, and just so that I would remember, yes. It started early on, with the V-12, and then, Parris Island and Quantico, etc., so that each day, I would have something, if something interesting happened, you know. ... Yes, yes, I've got it somewhere.

SI: Were you able to maintain good correspondence with your family?

JB: Oh, I wrote, like, every day, oh, yes. It was interesting, because, when you are discharged, which I was discharged from Brooklyn Navy Yard, you've got to stay in the Reserves, okay. So, we had Jim, we had Tom, and then, we had Peg and we had Julia, and we learned that the twins were coming along. That was six. So, I wrote to the Commandant of the Marines, in Quantico, I said, "Sir, we have our sixth child coming. I don't think I should stay in the Reserve anymore." Back came the discharge, "Okay, you're discharged," and not too long after that, ... was it Korea?

SI: Yes.

JB: Yes, was that the first thing after the Second World War?

SI: Yes. Korea started in the Summer of 1950.

JB: So, my roommate, ... the guy that was best man, ... my roommate when we were in Camp Lejeune, he was sent to [Korea]. He was overseas, yes, and ... had I known, I wouldn't have gotten out, but the guy upstairs said, "Hey, I've got to help that kid. He's so stupid, I'm going to help him," yes. So, not too long after that, the Korean Conflict, yes, so, I escaped, I guess, so [that] I could do my work, whatever.

SI: You talked about having a relationship with God. Were you very religious?

JB: No, no. Just that I felt, you know, some guy's [looking out for me], corny as it may sound, and this girl that I've been living with for sixty-five years, I said, "You know, I've always felt that I had a guardian angel looking out for me." That may sound corny, but, when I go through my life and think of the times; I almost didn't get into college, I got into college, then, I got into a terrific outfit, the Marines, and had a lovely, lovely family, etc., and, here, I've reached the, what's the expression? the sunset of my life, and, still, people say, "Hey, how old are you?" I said, "I'm eighty-eight in January." "You don't look eighty-eight," and I don't feel eighty-eight. So, the guy, talk about being a lucky guy, and marrying the prettiest girl on the block, you know, I don't know how much more a guy can ask for in life, yes. ...

SI: Was it easy or difficult to readjust to civilian life?

JB: Oh, no, no. See, because I never considered myself where, "All right, now, you're going to do this and, now, you're going to do that, and just get right back to where you are, because that guy said, 'Don't let it go to your head, Charlie, because I'll cut you down real quick.'" So, I've been so, so lucky, yes. Lots of friends, nice family, boy, a guy can't ask for much more, and, when you figure what houses are today, ... one of the twins, Jack, bought his for half a million dollars, an old house, up in Ridgefield, Connecticut. He's with [Towers] Perrin Foster and Crosby, or somebody, big outfit. ... When you figure [that] we bought next-door for five thousand, and we had trouble getting the loan. My parents ... and my father-in-law had to go on the note, to be sure we could borrow, and I put a thousand dollars down from bonds, and then, to get this house and the lot for twelve-five, you know, as you said, you can't get a parking [spot for that price], yes. ...

SI: Yes.

JB: The kids that are buying houses today, they're three hundred thousand. How do you pay the mortgage on those?

SI: Yes.

JB: Yes, and I was with the Nationwide Insurance Companies for twenty-five years, so, I didn't make a million dollars, but we ate, and you can see, we did pretty well, yes.

SI: Did you get into the insurance business right away?

JB: Right after I got home. First, I sold the furniture, you know, I was in the furniture. ... First, I started with Middlesex Furniture, down on Neilson Street, I think they're gone now, then, J. (Schwartz?), and went there. At first, oh, originally, I was with Sears, in the furniture department, and then, Middlesex, and then, some guy came through, said, "Hey, there's an outfit coming to New Jersey called the Farm Bureau Insurance Companies and they're looking for agents." So, they sent you to school, ... and, luckily, I passed the exam and became an agent for them for twenty-five years, and then, they changed the name to Nationwide. ... Then, when they

left, they're one of the few companies that ever left New Jersey, ... I retired after fifty-some years, twenty-five with them, and then, another for thirty with just a regular [office], just doing the best I can, trying to find a company that would take my cars, like, the assigned risk, and then, with a company called Providence Mutual Fire, took care of my fire, and that's where I finally ended up, so, over fifty years, yes.

SI: Wow.

JB: Yes.

SI: Having lived in New Brunswick since you were a child, but particularly since that postwar period, how have you seen the city change in the last fifty years?

JB: Well, you know, Camp Kilmer, of course, was here for awhile, and, Thursday night, you know, [for] a lot of soldiers, that was shopping night. ... Then, after, when I came home, there wasn't much of a change, wasn't much of a change, and then, suddenly, J&J [Johnson & Johnson] started to negotiate with different people and, suddenly, the different things were being torn down. So, it was really a godsend to see, you know. I think there's a company called [Eli] Lilly, ... out West somewhere, [Indianapolis], where they did the same that J&J did here in New Brunswick, and I thank God that [they did]. Talk about a city being on the right street corner at the right time, because, otherwise, we would have been a ghost town, and we have to thank Rutgers and we have to thank J&J for being the savior of New Brunswick, yes.

SI: From what I understand, many businesses moved out of New Brunswick in the 1950s and 1960s.

JB: Yes. Things were not going too well. So, suddenly, with J&J doing what they did, why, you can see all the restaurants that are downtown, and you've got the George Street Theater, ... which used to be the YMCA, and they've done so much to further the town's reputation. So, thank God for them, yes.

SI: You have become very involved in community activities.

JB: Well, as I told you, ... I served on the Board of Education for seven years, under [Patricia Q.] Pat Sheehan, and then, when a new mayor came in, a guy by the name of [Richard J.] Mulligan, he didn't reappoint me, and the president, I was the vice-president, and the president [was] a fellow by the name of George Claflen, terrific engineer, and he didn't reappoint us. Well, technically, there, again, I'm never a quitter. I would have stayed on to do what I had to do, but they didn't reappoint us, and thank God. He did us a favor, because I wouldn't have quit, he wouldn't quit, ... but I think that we made a mark, the two of us, as members of the board, because I know, from the children, the feedback over the years, that we did.

SI: Do you remember what programs you put in place or what you tried to do that really contributed to the quality of education?

JB: Well, I know that they tried to do something with the junior high, and we didn't make any changes that I can think of. We had to get rid of a principal or so, but we got a new superintendent [that] came in. ... In fact, even though you're appointed by the powers-to-be, Pat Sheehan, etc., when they wouldn't give us any money, we went down to Trenton to complain about [it], and, really, you're in the position at their good graces, but, since we wanted something for our people, our kids, we went to Trenton and tried to force them to give us the money to do what we had to do. ... Even though we were appointed by them, we tried to do our job, yes.

SI: Are there any other things that you did in the community that you want to talk about?

JB: Not that I can recall. We just kept things going, ... and I remember one thing, as head of the liaison on the board for the athletic department. I jumped up on my soapbox and I said, "I want the same things that happened and [were] given to ... the boys, I want given to the girls." So, I was the advocate, and the one thing that stands out in my mind, we were at the high school and the children, and the boys and the girls, were complaining that they wanted a smoke area in the center of the school. ... Of course, you're talking to a guy who doesn't smoke and knows what it does to people, and, as a member of the board, I said, "Over my dead body." So, they never did get the smoking area. That was the one point I remember.

SI: Why were you so adamant about women having equal athletic opportunities?

JB: Well, I suppose because maybe I had some girls and I wanted equal rights for the boys and the girls, no favoritism, might be a little odd thinking, but everybody has his own little way of living their life, and I wanted the same for the girls as the boys. ... I remember one instance, I'll tell you, and you can wipe it out if you want to, there was a woman who was ... the gym teacher, and [she] had been there, like, for thirty years, gym teacher. ... She had to have operations on her knees and she had used up all her time that you're allowed, according to the manual, okay. That was one other time that I got on my soapbox. Now, I'm only one guy, okay, on the board there were seven, I think, five or seven, I'm not sure, and I had a good relationship with the other members of the board and I was going to go to plead for an extension for this gym teacher. So, it came my time at the meeting. I said, "I know what the manual says. However, I think it would be only fitting and proper to give credit for somebody's dedication, for all these years, [and] that we should extend and take each case by case," and they granted her more time. So, that was one other thing I remember I did, for mankind, ... because it was the right thing to do, I felt, and they were good. ... One board member, by the name of Nick Hummel, he had been the assistant to the superintendent, ... he said to his wife, [Betty], before he died, he said, "You know, there's one guy on that board we can always depend upon, whenever we want something," and he said, and she told me, this is after he died, "we could count on Jim." ...

SI: You were also active in the local Republican Party.

JB: Oh, yes. I ran for the city commission, way back. This was when the old group was in, [Chester W.] Chet Paulus and (Lukey Horvath?), and I think a guy by the name of (Daley?). This was the old group, that Pat Sheehan and [Aldrage B.] Al Cooper and (John Smith?) beat. [Editor's Note: Patricia Q. Sheehan took office in 1967.] So, this was before then. ... I'll tell you a cute, little story ... about the Board of Education. So, I ran for [city commission], and,

naturally, you can't beat the machine. I didn't have any money, ... no organization, just me, running against the machine. So, it was not ...

SI: Which is Democratic.

JB: Yes, oh, for centuries, yes, and then, when Pat Sheehan and her group, they beat the Paulus group, Paulus, (Darian?), okay, so, then, when they were elected, the mayor writes, contacts me, and she wants me to serve on the Board of Education. I sent her a nice letter. I said, "Dear Pat, I appreciate the honor," I said, "but I don't think I have the mentality to serve on the Board of Education." So, she and a guy by the name of George Shamy, oh, I can't think of his last name, he was the Democratic leader, they took us to lunch, my wife and I, at the Rutgers Club. ... We finished the meal and they said, "You owe it to the City of New Brunswick to serve on the Board of Education." [laughter] So, I was stuck, because, then, I had to say that I owed the school system, the fact that I could get into college, etc., I owed and I had to pay back, something. So, that's how I got on the Board of Education, even though I said, "I don't think I have the [mentality]," and it turned out pretty good, turned out pretty good, yes, because the same guy that you read about in that corny school yearbook was the same guy that was on the Board of Education, and the same way I tried to deal with the kids. I treated them like they were my big family. I have a big family, this is a little bigger, and that's how I [operated], and I've got to tell you something. You can wipe it out, if you want to, my wife doesn't like me to say this, but, when I was young, we were poor, I was a crook, stole a bicycle, five-and-ten, etc. I was caught at the five-and-ten, but I'm leading to a point. The guy said, "If I ever see you here again, stealing, I'm going to throw the book at you." So, suddenly, now, I am on the Board of Education, this kid who went straight because he had butterflies every time; he gave up being a crook. Now, I'm on the Board of Education and they put me in charge of the bad kids who are in trouble, and you have to have a conference with them at the board room, etc. So, now, I'm sitting in a position of authority and the kid, I hear his story, I said, "Okay, I'm going to give you one other chance. I don't want to ever see you back here again." So, it gave me that background of once being in their shoes, ... now, and I never did see those kids back in trouble again, because they said, "Hey, here's a pretty good Joe. All right, I'll watch my step." So, now, I've told you stuff that I've had hidden way down deep inside, but true, true stories.

SI: To go back to the issue of women in sports, was anybody against that idea?

JB: No.

SI: Was there any resistance?

JB: No, you see, ... because I had the reputation with, you heard of Nick Hummel, and a fellow by the name of Eli Saltz. I used to pick him up. He was on the board, and he had been president one year, and I would pick him up. ... We were having the riots and trouble, and a Jewish fellow, lovely. I got a daughter-in-law [who is] Jewish, so, I don't want Jordan to be upset. I said, "Eli, what I'd like to do with all this trouble that's here [is to] go on some island and to get away from it all," and Eli says to me, "But, the trouble is, one day, going to get to that island, so, we might as well settle it here." So, that's another little thing I'm going to my grave remembering what he told me. You have a problem, you don't run away from it and say, "I'm

going to get over to this island, where it's nice and sweet," solve it, because ... it's only going to eventually come over to that island. [laughter] ...

SI: Were there difficult times in the 1960s?

JB: We had riots.

SI: Yes.

JB: We had riots, and, again, I was right in the thick of it, trying to [address it], and this is another thing that I [did]; there were some African-American kids, and I said, "Why?" I said, ... "I was here the day before, in the library. Everything was great." I said, "Why did you riot today? What was wrong? What went wrong?" He said, "Well," he was sitting down, okay, he said, "well, they were rioting over in Franklin Township, so, we thought we would riot," ... not that there was a problem; copycats. I said, "That's the only reason why you rioted, because they did it over there?" ... They could see what this guy is all about, you know. ... I remember, one time, a fellow by the name of Dave (Harris?), lovely man, black man, ... he would criticize us in the ... board meetings, bright man, ... used to be on the Board of Directors, I think, ... or Trustees, at Rutgers, and wrote for the *Home News*. ... He was complaining and he said to Eli, who was then the president, said, "Why is Jim angry when I [criticize him]?" He was really; he would go at you like this, and we were trying to do the best we could, and that's what I told him, from the audience. It was up at Livingston School, and he said, "Why is Jim angry?" I said, "Maybe it's because of what you said," little, simple thing, and, of course, he didn't realize that he's [hurting us]. Here we are, up there, sincere, trying to solve whatever we can solve and do the best we can, and he was a good talker and he loved to hear himself talk, I suppose, but ... I would lash back at him and say, from a member of the board up there, and he was wondering, "Why is he so [angry]?" you know, and Eli had to tell him, "Maybe it's because of what you said." ...

SI: Was that over a particular issue?

JB: Oh, yes, you know, "We're not doing our job, ... we should be doing better," etc., and with a guy like Eli and me, and some of the others, just doing [our best], it was an impossible job, because riots were [breaking out] at the drop of a hat, and it wasn't anything to complain about, it was just the thing to do, you know, to have some fun, but, meantime, we had to close the school, yes.

SI: Were there any programs that they tried to implement?

JB: I've got to tell you a cute story that I told my [family]. ...

SI: Sure.

JB: Joe Marino was my track coach in high school. He later became the principal of [the] junior high and there was a riot. He was the assistant principal at the time, and I can't recall who the principal was, and Joe had to take over. Now, here, so, the place is shut down, and so, we're

trying to open the school, and, now, Joe, technically, I'm his boss. He had been my track coach years ago and, now, I'm on the Board of Education and I'm really his boss, okay. I'm leading to a funny ending. We're meeting in the library with the Chief of Police, [Ralph] Petrone, and they've got the police dogs and all the riot gear, etc., and I am complaining to the chief of police. Now, Joe Marino is sitting there, now, I'm his boss, and I said, "You guys are overreacting. These kids are; you know, why can't you back off a little, tiny bit?" So, here, I'm complaining to the Chief of Police and Joe Marino. I'm his boss. He said, "Jimmy, shut up," and you want to know something? Jimmy shut up. ... When I told Joe that, years later, he said, "No, don't tell anybody that," [laughter] because, here, ... now, my track coach is telling me, "Shut up," now that I'm his boss and he's under me, "Jimmy, shut up," and Jimmy shut up.

JR: On a different subject, I was just wondering if you had an opinion about movies that have been made about the war? In general, did you agree with them? Did you like or dislike them?

JB: Not really. You know, I like Clint Eastwood, and whatever stand he takes, I have to just like him, but I don't have to agree with him. ... As you can see what happens to me when you mention Marine to me, so that, I know that war is a terrible, terrible thing, and I pray that we can all talk this thing out and just get beyond this anymore. ... The one expression I use to [say to] my wife [is], "It's a crazy world," and you've got a lot of crazy people who are in charge of the different countries and they don't have any compunction about, "Hey, let's do this, let's do that and have a war," and I wish the world would one day come to a point where [they say], "Look, let's all sit down and talk this thing over, hash it out, so [that] we don't have to [go to war]," but I know that that's asking too much. That's asking too much, yes.

JR: Did you have any knowledge about the Holocaust during the war, or did you hear about that afterwards?

JB: Oh, that's a tough one, oh, boy. Yes, I knew about it, but, apparently, not [all of it]. The fact that Roosevelt did nothing, it was like a rumor, but, then, once you see [the victims], and the thing that galls me [to] no end, when you see the camps and the bodies. ... My wife and I went to the one in Poland, and to see the teeth and the jewelry and the different garments, to have some of these people in the world saying, "It's a myth; it never happened," that, to me, probably, is the biggest [disgrace]. I just can't begin to find the words to say, "Where are you? What do you think, these pictures are all put together, some sort of a collage?" and, yet, you've got some people saying [that]. So, back then, you weren't sure, and then, of course, as the years went by, [it] turned out to be, what a travesty, what a crying, crying, terrible shame, oh, boy, oh, boy.

SI: Do you remember if any refugees from Europe came into New Brunswick in the 1930s?

JB: At that time? No, I can't recall. See, I had cousins come from Hungary. In fact, two of them, two of my cousins, lived with us for a short time, until they could find their own [house], because they had to be sponsored. ... Both of them have passed on, now, my other cousin, who lives a few blocks over, a woman, then, one of those boys [who stayed with us] sponsored her to come. So, we sponsored two of my cousins, and then, she came. So, they were the only ones that we knew from the other side [Hungary]. ... Of course, we never paid too much attention, because, ... if you were Hungarian, you went to New Brunswick, because that's where all the

Hungarians are, and you had about three different churches, St. Ladislaus, and then, our church, and then, the church that's across the street from St. Peter's School, and then, ... down the road, there's another, around the corner, there's another. So, there were about four churches that were all Hungarian, Catholic, Protestant, whatever, so that there were a lot of Hungarians here. So, if somebody showed up, you didn't pay any attention. "Oh, are you a refugee?" You know, it's another person, yes, so, you never really looked upon anybody [as], "Oh, he just came over." "Okay."

SI: There were a lot of recent immigrants coming into the community all the time.

JB: Oh, yes, yes. Oh, they were always coming, yes, and, see, every once in awhile, I would get a refugee who wanted car insurance. Since I spoke Hungarian, [someone would say], "Go see Borbely." See, "Borbely" translated, in Hungarian, as, "a barber," "*Borbély*," pronounced, "BOR-bay," and [was] a guy who cuts your hair, yes.

SI: I know there was a large influx of refugees after the 1956 Revolution. [Editor's Note: Beginning on October 23, 1956, Hungarians revolted against the Communist government installed by the Soviet Union after World War II. Following an invasion and brutal occupation by Soviet forces, most resistance ceased by November 10th. Approximately 200,000 Hungarians fled the country after the Hungarian Revolution and many settled in the United States.]

JB: Oh, yes, yes. That's when Dr. Molnar told of the [Revolution], but, see, there was a large [influx]. They came, and, in fact, ... the Kara-(Nemeth?) Orchestra went over, and I spoke to [them]. We went ... over to Camp Kilmer and said a few words to this little group of Hungarians who came over, and the point that I'm trying to make; oh, dear, what were we driving at? Let's see, I mentioned that; oh, see, the big influx [of refugees] was J&J [Johnson and Johnson], to work in the plant, okay, then. [Editor's Note: The Johnson and Johnson Company, an American pharmaceutical company, has its headquarters and significant manufacturing facilities in New Brunswick and employed many of the city's Hungarian-American residents.] ... Then, I suppose, once such a big Hungarian [influx arrived] in this area, Camp Kilmer, a lot of them then settled around [the area]. In fact, they have a Hungarian Day every year, you know, on Somerset Street, yes, sure, and, naturally, the first thing that they [Hungarian refugees] would do is, "Hey, let's gravitate where more of our own [are, so] that we can converse with people." So, that was a great spot to bring the Hungarians, yes, to, to Camp Kilmer, yes.

SI: You went over to Camp Kilmer and sang for the Hungarians once.

JB: Yes, yes, with the Kara-(Nemeth?) Orchestra, yes. [Of] course, I could only sing one song, ... although my mother taught me other songs, but it's not one that I sang on the air, just the one song I sang, *Anniversary Song*, transposed [translated] into Hungarian. That's the one Al Jolson sang, you know, *Anniversary Song*, yes.

SI: Have you kept up your interest and your involvement in Hungarian culture and affairs?

JB: Oh, yes. Well, you see, ... being in insurance, why, then, you, every once in awhile, get a Hungarian fellow that you have to write car insurance for, fire insurance [for], and then, every once in awhile, we went to ... St. Ladislaus Church, the Hungarian church, although we belonged to St. Peter's. That's my wife's parish [St. Peter's] and it's where the children went to school, although Peter and Bill and Mary and Ed went to New Brunswick High, yes, but the Jesuit [priest, his son], and Peg and Jim, Peg, Julia and Jack went to St. Peter's, graduated from there, and Jack and Peter both graduated from St. Joe's [St. Joseph's University] and Julia [graduated from] Duke, Jim from St. Joe's, and Tom, Ed from Rutgers, and, let's see, ... yes, that should take care of all of them, yes.

SI: Do you have any other questions?

JR: I do not think so.

JB: Okay.

SI: Is there anything else you would like to add for the record?

JB: No. I think I've filled you in on some of the innermost things that were part of my life.

SI: Good. It was a real pleasure to talk to you. I have learned a lot of new things. [laughter] I always like learning about New Brunswick.

JB: Okay.

SI: Both because of Rutgers and the fact that I also lived here for a few years. I used to live on Maple Street.

JB: Okay.

SI: Around the corner from St. Ladislaus, which is one of the places where they close it off for the Hungarian Day.

JB: Sure, that's the Hungarian district, yes.

SI: I would see people coming out in Hungarian dress and it was very interesting.

JB: Oh, yes.

SI: Thank you very much. We appreciate your time and service.

JB: My pleasure.

SI: Thank you very much.

JB: Thank you, good.

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Reviewed by Melinda Kinhofer 11/4/09

Reviewed by Victoria Raab 11/4/09

Reviewed by Emily Shapiro 11/4/09

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 12/22/09

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 1/17/10

Reviewed by James A. Borbely 1/26/10