

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALFRED V. BRADY

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Mr. Alfred V. Brady on April 4, 1996 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler and ...

Robert Hood: Robert Hood.

Kurt Piehler: We would like to ask you a number of questions about your years at Rutgers, and one of them would be about the jobs you held while you were at Rutgers as a student. For example, you worked at Squibb for a time.

Alfred V. Brady: Yeah, the work at Squibb was war effort and ... it consisted of filling in a four hour shift in between the two regular ten hour shifts of the regular employees of Squibb, which, of course, at the time was just R.H. Squibb and Company, and not Bristol Myers Squibb, which it is now ... Anyhow, ... what they had us doing, was taking care of things that ... went bad during the regular shift, like repairing cans that turned out to be leakers when they were tested, and that sort of stuff ... Also, we did pick up any back-logs that were left over from the previous shifts in the way of testing, because we could operate the testing machines pretty easy. They really were, ... [they] consisted of a big wheel that were rotated, the cans were fitted into receptacles on the wheel and it was rotated into ... water, under water, and a shot of air was put in. [If you] saw any bubbles when it went under water you pulled a can out and [then] put it on a stack or threw it into a bin that has leakers in it, and they were taken out, and in most cases just re-soldered, because that's usually where the leaking was, at re-soldered joints between the bottoms and the tops, more the tops of the can. Anyhow, that ... was an interesting job, and it was my first personal experience in factory work ... Incidentally, the foreman of my crew was the NJC professor that, Doc Norton who was the philosophy prof at NJC at the time ... Who, ... when Ed Bloustein showed up here at the university many years later was turned out to be his, Ed's father-in-law. Ruth Bloustein was a step-daughter of Doc Norton. There's no blood relationship, but it was a funny coincidence.

KP: Since professors do not make very much money, it seems like a very unorthodox team, as you had the head of the philosophy department at NJC, as the foreman. Could you maybe elaborate on that a bit?

AVB: Well, I think, what happened was, somebody came to the university, and I don't know this, except, ... somebody came to the university and in conversation, with somebody else, suggested that, and probably with Doc Norton, ... suggested that maybe something with people at the university and particularly the students, who were looking to make some money, ... what could they do that would be useful? ... This was, it was probably somebody in Squibb management and this turned out to be a task, an effective task, a useful task, which ... didn't require a lot of training, or knowledge, ... background knowledge, or anything like that. So, ... I was recruited by a fraternity brother who ... was actually leaving. He graduated, or was just about to graduate, but he had had Norton as a prof in the course he was taking over there, and he said that Norton apparently had asked, "Are there ... any people over at Rutgers that you know, who wanted to go to work?" So, that's what I, when I heard about it, I said, "I'm interested," and I could always use money, the important thing. So, ... it worked out reasonably well and I stayed at it until I graduated actually. It was essentially the ... from the summer, I guess it was the Spring of 1943, through ... about the same time in '44. I graduated in June, July '44.

KP: What was your image of foremans and how did Doc Norton conform or fail to conform to that?

AVB: ... Every aspect of the foreman that I had in my mind, would have, well, Norton would have ... met only with the male requirement. He was an unprepossessing, rather, he wasn't, I won't call him undersized, but he wasn't a big, composing presence, and ... he was a very diffident, unassuming kind of guy ... And I always, I had at that time always thought of a foreman as the guy that I saw in the funny papers, or [in] the movies, as the boss who was bellowing at everybody, maybe not cracking a whip, but at the same time being enough of a figure, that ... nobody would dare to challenge him.

KP: Apparently, Doc Norton doesn't sound like

AVB: Yes, exactly the opposite. I mean, I was an eighteen-year-old nerd at the time, which the term, of course, wasn't in use then, But ..., you know, I didn't feel threatened by him in any way. [laughter] Yeah, the real foreman of that ... gang, I'm struggling to remember his name, he was the ... supervisor of the shift, Jake Hobshait, that was it ... [He] did meet my idea of what a foreman was like, except in his personality. He was a very, really decent man, ... although he was, he physically, he was all muscle ... You know, a guy about forty or forty-five, just a little too old for the service, and he had a beautiful family. ... Jake was a great guy. He was the ... regular foreman at that, in that crew. He was a guy I had a great respect for and wasn't, because I was, I mean, he didn't make you afraid of him, he really made you respect him.

KP: It sounds like he really knew how to put people to work.

AVB: Oh, that's right. Yeah, and every, of course, everybody had, nobody in the crew from the college that was involved, there was very little ... organization or unionism or anything like that involved, ... regardless of our backgrounds. We were all guys somewhere between eighteen and twenty-two and ... everybody was interested in helping, participating in some way in the war effort. That was a real ... big thing at that time.

KP: So, it was not simply a job to make money?

AVB: That's right. I don't think, it hasn't been a situation like that since then, that I can remember ... Most people now, especially the people who, of course, didn't live through it, can't appreciate what that feeling is, that this has to be an all out effort on the part of everybody in the country, and nobody can be out of it. The sort of attitude ... that developed in Vietnam, never even, there was nothing close to it at all, except maybe in some of the real crazies in ... at the time, who ... couldn't make up their mind whether they were supporting communism or capitalism ... I was as much of a socialist as anybody around at that time, ... but I certainly couldn't see any reason why we should not, ... we should do anything except fight who we were fighting and when we were fighting, and doing as much, and every individual doing as much as they could do to participate. So, that was the big objective, the money was real nice. It was ... sixty-five cents an hour, was how much, was the pay as I remember, yeah it was sixty-five.

KP: Were you in union at Squibb?

AVB: Oh, no. I don't even, I'm not sure Squibb had a union. Their main plant was in Brooklyn, or their big plant ... Somehow or other, I remember reading or hearing about, on the radio, some labor troubles that they had there.

KP: But it did not affect your plant?

AVB: No. And it, well, they were before the war [the labor troubles]. I never heard any problems during the war.

KP: You mentioned that there were a number of women at the Squibb plant.

AVB: Yeah, the regular shifts had a lot of women working, because it was the kind of work that women ... could do. You gotta remember, I'm talking in the context of 1942 and '43. Now, in a lot of places, the assembly lines ... like that, small assembly lines like that are nothing but women. But, in those days, women were just starting to do that ... I have an aunt who's retired from Western Electric. She was a foreman at Western Electric, a long time ago. She's retired twenty, better than twenty years and ... she went into work at a plant in Kearny at that time, which was at that time Western Electric's biggest plant. There may have been one in Chicago, but, ... they manufactured all kinds of stuff. ... But she was the first one. And my mother worked in a dress factory when she was a kid, but that was women's work, but working on an assembly line wasn't.

KP: How did you, what did you think of factory work?

AVB: It was interesting. I was an engineering student, anyway, so seeing how machinery worked and how it was built, and ... in general, how it contributed to the whole process. That was always interesting, it still is ... I still have the same kind of interest in manufacturing and operations ... that never changes. The only difference now, is that ... manufacturing isn't done for, to make something that's gonna last, it planned obsolescence. That's so that the quality control and the use of materials that are going to last a real long time is not any more the kind of consideration it was at that time, when I was in school.

RH: While working through college, you worked as a front line guy, and then once you graduated you worked as management. Do you think that working at that beginning level helped you later on, with dealing with the employees?

AVB: Yeah. The experience of being the working stiff kind of guy ... is always useful, for two reasons; one, is you have got to appreciate what the viewpoint was, and the other one, the other reason is that ... you were able to see what ... the management structure was like and how it related to the working people. I worked in there, for that school I worked in, I went right into refinery, for at that time was ... I wasn't in a management kind of job, ... I was [a] refinery inspector. It wasn't a bargaining unit, well, of course, there wasn't any bargaining unit at that time in Esso, it came along after the war. But, they had a company and this job was not included in it. Everybody, the staff, or the force that, the office that I worked in was comprised of ...

professionals like me, who had engineering degrees, but it also had a substantial component of ... guys who had been refinery workers, in trades, in mostly piper fitters and boilermakers. But those guys, were ... they, you know, everybody pretty much worked as equals, but some, the professionals were more equal than the others, that's about what it meant. And, of course, there was clearly a manager of the department who was an engineer and an assistant, who also was an engineer. None of the ... non-professional guys had the supervisory positions. One guy, who I guess just retired a few years ago at Bayway, that I lost track of, he retired as the ...chief purchasing agent of the whole plant. He was ... the one non-professional guy who had, who got by the end of the war, got to be a supervisor. ... It was after the war, by the time I left the refinery, which was 1947, he had gotten to be a supervisor, and then, he kept moving up. And, I guess, he went to school and finally got a degree after he was about forty years old ... and did very well. He was, at that time, the guy that ran the storehouse in purchasing for the refinery. It was one of the biggest ones in the country, or in the world. It was a pretty good job, professional or not, it didn't make much difference, he got up there. But that, in the context of the question that you asked me, I got into that business of working ... with all of the rank and file non-professional people in the plant. It was very useful in understanding the whole picture of labor relations. It was very, that was very useful when I came here.

KP: Really, if you did ...

AVB: Oh, yeah, and mainly, because Rutgers was just entering the real world in that area, too. I came in[to the] university in 1965 and ... they had just gotten recognized for the operating engineers ... and the, oh, AFSCME had not yet organized the people in the physical plant, or in housing, or in any of the other departments, but they were in the process of doing it. Of course, the office and technical people that in (1961?) wasn't, that didn't get together until around 1970, around that time. But, it was a time when Rutgers was undergoing the same things that Esso underwent after World War II, ... you know, twenty years later.

KP: What was the process at Esso? It seems very interesting.

AVB: The funny thing here, ... well, the process was different. Esso, was a, the company had a reputation, at that time, of buying out the employees. Since it was a capital intensive kind of industry, ... the workforce, the cost contributable to the workforce is not anywhere near as significant as the cost of the money required to ... build the plant and to ... find the oil. That was where all the big money was going in the oil business, and the workforce was significant, but it wasn't, it wasn't the oil, the big one. And so, it was always possible when ... the working force got unhappy about something, to buy them out of it, to give them more money, or do whatever it was they wanted, and pay for it, rather than undergo a whole bunch of arguments, fighting, strikes, and all the other garbage that goes with that.

KP: The war changed that.

AVB: Well, no. No, this was after the war. This was still that way. This was still that way up through the '50s into the '60s. And then, of course, some of the unions and even in the, mid-'60s ... Esso still, the union was a, at least the union as far as Esso was concerned. Now, some of the oil, other oil companies had a CIO, AFL, OCAW, oil, chemical, oh, CAW, yeah, oil, chemical,

and atomic workers, they were organized under that. But, Esso was still a union. That was an Esso union ... It got more and more militant as time went on, and did, in fact, strike after I left. I left in '63, and they had a strike at Bayway, in '65 or '66. But the thing that existed in 1946 was the union, [it] was really a cozy company union. Everybody was buddies, and ... there was a Bayway community center, for example, and there was an industrial YMCA in Bayonne, both built with ... what amounted to Esso money. ... When they had had a strike at Bayonne back in 1916, I think it was, ... and it was a pretty big deal at the time, and it was more a matter, I think, of the ethnic differences. ... The workforce in the refinery was either, there was largely Irish, but it had a lot of Slavic, Polish, and Italian people involved, mostly ... Central European, and there was ... considerable animosity, I guess you'd call it, between, since most of them didn't speak English, the same thing that exists now with the Hispanic ... and you have the language differences, and so, that there's not much, and the supervisors, and the management at the plant, don't necessarily socialize, or move in the same circles, in the city outside of the refinery, outside the plant. So, anyway, that strike was a wild one, and they brought in strikebreakers ... There was a guy, by the name of Burgoff, who was the agent for the strikebreakers, he made a hell of a lot of money out of this thing, but, then finally, Mrs. Rockefeller settled it, at least she gets the credit for it. And she, ... they built this YMCA in Bayonne, which is still there as far as I know ...

KP: So, in other words...

AVB: You know, and that was one of the things that they, that was the kind of union they had, and over at Bayway there was a community center where a bowling alley and all that sort of thing, used that ... That was built in the late '20s, because Bayway had avoided the strike. As a matter of fact, that was one of the, another one of the reasons for the strike. They had started to take operations out of Bayonne and move them to Bayway. Largely, because there was more room at Bayway and it was more strategically located. They could still get tankers in there, and at the same time, they were where it was a lot easier to get the automotive traffic in and out of it, so the trucking industry was not squeezed from a (railroad?) standpoint, and they were better off. And, of course, there was a lot more available land to debauch by dumping oil all over. What Esso is stuck with now, or was stuck with, I guess they ... somebody in the environmental world is trying to decide, I guess, who's responsible for cleaning it all up, but you got a couple square miles of Linden and Elizabeth ... that's ... and Woodbridge, and that's all messed up with ... what had been dumped out of those refineries over the last century. And this Tosco outfit, whoever they are, who own the refinery now that Esso sold to them, is having their fun, trying to figure out, all they're doing is making money, I guess, and not worrying about the long range. However, that ... whole business of unionism at Esso was quite ... a different thing from what was here at the University.

KP: You said that it had changed when you got here, that unions were coming in.

AVB: Here?

KP: Yes.

AVB: Yeah. Oh, but it was twenty years later.

KP: Yes.

AVB: I remember ... one of the revelations, I mean one of the things that really happened opened my eyes to the state of employment to people working here. When I found out that they weren't paying for overtime for anybody except, I guess, the operating engineers who had a contract and there were only at the time, I guess, maybe twelve of those, you know, six in Newark, a dozen here, and four in Camden, so, twenty-two people out of the whole university, but they were getting paid overtime. But, ... the rest of and everybody else, well, you got lucky if you got time, comp time, and that was it, and there was no rules at all about it. And I remember talking to (Don Sergeant?), who at the time, ... who the heck's closest to him? Well, he was like, if you could put, ... let's assume that Joe Whiteside's position was the same as John (Swink?) when I got here, and then Don. Don was the next to him. Richard (Norman?), I guess, is probably as close as anybody. Although, Richard, ... Don did not have responsibility for personnel, and that's what Richard is most notorious for. [laughter] We're very good friends, so I can call him that. Anyhow, ... I remember talking to (Don Sergeant?), and he was trying to explain to me why they don't pay overtime, and he said, "Well, the State won't let us do it, the State pays overtime to some people." ... At that time New Jersey was in the process of getting organized, too. That was when they started with ... and ... the communication workers started to get into the state. But, anyhow, and AFSCME, as I said, was really, really organized in the state. But, you know, I guess that was 1960, that was in '65, because I came here in February and this conversation took place some time in September. We were beginning a new year, and we were talking about, I was starting to talk about budget for the following year, and that was my first introduction to the budget. It was crazy. [laughter] But, anyhow, that was about the way, ... oh, heck, I guess, the outside world, that is the commercial world. It was actually, my experience in Esso was long after the real big convulsion that occurred, which had happened in 1916, 1920, ... in the steel industry, way back to the 1890s. All of those things had already taken place and there was a certain formality to all the relationships among the people involved in those industries ... which, and Exxon was, had gone through all that, and with some of the big battles, but they were never organized successfully by outside forces. I mean, outside unions that weren't a company project, and so that was all done long before and Rutgers had they just through all that time, but, nobody paid any attention to the working crew, because they never had any, they never had any problems. I guess, well, the physical plant people, all they had to have was people who could shovel coal, you know, or maybe know enough about it to have an oil burner work, or handle the custodial chores around the building, that was it. And during the '50s and the '60s, the technological development of the whole business facilities started to grow and become, I guess, what's the word I'm looking for? Oh, become more integrated ... We tied buildings together to get economies to scale, and in order to minimize capital investment, central processing, or energy management units, things like that, or energy creating units. ... By the end of the '60s it got to be, if you had a significant workforce in the university or in any big campus type operation, research center, university shopping center, airport, all of these kind of things where they're spread out, things got tied together in such a way that you really needed technologically aware people to operate 'em, and you weren't going to get those people without paying the price for it. You couldn't get them in minimum wage. For a long time that was the way the University operated, and in the '60s, was when the University broke out of it. Yale was still trying to break out of it.

KP: It sounds like when you first got here you mentioned overtime, but Rutgers was still a sort of very informal.

AVB: Yeah.

KP: In some ways, a very unstructured place.

AVB: Yeah. For example, when I worked at Squibb's, we got paid for overtime. We didn't get paid for overtime in the way, time and a half, we just get paid so much more. Well, because we didn't work a forty-hour week to start with ... Of course, the law, the thing that got me was that, and it's about one of the reasons that (Don Sergeant?) advanced to me, was that, you know, that the people here weren't subjected to the requirements of the Taft-Hartley Act, or any of the laws, because they were not supposed to apply to, ... public organizations, merely private commercial operations. So, ... people were haggling, and actually, of course, the way all that grew since then, since '65, it, I don't know if it's better or worse now, but it's different, and that's all I can say.

KP: What were some of the strengths and disadvantages of the change that took place?

AVB: Well, the good things ... that unionization, as far as I'm concerned, from the managerial standpoint, are that you did have a certain framework set up that allowed you to ... deal with the efforts, handle your attempts to control what the working people did, ... and [the] primary objective, as far as I was concerned, was to promote their effectiveness and the efficiency of the use of their time, or their ability, or whatever ... It's a lot easier to do that on a ... if you don't have too many people to deal with, because if you try to deal with each individual person, you then, if you have any ... amount of compassions or concerns for the welfare of the world, and for the other people in the world, you try to deal with each one as an individual ... You really then get into an almost impossible situation with respect to taking care of the idiosyncrasies of each individual. So, what that, what working through a union does, at least over a broad spectrum of things that ... are common to the whole working force, you have a rather uniform situation ... There are certain work rules that apply, and they apply to everybody, and you get paid a certain amount, for a certain kind of work, and paid a different amount for a different kind of work ... Maybe you take care of working conditions in terms of environment and maybe you don't. In some cases, most people feel like ... well, the environment, maybe, if I have to work outdoors maybe I can con 'em into getting me some (extra hours?), or something like that. They don't really get ... very pushy, or concerned about it, or they provide those things for themselves ... When they find out that you're paying one guy for a certain amount, another guy a certain amount, and another guy a certain amount, they're all doing potentially the same thing, and none of them are getting the same amount of money. They all may be satisfied at the moment, but as soon as the word gets around that there is a difference, then the people who are on the bottom side usually get unhappy. Anyway, unionization and working through an organization like a union, does simplify a manager's job to some degree, too, because then you deal with a steward, or you deal with a business agent, and you don't have a lot of the issues that come up when you don't have that. And, of course, as soon as the organization gets big, and when you're dealing with a half a dozen people, it's no problem, you can always juggle that much around. But, as

you soon as you start getting a staff of ... well, we had, when I started here we had six hundred people in physical plant, when I retired we had nine hundred. It's impossible to handle that kind of thing.

KP: What are the disadvantages, there's a pause to some ...

AVB: Oh, the disadvantages, I guess, the disadvantages are leaders in the union who are always looking for an issue to ... to raise a fuss about and their reasons for looking for that are all kinds of reasons ... But in any case, when you get leaders like that, and, particularly, when you get to the situation where they may be coming up for re-election and they're looking for issues, then you have to deal with a lot of ... things that you really wouldn't have to deal with if that organization didn't exist ... They raise issues about, like one of the major things I don't think, I don't hear about it much anymore, but this happened, oh, maybe in the mid-seventies, when ... the whole world was concerned about various forms of harassment between supervisors and workers ... and its business within the racial harassment, or sexual harassment, and all that sort of business, ... that term started to be applied to ordinary supervisory language. When ... a foreman told a worker that, "You were supposed to do this and you didn't do it," and the worker says, "Go away and stop harassing me," and I mean, I heard this a lot of times, and I went through a lot of battles with the union leaders about it, about the application of the terms of that thing. This is ordinary everyday, worker-to-management discourse and the terminology, the application of something like harassment to it, it may seem like harassment, and it probably is, but it isn't the kind of harassment that's forbidden. It's the kind of harassment that's required, [laughter] only when you don't do what you're supposed to do and still expect us to pay you. But, anyway, that's the kind of thing that ... makes it a pain when you get the ... and it's usually the leadership of the working people, you are in big trouble when you got a substantial group. I mean, either a very big minority, or a majority of the working staff, when they're all unanimous about, not unanimous, that's a bad word when I'm talking about majority, but when there's a big portion of the working force who has agreed that whatever it is they're fighting about is a true and real issue, then you've got a real problem. But, in this case, it's mostly a few of the people in the working force ... aided and abetted largely by the union leaders, who are looking for something to make a fuss about. That's a disadvantage. Another disadvantage, I think, is ... the business ... of raising other, I guess, difference in viewpoints, I think, between the workers' welfare and the enterprisers' welfare. There are a lot of people now who, a lot of unions ... that are, literally written their own death sentence, because they closed the plant that was providing their resource for all of its business... There's nothing. ... What it'll amount to, what it all finally boils down to is that ... the individual workers are at the mercy of whoever the heck they have elected to run the union and when the people running the union get to the point of ... seriously threatening the success of the enterprise, they have to be able to recognize that, and willing to act in such a way that they'll eliminate that threat and that's an awful[ly] hard, and, in a lot of cases, impossible thing for 'em to do ... These are people that really suffered, unfortunately, rank and file, who don't have a job anymore. So, that can happen, and that's ... a bad deal. And is, I mean, a lot of people complain, and I complain, very much right now about the amount of money that the upper management is taking out of the company. Even though I'm a stockholder, more than I am anything else ... I think that ... that's absolutely unconscionable, shouldn't be allowed ... But, I don't think you'll ever see these guys threatening no matter what they do. They're not going to really threaten the welfare of the company, because they're so

close to, I mean the whole thing, the whole, that would be a total contradiction of everything else that they do. But, in the case of the union, even though they have that stake in the welfare of the company, they don't necessarily recognize or be aware of it. From that tug-of-war that exists, ... where you can pin-point specific nodes that center, you know, where the management is centered in the CEO, or the president, or whatever, and the union is, and the leaders of the union and the stockholders are all kind of in an amorphous mass off on the side, soaking up the money, but they don't really have a specific leader until somebody tries to take the company over. And then the leader (?) needs their vote ... the whole business is very hard to see how all of that's going to work out, or predict what's going to happen. And again, when you're talking about advantages and disadvantages, ... when you're into management, it's pretty tough for the guy at the ...

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AVB: Most people are, you know, middle or lower management. They can't really identify with the president, or the CEO, or any of the major stockholders ... So, that I just don't know if the advantages and disadvantages are that important about a union, except that it does provide a focal, one single point for the management to deal with, rather than ... like dealing with the stockholders. Who are they and how significant are they? The guy that's got a million shares, is a lot more significant than the guy that's got a hundred ... Well, that's a subject for some other time.

KP: You mentioned earlier, when we were talking about your factory experience, you phrased it, if I remember correctly, you were as socialist as the next man. What was your...

AVB: Well, in that time, in the '40s, in the '30s, of course, there was a lot more of it, ... but it still existed in the '40s and it sort of came to a head in ... all the battles in Congress that year in '46, '47, and '48, ... between ... the very liberal DEMOCRATS, which was what kind of an atmosphere I grew up in. My father was the ... professional, but, yet, he was very liberal in his views about a lot of things. So, that ... and, of course, my teachers, particularly the teachers in high school were, almost uniformly, very liberal, ordinary in the public schools, but I think this, ... the Bayonne High School teachers weren't any different from the teachers in Jersey City, or Newark, Elizabeth, or in New Brunswick that I got to know ... when I came to school here. So, that, and, of course, I guess one of my biggest single influences at Rutgers, and I don't remember that I mentioned this first time around, when we talked, ... was ... my freshman year, when I was ... I went to a chapel session and we had speakers in the chapel, lecturers at special meetings in the chapel, and then at Sunday services in the chapel, there would be people who would talk, say the sermon, and (Norman Thomas?) was certainly one of the most influential people in terms of my life ... I was very convinced by practically everything he said, in that speech in my freshman year, and I was seventeen years old, so it was the right time to make an impression, and I pretty much still believe in a lot of the things that he said. So, ... and I didn't hesitate, I never ... voted for anybody with a socialist name, I mean in their party affiliation, just because the opportunity didn't present itself, I think.

KP: If you had been a few years older, and if you'd been able to vote in the '30s, you might well have voted Socialist, or ...

AVB: Well, no. I would've voted for Roosevelt. Yeah.

KP: You clearly wanted him to lean in that direction.

AVB: Yeah. Oh, yeah. You see, that was it. Roosevelt was there, ... I certainly never had, I had no problem at all in not voting for Henry Wallace when he ran in, ... what was it '44?

KP: '48.

AVB: Yeah, '48. Yeah.

KP: So, you were a Wallace supporter?

AVB: No, I didn't vote for Wallace.

KP: You didn't vote for Wallace, you voted for Truman.

AVB: No, I voted for Truman ... I voted for Truman because I was a little more sophisticated about the likelihood of like who was going to win. I was fairly sure that Dewey would win like everybody else was. But, at the same time, I couldn't go for Dewey, because of his associations with ... people in business who I knew were just as soon rip off the public, regardless of anything else. Oh, big contracting firms that supported him. The guys that, well, Brewster was one of the most obvious ones to me just because the Brewster firm was doing a lot of contract work around Hudson County at the time ... Brewster was a big gun in the state, New Jersey Republican Party at that time, in Bergen County. So, ... that's the kind of things that got me pretty well turned off with the Republicans who were always so sanctimonious about how they were concerned with the general welfare, as long as it was the Republican general welfare.
[laughter]

KP: What about your fellow students? One of the things we noticed, when reading the *Targums* from the '30s and '40s is that Republican candidates, when there were straw polls held, Republican candidates tended to outpoll the Democrats. Not by huge margins, but still the majority of students in straw polls would vote, say, I think, for Willkie in '40. There was no *Targum* for forty...

AVB: That's true. You didn't see that after that. I mean, I don't think you ever saw it after the forties, because the composition of the student body [had] changed. The people who were here prior to 1941, ... came from a different branch. Branch is not really the right word, it implies it's narrow, and ... what I meant was really a different sector of the population ... They, and their undergraduate, their, rather their pre-college education was different. The people who were in my class and later, ... '41, '42, '43, and on, were, had gone through high school affected a lot by the whole aura of the country during the late '30s. And the teachers in high school, who as I said

were very ... liberal, progressive, whatever the heck word you want to apply, ... that started to show itself in college, with students who came in '41, 2, and 3. And, so that, they would be less, and, of course, ... the whole, what's the word I want to use? I'm thinking of the ... atmosphere, the general atmosphere of the country with respect to ... behavioral kind[s] of things ... There was a lot more still Victorian morals, and social ... ideas were still in effect in the '20s and the early '30s. And they all started to disappear, or become more successfully challenged by people in the late '30s, and that had an effect, and I still, I see it now. The guys that I know from the Class of '41 and '42, who are really not that far behind me in school, those guys, very few of them are ... Democrats now ... When I was in school, these guys were all a lot different in terms of their ... social and political outlook than the guys who were in school with me, and my friends from high school, their outlook was a lot more liberal.

KP: Even at that time.

AVB: At that time, yeah, and that's continued, I mean, of course, now, and some of these guys have changed. In my class Harry Kranz, I don't know if you have ever ran across, if you ever run across him. He, ... Harry worked for the federal government, and ... but when he was in school he was the last editor of the *Targum* before the war, or during the war, and when they suspended publication, he got into a big fight with Metzger about it.

KP: What was the fight about?

AVB: About, "What are you doing that for?" I mean, that's the whole point, and then, they, ... that was in '43, yeah, that was in September, or August. August or September of '43, and then they put the paper back together, as a result of all this. They started the *Targum* again after Christmas break, ... in '44, and then in February of '44, they had a hell of a big fight, and I'm trying right now, oh, yeah, they tried to ... censor an editorial that he had written.

KP: Do you remember about what?

AVB: I can't remember. I can dig it out ... of the archives, because we saw it last summer, or last year, when we were putting together the 50th reunion class yearbook, because we never had a yearbook in '44 and '45. But, anyway, there was this big fight and Harry just quit, as the editor, right, and left. They kept on publishing it ... but ... it was directly controlled by the dean's office, and it was, you know, it wasn't a free newspaper. Because, the *Targum* evolved from that into what it is now, and that all happened late in the '60s when they really started to get ... I guess, in 1970 or so, or '71 when they got enough money to buy the thing out, and go as a private, or at least as a non-subsidized enterprise at the University. So, anyhow, to get back to the original thing, Harry ... was at the time, he was a pretty straight, middle-of-the-road kind of guy. He wasn't a wild-eyed liberal, all of the time after that, after the war ... Now, he didn't go in, he never went into the service. I don't remember what his affliction was, I guess a main one was he got married. Although, they're still married, so I guess it's okay. He got married before he graduated, ... right after he quit, or right about the time he quit the *Targum*. But, anyway, he's worked for the Labor Department, the Federal Labor Department ever since then, and he's retired now. But, he still publishes quite a bit, writes quite a bit ... and he's a very liberal guy now ... But, he was pretty much as they say, middle-of-the-road. But, there were a lot of other

guys who were ... in my class ... the guys that were left, were still, I'd say probably seventy-five to eighty percent of them were not unusually ... liberal or conservative. In most cases, they ... accepted a certain number of things, and, of course, you know, there were things, there were some things that were just beginning to be recognized, in some aspects of human relations, between Americans and the racial concerns were just really starting to be made more noise about. The Paul Robeson business ... was stirring up everybody at that time and the whole ... idea of communism, and that was the only real, that's the only real gripe that I think anybody had against Robeson.

KP: I have been struck by the people I've interviewed and people, who were fairly conservative, still have really fond things to say about Paul Robeson. I have been sort of struck that he seemed to have been widely accepted by a cross section of students.

AVB: That's right ... I thought, you know, all kind of good things about him and still do. I haven't heard anything except this, what to me was horseshit, about communism. Communism to me doesn't mean anything. It's just another ... way of organizing government, and if the people being governed ... allow themselves to be governed that way, well, so be it. I certainly wouldn't, ... I would do what I could do to get out of it. But, I would do the same to get out of any kind of dictatorship like that. I'm interested in democracy and nothing else, and I don't care about what you call it. [laughter] But to condemn somebody, because they ... endorse it, or because they think that it's great, well, that's whatever turns them on, is about my attitude. And why anyone should condemn people for being, for believing in something like that is totally beyond me ... I don't know that this is, maybe, at least in my lifetime, this has been just another media creation.

KP: Sounds like you do not like Joseph McCarthy and the whole McCarthy [era].

AVB: I thought McCarthy was a slob and is a slob and, I think, that it is just one of the disgraces that people, from various states, have voted into the Congress since 1790. [laughter] My brother-in-law, who is a Congressman, and I have a lot of arguments about that. Well, we don't really argue about it, ... he agrees with me.

KP: Who is your brother-in-law in Congress?

AVB: Well, he's not in Congress now. He was during the '60s, John Monagan. My sister's husband. He is a Douglass, one of the, ... what do you call them, ... the alumni, they're honored, ... whatever the heck they call them, Loyal Sons over at Douglass. [laughter]

KP: Loyal Daughters. You mentioned, just a little bit ago, about Victorianism and the decline of it, the name that comes to mind is Dean Metzger.

AVB: Well, yeah. That's right ... He was sort of the personification, I guess, of the Victorian ethic. He ... had a great control over the University. He was Dean of Students, but, and he had, he was not the Dean of the Faculty.

KP: But, his name comes up constantly ...

AVB: Well, there wasn't any Dean of the Faculty. There was ... I guess, they had ... I don't remember that they have a provost at the time. I really wasn't that familiar with the organization. That was what happened after I started to work here. But, ... he really had complete control over your life as a student, from the day of admission on, 'til the grave, which was commencement. I don't know if he had any significant effect afterwards. I never, that never presented itself to me. That is, I never had to use the University for access to an employer, or anything like that. I was going to go to work for Exxon when I entered school and I was still going to go to work when I left. [The] same place, because when you grew up in Bayonne, that was the place that you went to work, and I had, my father had worked there and my uncles, so, it was logical that I go there.

KP: You were here in the '60s when it was harder to control students.

AVB: Oh, yeah.

KP: How would Dean Metzger control people's lives?

AVB: Just through, he had the power, at least he seemed to have the power to throw you out of school if you didn't do what he said you were supposed to do. Which was, of course, I think, the fight that Harry Kranz had with him is that he, you know, he threatened Harry if he made any kind of public fuss over the thing, he was going to get him thrown out of school and, of course, this was three months or four months before graduation, so, it was an effective time to use that kind of weapon, because nobody's going to throw away ...

RH: Three and a half years of work.

AVB: You know, three and a half years. So, this is ... that was basically what he did, and I really don't have any idea whether he had any authority at all, with respect to the faculty, or whether the faculty would listen to him. I know that, and I don't know anything about Clothier's relationship with him, those two, and (Lou Martin?), who was the registrar, and who was the only one of that ... hierarchy of the university that I knew, that was around when I came back to work here. I used to play pinochle with him, and who was ... lived in Highland Park, and he used to come over to the club, to the faculty club, and I was a member of the club before I came to work here, as an alumnus, and I used to go play cards with him, and he'd come over to the club, and had Saturday afternoon there was a card game. And I did that for a couple years, and I had opportunities to talk to Lou about it, and he said that Metzger effectively ran the university, outside of the ... faculty, all the other aspects were his domain. But, of course, Douglass wasn't involved in that, for example. Cook was pretty much run by the Dean of Cook College, ... which was the Dean of the College of Agriculture and the experiment station. And, of course, Livingston didn't exist, and the only thing on the other side of the river was the stadium. So, that it was this little kingdom, right here, that he had control over, and he did have control in that he could, he could influence the money distribution. Like I said, I don't really remember who the heck was the vice president or the treasurer was.

KP: Did you have any personal items with Metzger during ...

AVB: No, I had this one. I thought I said something about it the first time we talked. But, my freshman year I didn't really want to go to chapel, and that was the only thing, and he said, "See, come around," and I started showing up when I found out you can get paid to sing in the choir.

KP: That's right, you did. Going back to the question of race, Rutgers was a very different place in terms of composition of the student body.

AVB: Oh, sure, we had ... to my knowledge, we had one Japanese guy, I don't remember any Chinese people, and one black man and the black guy wasn't in my class. He was the Class of '46. I'm going to find out if he's alive at reunion this year, he'll be back because this is their 50th. But, he ... was a football player, and a good one, Leroy Darkes is his name. He came from Atlantic City ... He was an engineering student, and ... was a really nice guy. And the other, the other non-Caucasian was this guy Toshio Hashizume. He was, ... I think he was in the engineering, I'm not positive. He was a pretty decent guy, too, and, of course, after Pearl Harbor, he had a tough time. He took a lot of crap from a lot of people. I don't think ... he was born in Japan. I think he was born in the United States, because he was only twenty, you know, eighteen, or twenty when he came here, and ... his family had come into the United States from California.

KP: He had a tough time?

AVB: Well, he took a certain amount of crap and, of course, he didn't travel with us all the time, you know, with the gang I hung around with, so I didn't really see much of him. So, I don't know. But, he certainly didn't have any trouble with any of us at all ... The same thing applied to Roy Darkes, he was, you know, we'd see him at football practice and stuff like that, but that was it. And other than that, there, I don't remember any other people who were, yeah, in the classes afterward almost everybody was a white male. Of course, the school was a male school at that time, too. Yeah, I really can't think of any others. But, I had ... several black kids in my classes in high school, and I was still friendly with them. And, of course, my, you know, we still talk about it, my freshman year I was home every weekend and after I came back here for my sophomore year, in September of '42, I didn't go home again until July '44, even though it was thirty miles away. Actually, I went home, but I didn't go home on weekends religiously, the way I had my freshman year. Anyhow, I still saw ... a lot of these kids, who were mostly black kids, but a few Hispanic kids. Of course, at that time Hispanics weren't considered a minority, because they were just the same as the Italian kids. [laughter] There really was no difference. Their parents spoke a little bit of English and a lot of Italian, or a lot of Spanish, and the Italian kids had a culture that was different from Anglo-Saxon culture ... and they made a big deal out of it, and they still make a big deal out of it. I don't see anything wrong with that, I mean, but everybody gets excited about it now. Again, another media construct that makes for a conversation maybe, but it doesn't really make any sense with respect to human relation ... The same way with, ... there was a much more significant barrier between black kids and everybody else, and it's just the one of color. I always felt, or used to feel that they were different, when I was a little kid and nobody really argued with that, because that was the conventional wisdom, and to a great extent that is still the conventional wisdom in too many parts of the country. And that's why we have so much trouble with it. And my whole experience has taught me that there

is essentially no difference at all, except the color of the skin between black people, or black individuals and white individuals. If you want to talk as a race, yeah, there are differences, because their cultures are different, but that's not any different than the differences which are the result of people in the same race growing up in different parts of the world.

KP: When did you come to this conclusion? You mentioned that when you were very young you had this vision, but when did your views change on this?

AVB: That happened very early in my life. I guess by the time I was thirty ... I was, I don't know that I mentioned this last time, either, but after I graduated, I guess it was 1946, at the time, and I was, I had been over in, been out drinking with a couple of my buddies and got on a bus in Newark to go to Elizabeth to catch the train out of Elizabeth back over to Bayonne and I was standing in a bus ... not really drunk, but not really sober, you know, sort of half way in between, and a black kid got on with a load of books, you know, sort of obviously a student and it turned out he was and this was after the war he was going to college, I guess. I don't really remember which school, but it was a college level. I started to open my wisdom of twenty-two years old, whatever I was twenty-two or twenty-three, and telling him about, you know, asking him about what he thought about and he was reasonably willing to talk about it ... So, we just kept gabbing about education, generally. And I said, ... "Well, that's one of the problems of most non-conventional people," the word I'll use now, but I don't remember what I used then, "But, the people, because of the differences, color differences, why there was a certain amount of prejudice against that group, and I think education is the only way out of it." And he said, "Well, so do I," and he said "because we wouldn't be standing here talking for the last twenty minutes here. So, and, we really agree on practically everything." And we did. And I still vaguely remember, I don't remember the details of the conversation at all, but I remember just what I related, because that, from that point on, I was essentially convinced that there weren't any real differences, and that there was no reason to discriminate whatever, except as an individual, on an individual basis. If somebody treats you like an asshole, treat them like one. [laughter] ... If it's not to your disadvantage, because maybe they got a gun, or because of the other extreme, ... you know, reasons to concern yourself with the way they behave. So, you walk away from them. Maybe they'll go away, too. So, anyway, I think that's how far back it goes. That was in the mid-'40s, I had that idea and that evolved out of experiences here ... But, a lot more just observations of people that I knew from high school. A guy was president of my freshman class, in high school, who became an undertaker in East Orange, died rich. He overcame tuberculosis when he was a kid. We were in school when he, at that time when we were in school they were going around with tuberculin testing, and that was late '30s, and ... he was one of us who had turned up showing a positive reaction to the test ... But, he was ... just a really nice guy, and ... everybody really liked him, that's what got him elected. His name was (Ulysses Jackson?). It [is] identified pretty much now as a black guy's name ... At that time, I think an awful lot about it that way. There was ... there were three or four women that were in the class, girls ... in those days, women now-a-days. They were still sixteen, seventeen years old and there were a couple of 'em, a couple of women, that were really nothing, ... but ... quite a few of the white girls that were really nothing. But, there was nothing to distinguish them from the white people, except their skin color.

KP: So, you in a sense, were used to having black students in a school. Did it seem unusual how that had changed when you came to Rutgers?

AVB: Oh, no, I expected it. I expected it. I expected it just because, the other thing I didn't mention were the differences in the pre-war classes. The people who came here, and to some extent quite a few in my class, came from a significantly higher economic level ... That I suppose is true now, too, but ... at that time there were a lot, there wasn't so much a tight relationship between ... economic status and political outlook as there is now, or maybe there isn't now, I don't know what it is since I'm not here. There were a lot of people here, these guys who were pre-war classes, ... who were conservative in their political outlook, and who didn't have a pot, ... came from farms, and rural counties in the state, or they were here on an athletic scholarship, or something like that, and they were pretty much conservative. The liberal people largely came from the cities, and an awful big number of them were on scholarship, because they didn't have money. I wouldn't have gone here. I wouldn't have gone to college at all, maybe, but ... although I think my father would have found some way to get me in some place if I didn't get in here. But, this was the easiest, just because it was, I was admissible. I was the top ten in my class in high school ... They didn't have SATs, but they had a scholarship exam specifically for the state scholarship, and I aced that. It was no real problem. I've always been able to take those tests.

KP: You joined a fraternity when you were ...

AVB: No, I was, I thought I mentioned about that, too, the last time. I didn't join it, it was sort of by default, because I needed a place to live. I thought I was gonna commute, and that turned out to not really be a practical solution, and so, ... just because, the time involved and the distance. So, anyway, ... my father had a teaching colleague who's brother had graduated in the Class of '41 ... His fraternity was the Raritan Club, and so they advised me to go up there and see if I can work it out, and it worked out. Now it's Sigma Phi Epsilon, but, it ... and I was involved in it becoming Sigma Phi Epsilon. That happened while I was still in school. And then, when I came back here to work, I was on the alumni board for the fraternity for a while. We tried to build a new house then, in the late '60s, but the inflation started to take it right out of our hands and we couldn't afford it. So, and they finally built it in the '80s.

RH: What was it like when it became a national chapter? I know you guys were local at first, but then you opened up.

AVB: When we went national, it was the middle of the war. There was nobody here, anyhow. There I was, the guy by the name of Earle Berger, who was in the Class of '44, was the first president of the national chapter, I mean the chapter of the national. I think I was the vice-president, but I don't really remember. I certainly didn't preside over any meetings ... It was all in just a paper construct at that time. A guy who was in the Class of '23 originally, Morgan Seifert, who was a lawyer down in New Brunswick, and ... he was the guy who was sort of the driving force behind the national reservation. From a practical standpoint, a local fraternity can't really last very long, because it's just too expensive.

RH: You need the outside support.

AVB: And you can't get support from any place outside, unless you get a group together and then recruit. I mean, you gotta be able to pledge guys who are willing and able to invest that much money in the living arrangement to be able to support it. I mean, you gotta keep on doing that, because everybody leaves in no longer than four years, maybe five if they get red-shirted one year, or something like that. But, that's the only thing that supports a fraternity. So, anyway, that was my extent of my involvement with the fraternity and I got off it after I became very involved in the physical plant work. I really figured I should get off the alumni board of the fraternity. I didn't want to get into any conflicting situations with it. I still go back there. I still help them out if I can. I still contribute to the fraternity organization, but I don't really take a big active part in the day-to-day operation.

KP: You were an aircraft spotter in Bayonne?

AVB: Yeah.

KP: What do you remember about the whole civil defense craze? Bayonne was particularly the key facility.

AVB: Well, I didn't get, you see, I didn't work at Esso until '44, and by that time, ... well, I was still involved with it. But I, you know, I really had a tough time working out a shift to cover the aircraft spotting. Well, actually, as they developed better and more effective radar, which was happening during the war. As a matter-of-fact, my father was the one that got me involved in it in the first place. In 1943, [my father] went to a, work for Western Electric, as a, he was a teacher in high school, but he went to work for Western Electric, at night, teaching, ... maintenance of the radar equipment, since it was something he could do, put extra money. By the time I graduated in '44, ... they were pretty much almost out of the business of doing spotting, because the radar equipment was good enough to control what was coming and going in the area around New York. And that's what we were, exactly what we were able to do, merely stuff coming in and out of Newark that we saw. And that's what it was, (Idlewilde?), that's what it was, it wasn't Kennedy was just a big sand, a big meadow, and LaGuardia was pretty far away. Well, the only airports we would see would be Newark or Teterboro, we couldn't see it, but we'd see flights going in and out of it and Linden had a little airport over by the General Motors plant, which is still there. The General Motors plant isn't.

KP: Yes, it is.

AVB: Yeah, the assembly plant is there. But, Linden Airport is across the highway. That ..., but those, ... you know, commercial flights, hardly any of them at that time.

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

KP: This continues an interview with Mr. Alfred V. Brady on April 4, 1996 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler and ...

RH: Robert Hood.

KP: You mentioned that the aircraft spotting really declined by the time you did it, partly because most of the traffic was going over La Guardia.

AVB: No, what I meant was, that once I graduated from college, even when I was down here at school, I didn't get that involved in it, because ... I wasn't there, in Bayonne. When I did do that was pretty much during my freshman year. As I said, I went home on the weekends very, sort of, religiously ... and, of course, it was my senior year in high school, because that's when all that business started, that was 1940-'41. By September '42, I was out of it, because ... I wasn't home. I didn't go back home on weekends, so I didn't get scheduled that much. I didn't get involved in it that much. By 1940, into '43 or middle '43, ... the whole need for that kind of operation sort of died out. It was replaced by radar, which we developed. So, anyway, that was the extent of it, but it was, again, a contribution to the war effort. I think primarily one of the, one of my motivations during that time, I ... never ... got involved in the military at that time, because my eyesight put me at limited service. Although, I tried several times to get in meteorology operation in the Air Force, well, the Army Air Force at that time, and the Navy Air Force. But even for meteorology they wouldn't let me in, because of my eyes.

KP: It sounds like you had a real sense of service there.

AVB: Well, they came from my father. That was his attitude towards life in general is that everybody oughta contribute something to the general welfare, if they had the ability and time and everything else to do it.

KP: What were your general or specific observations about what life was like on the home front? Most of the people I've interviewed only speak of a part of the home front. They go off to war in '42. They are part of Rutgers, or they come back to Rutgers, or they go from high school right to the military, but you were here.

AVB: Yeah. Well, I think that attitude you talk about, about contributing to the general welfare, and the war effort, specifically, I think that was pretty general. There may have been ten percent who didn't get the word around, but I really wasn't very aware of 'em. There was a certain amount of stuff you read in the paper, or seen in the newsreel, of people who were busy doing something else. But ... most of the ordinary, everyday people ... that you ran into, in ordinary intercourse ... social intercourse ... they were interested in doing what they could to support the war effort. And, actually, a lot of that, at least in my experience, came out of the same kind of thing ... I didn't talk about this before that I remember. During the '30s, the middle '30s, when the ... Washington made a big effort to pull people together in the business of the war, they didn't call it the "war on poverty." But, it was just an NRA [National Recovery Act] kind of thing, trying to get the whole economy started again, by getting people to just go out and do something to ... get the country moving. ... All of that razzmatazz that they put out during the middle '30s hit me at a time when I was very susceptible to that kind of, I was a pre-teen, I guess maybe somewhere between ten and fifteen, and all of the parades ... posters ... newspaper stories, radio stories about things coming next, and coming out of Washington and, which was,

generally, trying to get everybody marching along together, like the song says, ... that was an NRA marching song. It was ... this was the kind of, that sounded like a college pride song, but ... basically, that's what it was. I still ... I can't really say the whole thing, I can't remember all the words, but it was the kind of thing that would ... impress [a] ten to fifteen year old kid ... and I've never forgotten it, essentially, the same attitude though. And every now and then, when I start in the last ten years, fifteen years, ever since Ronnie Reagan reminded everybody we all ought to be trying to make a million bucks and the hell with the clown next to you ... The theme of this song, about marching along together, was a pretty important thing, and still is a pretty important thing.

KP: It sounds like you also listened to a fair share of FDR's radio "Fireside Chat," right?

AVB: Oh, yeah. That had a big, that's why I said in '54, when we were talking about who'd I vote for in the '30s, it would've been Roosevelt if I could have voted.

KP: Your father was the same?

AVB: Oh, yeah. Well, my father had voted for Al Smith and I know that he voted for Roosevelt, but, I remember the Smith campaign. I mean, I was four years old, but my, I guess my family is a very strong Catholic family, and Al Smith, of course, was the first Catholic to run for presidency, and so that was the reason for that, that kind of thing, and it had nothing to do with anything else. I didn't know anything about anything, after all. But I, and I only vaguely remember hearing Smith make speeches on the radio.

KP: What about Kennedy?

AVB: I had no problem with Kennedy. I voted for Kennedy all the way ... Actually, I never voted for, I had voted for Stevenson twice. I was pretty convinced then, as to being a Democrat, and nothing's actually happened since then to change that. I think, mainly, it's because the only guy that I really agonized over was ... Truman and Dewey ... and as I said, Truman, I just didn't know enough about him at the time. There was no indication that he was going to do anything very smart. Although, he had logically continued what Roosevelt was doing with respect to the war ... but, there was still really nothing, in 1946 and '47, that I thought defined him as the president to take us down the road. And, of course, Dewey was doing great things in New York and had a great press, and all that sort of stuff. So, I did really agonize over that for quite a while ... I met Truman in 1959, yeah ... it was just before the, yeah, 1959 or '60 ... yeah, it was before the Kennedy election ... I just had a chance to shake his hand, and say, because he was making a speech and my father, since he was the mayor of Bayonne, he was in the entourage ... He was making a speech in Newark. I had a chance to go up to him, and I mentioned to him that I was very happy I had been smart enough to choose him over Dewey. [laughter] But, it was a real close vote as far as I was concerned. But, that was the last time I really agonized, because Eisenhower, well, Stevenson just really convinced me more, a lot more, being concerned with things, and Eisenhower was very clearly, ... you know, going to keep things as they were, and ... I really ... wanted to have things changed. Particularly, at that time, when I was being really stirred up in the racial business, because it was just before the Supreme Court thing, and ... during the early '50's. The other thing was my first wife was ... worked at Maidenform and was

in the union there and that union was really filled up with people that were, they hated everybody who wasn't for the Rosenberg's. I was not involved in that, at all. As far as I was concerned, they got what they deserved, and that was it. That was a bunch of people from New York City and they were really ... pretty far left, even for me.

KP: The civil rights was a very important issue to you in the '50s.

AVB: Yeah. Oh, yeah, and that was the reason I preferred Stevenson, because I think he would have done something about it more than Eisenhower did. Eisenhower just wished it would go away ... If wishing would make it so, it would have. But, ... anyway that, then when Kennedy came along I was sure that, "Wow, the world was really gonna be saved," and then, of course, he pulled the stupid stuff with the Bay of Pigs and then even then, though, he took the gambles of Vietnam. I still can't blame that on Kennedy, totally, because I think he might have ... avoided the further complications that Johnson was just too arrogant and overbearing to [avoid] ... And I met him, too, and that's what convinced me that he was arrogant and overbearing.

KP: Where did you meet him?

AVB: [At the] '64 convention. I was then working for (Phil Levin?), who eventually got me here at Rutgers. He ... Phil was the state Democratic committeeman at that time. Anyway, when Johnson came into the back of the Convention Hall in Atlantic City, he came over and was introduced to the whole table, shake hands, he was, like I said, arrogant and overbearing.

KP: In that brief meeting you ...

AVB: Oh, just the whole style, yeah. Yeah, he was just shaking hands with you and looking around to see whoever the hell else he could. He wasn't, no real good eye contact, or anything else. He was just what I thought about most people from Texas. [laughter] Actually, one other guy that I knew very well was from Texas, I guess before that, I worked with him in Esso. A guy by the name of (Harry Clarke?), who was another big hulking guy, who had been a tackle on the Texas football team, maybe in '48 or '49. He was ... personnel manager up in Esso, and Harry was a great man. Texas isn't all bad. But, anyway, yeah, Johnson, I really, I voted for him just because Goldwater was worse. And then after that it ... was Nixon, or somebody else, and somebody else was always better than Nixon. [laughter] And then Reagan was absolute ... I couldn't, my real problem with Reagan was, I couldn't, Jimmy Carter ... was just so ineffectual, because of the staff he kept. He didn't have anybody on that staff to really do something and really keep control of things, and, of course, when you get a guy, what's his name? Hamilton Jordan, he and Jodie Powell, the two of them made more enemies in Congress and all over the place, instead of in the newspapers, and Jimmy Carter was, personally, one of the easiest guys in the world to get along with. I just met him sort of tangentially, even less, never, I just heard him talking to other people. But, all of his personalities that he delivered on television and radio, I thought was, ... he was a really decent guy. But, Reagan was the absolute disaster, and I just don't, you know, another thing I've done with a lot of my life was act. I was in community theater for twenty years, twenty-five years, and I know what actors are like ... I know I would never vote for an actor to do anything.

KP: How did you get involved in acting? Had you always wanted to act ?

AVB: I never disliked it. I'd done a little bit in grammar school even. I was Santa Claus in a Christmas play. I guess, that was the third grade or fourth grade. I'd done some in high school. I never did any here, just because the only dramatic activities that were available, well, actually, I was in engineering and I really didn't have time and there really wasn't much going on in '41 or '42. [In] '43 I could've gotten back in. By that time my sister was in school, at Douglass, and she did a show there in '40, that was in '44. She did *Our Town*, that was with the Queen's Players, she played the lead. She had acted a lot in high school, too ... Then I didn't do much after that until ... I guess it was mid-'60s, and I was in politics in Somerset County in Greenbrook County. I was on Greenbrook Township committee and the PTA over there wanted to do a fundraising show and they decided to do, *You Can't Take it With You*, which is a lot of fun, and they wanted me to be in that. So, I then did that and then we got, did two or three performances. It was one weekend, Friday and Saturday, I think. Anyway, we did that and ... it got a reasonable review. [laughter] But then, I did another. I know one other thing I did, in between, was when I was in the army down in, at Fort Belvoir, and the city of Alexandria was celebrating their 300th anniversary ... So I, they recruited a bunch of us out of the outfit I was in, which was ... training for teachers in the engineering, engineer school, and, I guess I ... was a messenger. In my part, in the pageant, I was to bring some message to General Washington that some French potentate was looking for him, and, I guess to bring all kinds of goodies and money. I really can't remember the line, it wasn't very significant, but it was done in a cast of thousands in front of an audience of hundreds of thousands. But, there was, the whole thing was put on. It's an empty space now, or it was an empty space then, it's all filled up now. It's right next to the big generating station for Pepco's, it's right along the river there. It's only about a mile, maybe two miles, below National Airport ... down the river. But, the audience was all along that side of Washington Boulevard or was it Mount Vernon Boulevard? I can't remember the name of the street. But it's essentially Route One ... and they were all along there, and all around it. It was a big deal. this was in ... in 1949. Yeah, it was in the fall, ... or September of 1949. So, I was in that show ... But then, I didn't do anything until this thing in Greenbrook, and then after that, ... they did another show ... I guess it was. Then I got involved with the people over at Foothill Playhouse in 1968, this was in Middlesex, and that was, I did a Benard Shaw theme *You Never Can Tell*, that was in 1968, and then, in '69 I did another one I did (?) and in 1970 I did *Gypsy*. In 1970, I did two shows, I can't remember them. And then, I did probably, one or two shows every year after that until mid-80s, and then we had to close up the theater. Because, by that time I was president, but we had to close it up because we couldn't afford to keep it open and pay the taxes. But since then, I've done some shows *Trilogy Rep* in Basking Ridge, and over here in Franklin, *The Villagers*. I was invited to do a thing at Crossroads Theater back, oh, way back, when it opened about fifteen years ago ... Lee Richard called me up, he needed a white judge for ... *No Place to be Somebody*. And I said, "I'd love that part." You really gotta be rotten ... but I couldn't do it. I couldn't give up, at that time I was working, I just couldn't give up the rehearsal time, because they rehearsed in the daytimes.

KP: You would have loved to have done it?

AVB: Oh, yeah. Sure, that would've been great, but there was just no way I could work it in.

RH: How did you find time with your career move?

AVB: Well, no, most of the time, in community theater, rehearsals are scheduled at times when the actors can get there.

RH: Okay.

AVB: "Crossroads" is not community theater, it's professional theater. If you want to do a part you gotta show up when they're rehearsing, ... and they'll rehearse daytimes, anytime ... It's not an easy move for me to make or anybody in my position. If you're a lawyer, you know, professor, you got a lot of ...

KP: Yeah.

AVB: ... Time that you can juggle around. You can make up things by working at night, or on the weekends, things like that. So, okay, if you take off three or four hours a couple times a week, you can always make it up on weekends. But, I can't, I couldn't do that here. [I was] not in that position.

KP: Going back to the war, we have been moving around to these fun topics, but there are one or two questions we did not ask you last time. One was Camp Kilmer, which is very close by, and there are a lot of GIs sort of around. Was there any impact on the community in general or on Rutgers that you observed?

AVB: Sure, on the community. On Rutgers I don't know exactly. It was a place where there was some work maybe for some people. From my standpoint, my major contact was one of the jobs I held the last, my senior year, my roommate and I shared the position of night clerk at the Rutgers House ... Rutgers House was where the Hyatt is now, and it was the second best hotel in town. The best hotel, of course, at the time was the Roger Smith ... Anyhow ... the clientele or the inhabitants of the Rutgers House was essentially a few people who were working in industries around here. [There were] maybe a half a dozen, and then the rest of them were wives or girlfriends of the guys who were stationed at Kilmer, or going through Kilmer on their way to Europe or Pacific ... The night clerk job was, it was fairly simply, you know, we were checking people in or out. There wasn't a lot of flow at the times we went to work. We worked from at about ten o'clock until six in the morning. We alternated, so that one of us was there each night. There was an awful lot of ... activity, in terms of, I guess, drinking mostly was the biggest problem, because these guys and women would get plastered. ... Some of the occasions I remember, kind of specifically, was one night I had to break up a fight between a guy and his wife. He was banging her head against the wall. And, of course, I was no big physical specimen at the time. But, fortunately, there was an MP station across Albany Street, oh, where J&J headquarters is now, right about where Nelson Street crosses ... We used to go out to the front door and yell, either that, or call them up and tell them. Summertime, at night, midnight or two o'clock in the morning it was no problem to hear us, because there wasn't that much traffic, and there was only a freight train going by on the railroad. But, ... there was that kind of thing, and then, of course, ... there was all of the other things associated with the hotel ... You get very involved, if you allow yourself to be, with the affairs of the people going in and out of the hotel,

and there were some people who were regulars, who were there all the time. There was a big guy, a big bruising guy, whose name was Tony something or other. I can't even remember his last name. He was big Hungarian guy and he worked as a (?), in a factory. I don't remember for sure which one, I think it might have been a Mack plant, because Mack had a big ... on Jersey Avenue, had a big transmission manufacturing plant. Anyway, Tony came from Pennsylvania, but he was living in the hotel, and ... working in the plant. But, when we'd get there we'd see him and he'd sit up half the night drinking and shooting the breeze. And there were a few women who were ... well, one was a teacher over in Oaktree school, which was in the middle of all the farms over in what was then called Raritan Township, which, of course, is Edison ... and, of course, the school is still there. It turns out that my current mother-in-law, who is living in our house now, went to the third and fourth grades there, that was in 1910. She's ninety-two years old, going to be ninety-three. Anyway, this teacher, ... I'm trying to remember her name, but I can't now, she ... was, she'd sit around there and talk. She was very nice, very friendly. But, then there was another women who worked in ... oh, where'd she work? At one of the triangle cable. Yeah, the cable company down on, the same area, down on Jersey Avenue, I guess. She worked down there and ... but she was, she was sort of smoking and drinking all the time. She put away a pack of cigarettes in one sitting and I smoked then, but I never smoked like that, anyway, and three or four other people. And then there was ... the cops would regularly come in. (Ralph Petrone?), who was the chief in New Brunswick ten, fifteen years ago, or maybe twenty years ago, yeah, in the seventies ... he used to come up there, when he was on patrol, and they'd go in the back lounge behind the elevators, the lounge in there, which after the war it was opened up into a nightclub. Anyway, he'd park himself in there, and cork off for a couple of hours. We had an agreement with the cops. Another guy, (Marty Bradshaw?), was another cop, who used to have that beat regularly and our agreement with them was that if we heard, at that time if the headquarters had something for these guys, they had an alarm bell. It was like the bell you used to hear in a big department store as the signaling device to lure people ... You hear this bell ring up on George and Albany, and they were supposed to call in. So, anyway, any time we heard that we'd have to go back and wake them up and say, "Hey, you're getting your signal." They'd be going out to the phone on the pole outside, phoning in, to the headquarters, to find out, you know, what was the problem, if any. Anyway, that was the affect of Camp Kilmer, that and ... the guys generally, there wasn't an awful lot of traffic in and out on the Commercial Way. There was a hell a lot of traffic, troop trains, moving out of there and they had more effect on Bayway, when I went up there, because they used to go right through Bayway, right in front, across, of the main gate of the refinery ... There was a line, a track there that connected, it was the old Baltimore and Ohio track that they used to run coal trains from. They originally built it to run coal trains from Roselle Park ... the line of the old Jersey Central, across the railroad bridge, across Arthur Kill, over to Staten Island, where they had the Stapleton Coal Docks, where they loaded the coal into barges, or onto ships, where they were sending them someplace down the coast, or further overseas. Anyway, that was the route of the troop trains to go over to the ... New York POE [Port of Embarkation], over in, by where the bridge is now, and so, that's, we'd see troop trains going through there when I went to work at Bayway. [The] first day I went in there, there was a troop train coming out of Camp Kilmer. The day before I had been, you know, gotten my diploma.

RH: You see the other side of the trains.

AVB: [It] might have been on the other end of the train. But, anyway, occasionally I'd get to talk to some of these guys that were up there, and mostly their concern was how come I'm not in, I wasn't in the army? I told them I don't really want to be in the army, but I wanted to get into the air force ... They wouldn't take me because of my eyes. But boy, they did take me in 1949, put in fifteen years, but that was last week, or the last time we talked.

KP: I guess one last area we did not talk about was NJC and the relationship between the two campuses.

AVB: Oh, it was, I don't know if it was any different now than it was then ... It's pretty much an individual thing, you know, and, of course, the business between women and men has changed in terms of ... In those days, you'd rarely see ... any initiative from over there towards ... making dates, or any kind of significant relationships, with anybody at Rutgers ... I guess we gotta remember [that] we're talking now about a student body of maybe fifteen hundred or two thousand at Douglass, and about the same at Rutgers in terms of numbers, which is, you know, one tenth of what you have now ... I had a couple of dates from Douglass, NJC, but there, after my, I guess, after my freshman year, ... well, my freshman year I was still really bringing high school girlfriends ... one to the military ball was a girl that I really liked in high school and I still like her, you know, that's all it was. She was very pretty, and so it was one of those things where you sort of feel like you're a big shot, because you got the real good-looking doll. That's important when you're seventeen. I think ... my only other one from high school that I brought down, was ... she was in my sister's class in high school and ... I had been ... there was a little more sexual activity, but not a lot ... In those days there wasn't a lot of any kind. [laughter] But, ... that was about it. And as far as Douglass or NJC girls, the first date was a house party at the fraternity house. I needed to get a date, and ... my sister's roommate turned out to be that date and she ... was really nice. I mean, she's still a good-looking woman. I danced with her at a party about a year ago ... Anyway, that was, I went out with her, and then there were several others. This ... was, see after my freshman year ... my sister wasn't there, and then after she was there I made a lot more acquaintances over at NJC. And another thing that happened in my freshman year was my being the escort of my fraternity president's girlfriend at ... for a football game and a house party, because he was wrapped up working on something. Maybe he working, well, he was a cheerleader, so he couldn't be, you know, he had to deal with that at the football game and then at the house party he was off doing something else, and she and I were sitting in the living room talking at the fraternity, in the fraternity house ... I got, I was also the freshman, I was designated to do ... door duty. That was when I met Howard Crosby. I think I, did I tell you guys about that? Howard had just been made Assistant Dean to Metzger in September '41, and this was October '41 ... I was there with this doll, she was a doll, Barbara Murphy, her name was. She was ... after the war she got to be a newscaster on Philadelphia KYW. Yeah, I think that's what it was. You know, television, the very, very first television kind of thing. This was 1948, '49. But, anyway, she was (Ronnie Jarvis'?) girlfriend.

KP: Oh.

AVB: Did Ronnie interview with you?

KP: Yes. I interviewed Ron Jarvis.

AVB: She was his girlfriend. I've only seen him once when he came back for his 50th [reunion]. He was in the Class of '42.

KP: Yes. I went out to interview him in Kansas City.

AVB: Yeah. He owns Kansas City. [He has] got a real estate operation out there, or he did. I suppose he's still, I don't know if he's actively working at it, but as I said, I only saw him once at the 50th reunion. But, anyway, I was her escort and we went to the door to open it up and there's Howard, and she ... was smashed, "Oh, Biggie, come on in!" [laughter] Here I am shaking, because ... here this was the Dean of Students, as far as I was concerned. I told Howard about that and he never admitted that he remembered it. I told him a lot, you know, years later, and he never admitted that he remembered it. I was really embarrassed. [laughter] Another Douglass woman, she was, I think she was the Class of '43. But, anyway, that ... was about the limit of my involvement with NJC. Except again with my sister. My other sister came in there in '45, and left in a blaze of glory in '47 as "Miss Pin-Up of 1947" ... [She] went on to a big show biz career that lasted ten years, and then got married. But, she was, they were both, I mean talk about theater, they were both very active in theater. I said Rosemary, my older sister, she was in *Our Town* with Queens Players, and she also did another Thornton Wilder thing, ... *Skin of My Teeth*, what the hell was the other? She did another show with that gang, I can't remember. Oh, no, that was much later. I can't think, she ... (Mary?), the younger sister did ... oh, it was the two of them, that's right. They did Shakespeare, they did *Taming of the Shrew*. Art Gerold was in that, too. He was a classmate of mine who finally, who hooked himself up with the Class of '47, I think, because he came back after the war and finished. Yeah, but that's about it, all I can remember about NJC.

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

KP: You mentioned earlier that you went to Rutgers basically knowing you wanted to work for Esso-Exxon. Did you expect to spend your career there?

AVB: Oh, sure.

KP: Why did you leave Esso and how did you eventually end up back at Rutgers?

AVB: Relatively easy, why I left Esso, there was no place to go ... I had gotten after fifteen, seventeen years there, I had gotten to the point of running a lube oil blending and packaging plant, which was the biggest one of its kind in the world at the time ... It was an automatic plant where ... you open the right valves and then, so you get supplied to this equipment and punched in a bunch of settings, a bunch of quantities of each product, and ... pushed a button and pump started. Oil started to flow through mixing equipment, and blended a product that was then pumped directly into, either into a packaging operation with ... cans or barrels, or it was pumped directly into a tank truck, or pumped directly to another tank, which was going to be then used basically [as] a storage tank to supply some other use. Anyhow, that was my last operation here,

and I had been doing that for about, after that was seventeen, about nineteen years, and so two years, and I was, you know, I was being paid reasonably well, but ... I hadn't had any significant raise ... I was looking around to see where I would go next and how I could improve it and I looked at several possibilities, and I talked to people in the company, and it turned out that, well, if I really wanted to improve anything, I really should get some overseas experience ... The problem I had with that was, is that my wife at that time had significant mental illness that would really preclude her going overseas, or any place where there wasn't psychiatric help reasonably available on a quick basis ... The other thing was, an alternative to going overseas was go to work in the refineries down in Texas or Louisiana. ... which were much bigger, and where there were a lot more opportunities in other directions and ... I just didn't want to live in Texas or Louisiana. I still don't want to live in Texas or Louisiana. [laughter] So ... aside from the weather, or any of the obvious things, it's the whole atmosphere, political and social. I just, I don't care for it. Anyway, that's why I left Exxon ... I really wasn't sure of what I wanted to do. I thought I'd open up some kind of consulting operation, but that really wasn't too practical, because I needed a steady income, because I was using it up in paying psychiatric bills for my wife and then, I had to have some money saved, because my son was then, you know, entering high school, and ... I was gonna have to have money to get him to college. So, then I ... sort of just fiddled around for about six weeks or two months, and then I went to work for (Phil Levin?) at Allstate Construction Company, (Levin?) Enterprises, which was, you know, a lot of shopping centers. North Brunswick, that one, and Blue Star over on Route 22, Somerset Plaza over on the Somerville Circle, lots of them all around this area, plus all over the country, really ... I worked for him for a while, but then he ... had me, he said, well, one of the ways I could get ahead with him was to get into the real estate business, so I said, "Okay," and he sent me to ... a few of the places where he was planning to look at shopping center development and at that time we were in the middle of the construction of the interstate highway system. So, I went to several places, Rochester was one, Monroe County, New York. [I] did an area study there on the availability of sites and other things and then ... delivered a report, which was received with "thanks" and no other comment ... Then ... he wanted me to go to do something similar in North Carolina, in the area around Hickory ... which is an immense shopping center now.

KP: It was fields then?

AVB: But, then it was nothing but fields ... Well, it was highways, they were doing one of the highways I remember. I think it was Interstate 40, ... going west, eastwest, I can't remember. The one north south highway, it might have been. It wasn't 81, ... I don't think it was, ... but 83 maybe, I don't know, but, anyway, that intersection is four immense shopping centers, one on each corner ... Anyhow, I did a study on that one, and turned in a report. And then he sent me out to Bowling Green, Kentucky, where there was a similar situation, and ... Bowling Green, for me was most famous as the home of Western Kentucky University, which at the time had a pretty good basketball team, and I learned a lot about that and turned in a report. Also, went, that was a lot further along, that was a shopping center that was really under construction and he was trying to ... get people out of the town to ... various merchants around the town to come and ... try and rent space in the center. He had his anchor stores all set up, he took care of that. He and Dave Montgomery, who was his big real estate hand, they dealt with that kind of stuff. Anyhow, I came back after that one, and he said, I said "Fine," and this was, I guess this was in '64, fall of '64, and, at the same time, I was involved in all the political stuff with him, too,

because I was on the township committee in Greenbrook, and ... yeah, probably in Greenbrook, which he didn't try to develop while I was ... there's another story. You don't wanna get involved in that one, it'll take too long ... Anyhow, ... then, I guess it was in December he said, ... "I don't think you're ever gonna make it as a real estate guy. You're just like your old man, you're too damn honest," and he knew my father, because he had built a shopping center in Bayonne when my father was mayor ... He knew what he was. He knew what he was dealing with at least from my father's standpoint, and he says, "You're just exactly like him. You're too much like a professor, you're too damn honest." So, anyway, we ... he said, "How would you like to go to Rutgers?" and I said, "Well, I went to Rutgers," and he said, "No. I mean to go to work." He was the chairman of the Building and Grounds committee over here at the board. ... Well, they're looking for another engineer at the physical plant department and I said, "Well, that's fine. How many do they have now?" He says, "I don't know." It turns out there were none, but ... you know, I came over and interviewed with Elwood Clarke and John Swinker and then they ... offered me the job over here. So, that's how I came to work at Rutgers and it turned out that I was working for (Harry Besley?), who, coincidentally, was my, had been my commanding general in the reserves ... and I knew him from that in 1954 when ... the reserve unit I was in, which was at Bayway refinery, was absorbed into the 419th Engineer Brigade, which (Besley?) was the commander of, so, that's when I met [him]. So, ... I really knew Harry very well. Working for him was a breeze. We really got along.

KP: What was it like to be back at Rutgers? It sounds like you enjoyed it a great deal.

AVB: Oh, yeah. You mean my work here?

KP: Yes.

AVB: Oh, sure. ... It, ... you know, it's ... the unique kind of situation is that you don't usually come back in, after twenty years, to the college where you were an undergraduate and do work, especially at a rather significant time like the '60s were, when in addition to what was going on in the rest of the world, we had an immense building program.

KP: Yes, and most of what we have today was built in that time you were here.

AVB: Yeah. That's right and especially across the river, and across town. Down here, yeah, across the way here, you know, your whole Voorhees Library was buried in the Art Museum, in the Art Library, and everything else, and the ... Scott Hall. Scott Hall was built before that, but there isn't an awful lot additional down here, from Seminary Place on down, it's still pretty much the same, but up on the other side, you got the, all of the reconstruction around. Let's see, the Commons was built in '61, which was before, was there before I came here. Then we added the library addition, ... the library school was built, well it's SCILS now ... What did we build? ... I guess, the changes in the Commons area are all, was just changes inside the buildings. We didn't change the outside at all. Well, Clothier was just being finished when I came and Demarest and the Quads were there. The Quads were there when I was in school, and Demarest was built right after, around 1950, I think. But then, ... Clothier was built where my old fraternity house was. The Raritan Club House and Fiji was right ... next to it, on the corner, and both of them were wiped out by Clothier. But then, everything across the river, because when ...

I left here there was nothing except the stadium and then you got the shacks over there in 1945, the surplus property ...

KP: They are still there.

AVB: And they're still there. Well, half of them, a third of them are still there. I remember that, when it was first done, because my old roommate went to work ... with ... civil engineering prop (Bernhart?), his name was, working on ... road construction, material research, that sort of thing. ... Joe, since then, he left that operation, and worked up at Stevens Institute of Technology, in their soils and construction materials research, and then went with General Motors Delco research and became one of the significant members of the team that developed the vehicle to travel on the moon. I don't remember what they called it now, anyway, back when they went up and moved around. This vehicle they could ... travel on any kind of terrain. He did a lot of the work on that. He retired from Delco, he's still out in Santa Barbara. But, ... anyway, ... that stuff up at the Heights, there's a lot, fairly crazy stuff was started then, that turned out to be not so crazy twenty years later, and then, ... all of the new construction, everything else, you know. Wright Lab was started in 1946, and I remember seeing it go up, and then, (?) was the next one, that was '52, and then, ... Engineering was 1960, '3, or '4. Physics was ... about the same time, a little earlier than that, and then ... Nelson Biology, first piece of that was in '58, '59. They were there when I got there, and, when I came to work, engineering was just being opened up. Alcohol studies, I think, that was built in, again '63 or '4. [The] Library [of] Science and Medicine, Psychology, Pharmacy, and the Medical School were all built between '67 and '73. All of Livingston College was built in the late '60s, ... Beck Hall, and then after that, Kilmer, the Business School, and the Athletic Center. The Athletic Center was '79, '78 or '79 ... I don't remember the next sequence over at Busch, oh SERC maybe, you know, Science and Engineering, that was '83 or '4, you know, and you had all the apartments, dorms and apartments were built around the same time.

KP: You mentioned that the labor changed. You even mentioned buildings changed, that it became much more complicated to run a physical plant than simply shovel coal.

AVB: Yeah.

KP: What other changes, in terms of managing, building, and maintaining a physical plant changed in your era?

AVB: Well, actually, that's ... not really true. It was that way in '65, the University, yeah, the University had not really addressed it.

KP: It had already changed.

AVB: And, unfortunately, we're still about that far behind now. ... Because the physical plant organization doesn't have a, doesn't really have a structure, or doesn't have a staff to deal with the level of sophistication of the technological parts of the physical plant ... There are ... a few engineers, but they're not ... really involved, in any systematic way, in providing for the maintenance and operation of this stuff ... Way too much reliance is placed on contractors who

don't have an interest in anything other than making money. They don't have, you got to have part of your, or at least a small part, or a significant part of your force that's dealing with running this very sophisticated stuff and I say very sophisticated, because that is the development that has happened, that's different, from pre-'65. The ... development of automated controls for building environment and all kinds of facilities ... that's gotten a lot more sophisticated, along with the whole computer industry and the electronic industry ... You really don't have ... a good way to deal with that ... I've yelled at a few people. I don't know whatelse I can do about that.

KP: In other words, this plant has been built, but there has been a real problem in maintaining it.

AVB: Yeah. We struggled along for twenty years, keeping it from collapsing, and that's really what happens. You gotta remember that you're very dependent on a few insignificant pieces of equipment. You got an electrical supply coming from Public Service. We're now beginning to generate some of our own electricity over at Busch, but we really ... you know, from a practical standpoint, if we didn't have that, if that went out of the picture, we could still depend on public Service for a while, and the main reason we put that system in, was to make some money. I mean, to save some money, because ... by using the co-generation plant, you take a bigger hunk of energy and use it, rather than throwing it out of the stack, which is what public service does in the oil plant. They make electricity, but they throw sixty percent of the energy and the fuel out. We throw thirty percent of the energy and the fuel out in co-generation and the rest of it is either made into electricity or used as heat and now, that ... The co-generation plant aside, if one of the sub-station fails, there's a whole bunch of things that need to be done on the campus to protect what needs protection, because the electrical systems are gonna be, if they go out, refrigeration equipment won't run and other things won't happen, and you got, we have alternatives to all that, but somebody's gotta deal with it ... In a lot of cases we know about that, but in a lot of others we don't, and we don't have a big staff of people to know about it and as the place gets bigger that shortage, or dirth of knowledgeable people starts to become more and more significant. Up 'til now, we've had guys lose as much as ten years worth of work ... by, not over here, it's over on the other side of the river, because of animal facilities that got knocked out. Now it's been on a very small scale, but it could get to be on a major scale if we have a big shut down, or if we have one of our small failures that you have all the time that isn't getting addressed, because nobody's available who knows what button to push to address it. And by pushing a button, I mean maybe doing some other kind of work, which has the equivalent of pushing a button. If you had the machine that would do the work, but, the thing is, that kind of thing, it's twenty-five years later, and we still, it's thirty years later, 1965, and we have a reasonably sophisticated system over at Busch and Kilmer, to control and operate that whole energy system, water supply, the heat, the cooling, ... the electrical supply. They're all under some automated control that will keep 'em running as long as Public Service can feed us gas and electric, or if we can't get gas from them, we have oil to burn ... And we have, we're getting to that state over here but ... we're waiting on commercial people to do the rest of the work over there. [The] stuff over at Busch and Kilmer we developed ourselves with RCA during the '70s, and that works pretty well, but it's all, you know, sort of hangin' on a thread. And the guy that ... right now can handle almost all of it, is retiring next week, or in the middle, I think, in the end of April, I guess he's leaving. He's actually retiring July 1st, but he's got two months worth of vacation backed up.

RH: He might as well use it up.

AVB: You gotta use it up.

KP: It sounds like, in a sense, you enjoyed building a new campus.

AVB: Yeah. Busch and Kilmer, almost all of Kilmer ... or Livingston, if you want to call it the current name. It will change again probably, [when] Livingston goes out of style, or somebody with a different name puts up enough money to do something else. The same thing happened at Busch. It used to be University Heights. But, anyway, yeah, I think those things were, they were all my responsibility. It probably would have been done if I wasn't here, but I think they would've been done different, and not necessarily better.

KP: I can never resist asking someone who has been here for a while and came back to work at the University, or has been a professor, but what was your observation of the different presidential styles?

AVB: Oh, well, ... Mason was ... Mason Gross was the guy who attracted me back here more than anything else. When (Levin?) said about, talked about coming over here, I told him, I'd work for Mason Gross any place, and I still feel that way. I liked Ed Bloustein and I got along with him ... but ... Ed really was ... a different kind of guy ... comparing, after you're used to Gross, and I worked for him for six years, or so, that he was, six or seven years, and ... I [had] gotten very used to him. [I] never saw any reason to change my opinion of him.

KP: So, you felt as strongly about how great Mason Gross was in '71 as you did in '65?

AVB: Yeah. The only thing that happened between those years that made me wonder about it at all was his attitude towards some of the guys, some of the people at Newark, who had gotten to be pretty ridiculous in their demands about things that really weren't that practical to do, and which he avoided doing, because he was afraid that if he didn't do it, they'd burn the campus down ... I'm not sure that they would have, but they might have, because they did burn half of the city down. But ... that's a choice you make and I really respect his ability to see it that way and make the choice in the way that he thought he had (?). I think I would have held out more, a little longer, but that really was, that was the only thing that I ever doubted him about. ... The way he dealt with everything here in New Brunswick, I thought was fine. Especially the Genovese guy, I was really very proud of him, that he supported, refused to say anything. I was listening to all kinds of nuts. Vince Kramer, I don't know if you, did you know Vince?

KP: I have interviewed Vince Kramer.

AVB: Vince and I, we had big arguments up at the club about that ... I ... thought [that] Genovese was saying something that I didn't particularly believe, but that I thought that he had a right to say [it], and it was one of those things that I thought we were ridiculous going into Vietnam at all. And as a matter-of-fact, that's why I quit the army. I told you that. I think I mentioned before that I dumped fifteen good years towards the pension, because I thought, and that happened before I came here. That was in '60, well, it was about the same time. It was

about '64 or '65 that all happened at that period. I didn't care who won the war in Vietnam. I just didn't think the United States should be involved.

KP: Could you elaborate on the differences between Bloustein and Mason Gross? I have been struck by how many people admired Mason Gross in various ways.

AVB: Well ..., Mason could snow you, and you'd never know it. Bloustein couldn't do that. In addition, you not knowing Mason snowed you, you liked it and ... that's a matter of style, and he had that style. He also, I think, though had convictions about a lot of things that I agreed with and I think that's why, and Ed also had convictions, and I agreed with most of his, too. I really didn't have a big problem with it. I guess, the thing that bothered me most about ... Ed was his, he gave me the impression that even after being here ten years that he was surprised by some of things that turned out, as though they were just ... had happened, and, of course, they had been here all along and he knew it. I know he knew it, because I told him.

KP: What would Bloustein be surprised at?

AVB: Well, act like, "No, I didn't know that," and, "Of course, you knew it, you dumb son of a bitch. You weren't listening when I told you." ... It, well, you know, you can't say that to him, you have to keep your job, but essentially, all it meant was, he wasn't really paying any attention. That really always sort of bothered me. If you're gonna, when you're running an operation like this and you got people, and when the chief physical facilities manager you got tells you something, you oughta be at least paying enough attention so that you remember it ... And that didn't happen. Those are the sort of things that just, that's one of the things that just bothered me. I never had occasion to have that happen with Mason, but that, maybe it would have been the same way him, if the occasion had arisen, but it just never did.

KP: Although your job did not directly deal with students, you were still on campus at a very tumultuous time, in terms of students.

AVB: Oh, yeah. I was on the campus all of the time.

KP: What was your sense of students, particularly during the '60s and '70s?

AVB: Well, they were, again, it's the time. The students now come here are exactly the same. The students now aren't any, don't seem to be a lot different than what I think we were like, when I was in school, in terms of their own personalities, and their, you know, their maybe physical differences. I think all kids now are bigger than we were, because in the last fifty years people have gotten bigger. We fed ourselves better ... But, in terms of their approach to things and their personalities ... the contacts that I've had, have all led me to believe that there really isn't much difference, and, of course, when you look at the population in general, there's nothing to indicate that we've, that there's any significant change in the last fifty years. We have essentially the same proportion of the attitudes expressed by polls and that sort of thing. They were essentially what they were in the 1940s ... and I, well, I don't really have any feeling that kids now-a-days are different than they were when I was here and ... people in general aren't different.

KP: Do you think you would have those views if you had not worked on campus? A lot of your classmates I have interviewed from the '40s and '50s they see ...

AVB: They think there's a difference.

KP: Yes. They see a really sharp difference. I was struck that you really think students might dress a little differently, but that basically they are the same.

AVB: Yeah, but that's an externality that doesn't mean any[thing]. I mean, I got a very "in" shirt on, so that's what my son and daughter-in-law bought me. Although, they did warn me they were going to get one, and I said, "Fine. If I like it, I'll wear it. If I don't, it will become a rag and a paint shirt."

RH: Back hanger of the closet.

KP: Are you glad your son went to Rutgers?

AVB: Yeah. I offered him the opportunity to go other places, even though at the time, it would've been real difficult, because that was when my first wife was really spending, well, costing me a lot of money, but ... and I would have had to pay tuition. But ... I'd have done it. I would have found some way to handle it. But ... because he had ... an opportunity, he could have gone to Dartmouth, and ... could have gone to, where the hell else? Oh, I think it was BU, yeah. His cousins had gone to both schools and ... so he applied. I suggested that he apply to Dartmouth, because they had the kind of program that he wanted to take, but ... then he sat down, we sat down and talked about it one night and ... he said, "no", he said he's just as happy going to Rutgers. He said, "I just as soon not tie up as much of the money that's available to the family, and there's no reason." And, of course, I always told him that I didn't think there was a lot of difference in the education you'd get at any school, because most of the education that you get is what you get yourself. All the schools do is expose you to it ... You know, that's so it didn't, unless the school was a real mess, that ... whatever your application is going to be, that's what you're going to get. You're gonna learn ... So, anyway, he was, I was happy that he went here ... I was a little bit concerned about his pledging a fraternity as early as he did, not that I had any big problems with the fraternity as such, but ... I, my own feeling was, that unless you were in a situation like I was, where you had no place else to go, I mean, he had a dorm room, he was ... but, anyway, ... he had a room. He was all set and even if he had to commute, we only lived two minutes away. But ... I guess, it was Vince Kramer that talked him into it. Vince was a big Fiji pledge push guy. Vince was ... on the alumni board for Fiji and it turned out, it worked out very well. He got a lot of good buddies.

RH: So, your son pledged Fiji?

AVB: ... Yeah. He stayed with it, stayed active. [He] went out to their, one of their conventions. I guess, it was in San Francisco ... and has, and still, very good buddies with guys that were in his fraternity. His best friends are guys from the fraternity. So, it has, it certainly didn't hurt him. What I was concerned about that ... he'd get wrapped up in too much of that

fraternity activity and not get the schoolwork done. He learned better than I thought in high school. I'm really surprised, he really surprised me, because I told him a lot of these things when he was going to high school and grammar school and I just never got the feeling that he ...

KP: ... Was listening.

AVB: That he picked it up. Yeah, that's right. [laughter] I better call my mother-in-law and tell her I'm not going to get there to eat.

KP: Oh, no. We do not want to hold you if ...

AVB: Well, yeah ... I've gotta ...you know, it's just that she probably is hold ...

KP: Any final questions?

RH: Not that I can think of. I mean we pretty much covered it.

KP: Is there anything that we did not ask you about that you would like to talk about?

AVB: No ... I did that last night. I thought about, "What did I not tell him that I want to and what did I tell him that I shouldn't have?"

KP: You will have a chance to edit.

RH: Yes. They will have the transcripts done.

AVB: Well, whatever. Well, I'm ... glad I had the chance to talk about it.

KP: No, you have a sort of professor's detachment about a lot of the era you talk about. It is really very interesting and helpful.

AVB: Yeah. I try to ... do that. I'm a great believer in the scientific method, [laughter] and all of the other jargon that we use to describe how we arrive at the conclusions that we arrive at ... It's ... I don't know if it's good, bad, or indifferent, and it's too late now to worry about it, in my case anyway.

KP: Well, thanks again. Thank you very much, we really appreciate it, your first interview and your coming back.

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Reviewed by Bojan Stefanovic 11/25/01

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 1/16/02

Reviewed by Alfred Brady 8/02