RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH MORTON DEITZ, ESQ.

RUTGERS SCHOOL OF LAW-NEWARK CLASS OF 1955

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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BOYNTON BEACH, FLORIDA
JUNE 12, 2009

TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Morton Deitz on June 12, 2009, in Boynton Beach, Florida, with Shaun Illingworth. The travel portion of this interview was made possible in part by a travel grant from the Classes of 1942 and 1949. Mr. Deitz, thank you very much for having me here.

Morton Deitz: Thank you for coming.

SI: I appreciate it.

MD: It's very significant, Shaun, excuse me for interrupting, that this is partly supported by Class of '42; I assume that's '42 Rutgers.

SI: Rutgers College.

MD: I was '42 Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. So, it's very interesting. [laughter]

SI: Yes, your generation of college students graduated right into the teeth of World War II, as we say, and did a lot of the fighting. To begin, could you tell me where and when you were born?

MD: Trenton, New Jersey, March 15, 1921.

SI: What were your parents' names?

MD: My Father was Morris M. Deitz, M-O-R-R-I-S. My Mother was Rachel, middle name Celia, C-E-L-I-A, maiden name Bulitsky. If I may, let me amplify somewhat on the middle initial of Dad's name. Until he married (on January 4, 1914, according to *The Trenton Times*) and settled in Trenton, and for several years after he opened his store--first, at 697 South Broad Street, and some years later, moved to 691 South Broad--Dad's name was without any middle initial since he had no middle name. The store was identified as "M. Deitz." While young, I learned from Dad that from the time that he opened for business, his banking relationship was with the then extant The Colonial Trust Company, located at the south end of the block, at the corner of Hudson Street. His account at the bank, all the documents and records of which were (as typical in that era) manually kept, was identified as that of "Morris Deitz." I'm not sure, but I believe that Dad's checks were imprinted "Morris Deitz." In or about 1925, The Colonial Trust Company (of which Dad had been a very small shareholder) and The Mercer Trust Company, which was located several miles to the north at the corner of South Broad and Market Streets, were acquired by and merged into The Trenton Trust Company (which I have been told was founded and controlled by the Roebling Family, of the wire cable bridge-building company). Colonial Trust thus became the Colonial branch of Trenton Trust, and similarly Mercer Trust became the Mercer branch. Unbeknownst to Dad, an unrelated, much older acquaintance of Dad's with the same surname, with identical spelling, banked with Mercer Trust. That man's given name also began with the letter "M"--for courtesy's sake, let's call him "Manny." Manny operated a neighborhood furniture store on North Clinton Avenue, in North Trenton, and maintained his banking relationship in the name of "M. Deitz" at Mercer Trust--becoming Mercer branch. Dad began to notice that on his monthly bank statements (prepared by that

which was then called a "bookkeeping machine") were debits for checks not written by Dad, and the related cancelled checks were imprinted "M. Deitz" and written by Manny. The bank corrected the errors, but Dad was egregiously frustrated by the frequent and ongoing occurrences. Dad exercised fanatical care never to allow his bank balance to get low, and these "errors" gave Dad much pain at the end of each month. The bank continuously apologized, explaining the occurrences on human errors caused by the confusing similarity of names. (Dad in later years told me that he thought that more than likely, the errors were not in fact errors, but deliberately charged to Dad's account when Manny's had insufficient funds to cover--but Dad had only strong suspicion.) Dad several times spoke to Manny about the matter, initially suggesting, then requesting, and finally by attorney's letter, demanding that Manny change the name on his bank account from "M. Deitz" to include his full given name, all to no avail. The bank said that it was powerless to compel its customer to utilize a particular form of name on the account. Although Dad threatened to take the matter to court, to force Manny to use his full name, the bank persuaded Dad instead to change the name on Dad's account to "Morris M. Deitz" by the adoption of the middle initial. The relationship between Dad and Manny had become extremely frosty by that time, and thereafter they hardly recognized or spoke to one another. That's how Dad became to call himself and be known as Morris M. Deitz.

Interestingly, in much later years, my Mother, and even much later, my wife, Phyllis, and I became patients of one of Manny's children, a physician, and became warm acquaintances with another child, both children being much older than Phyllis and I were.

SI: Both of your parents were originally born in what is now Lithuania.

MD: That is correct.

SI: Did they ever tell you any stories about what their lives were like before they came to the United States?

MD: My Mother could not, because she came as an infant in arms, in or about 18--, I would guess 1881. Mother's parents emigrated to Trenton with Mother, her older sister Fanny and three yet older half-sisters, Rose, Rayzel, and Blanche. My maternal Grandfather, Rabbi Israel David Bulitsky, was, I believe, the first Orthodox rabbi to settle in Trenton. There had been, I was told, others before him to minister to the traditionally Orthodox Jewish population, but those were transient rabbis; Grandfather (whom I never knew--he died in or about June of 1921, three months after I was born) had been engaged by a group of observant, Orthodox Jews to come to Trenton to serve on a permanent basis. About thirty years prior to Grandfather's arrival, there had been organized in Trenton, principally by Jews who had emigrated from Germanic countries, a Reform Jewish congregation which also had been served by itinerant rabbis. While growing up, from that which I heard, I concluded that there were little common grounds of agreement between the Reform and the Orthodox congregations with regard to ritual or tradition, and the two hardly deigned to recognize the existence of the other. In any event, I was told that my Grandfather had in some manner been recruited to come to settle in Trenton. Upon arrival, he became a principal motivator involved in the formal organization of Congregation Brothers of Israel, which soon thereafter was appropriately incorporated as a nonprofit religious corporation of New Jersey. Grandfather's first wife, the Mother of my Mother's older half-sisters, had died in

childbirth of Mother's youngest half-sister, Blanche (with whom she was much attached) and Grandfather promptly remarried (as Orthodox custom required him to do). His new (second) wife, Pesha, gave birth to two daughters, Fanny and then my Mother. Two or three months thereafter, the family, including Mother, left Lithuania for the United States, ultimate goal, Trenton. After settling in Trenton, maternal Grandmother gave birth to Mother's younger brothers, Joseph and Isaac "Ike," both of whom piously followed the observance traditions of their Father. It was only many years later that I learned from a family acquaintance, who also came from Lithuania, that Mother's family had emigrated from a small Lithuanian town. The Yiddish term for a predominantly Jewish village or small town of Eastern Europe is *shtetl*, S-T-E-T-L, plural *shtetlach*, in Yiddish, and in English, *shtetls*. My acquaintance told me that the name of Mother's *shtetl* was--I'll spell it phonetically as best I can--"Ayscheschuck," in which reportedly were located several *yeshivot*--the term in Hebrew for Orthodox Jewish schools for religious (and secular) education, both elementary and of higher learning. Despite concerted effort, and perturbingly, until quite recently I hadn't been able to determine the town's Lithuanian name or locate it on a map. By dint of fortuity and a little ingenuity, I found a consular official at the Embassy of Lithuania who immediately recognized the name "Ayscheschuck," as I pronounced it to him by phone, as being "Eishyshok" (in Polish and Yiddish), the town known in Lithuanian as Eisiskes. He identified the town as being located about forty kilometers south-southwest of Vilnius (referred to in Yiddish and Russian as "Vilna" and in Polish as "Wilno"), the capital of Lithuania. Vilnius was also the county seat of Vilnius County, and frequently referred to as the Jerusalem of the North, by reason of its renown as a center of Judaism, Jewish culture and Judaic studies. From information later sent to me by the attaché, obtained from Wikipedia (free encyclopedia), I learned that Eisiskes is a small town, now a population of about 3,800, part of Vilnius County. It is situated on a small group of hills at the border with Belarus, a former Soviet Socialist Republic, and about twenty kilometers north-northwest of the city of Lida, Belarus. Eisiskes/Eishyshok was apparently of significant interest and importance to warrant the writing by Yaffa Eliach of *There Once Was A World: A 900-Year Chronicle of the Shtetl of Eishyshok* (Back Bay Books (1999) ISBN 978-0316232395). At the time that Mother left Eishyshok, the population was about seventy-five percent Jewish. On September 25 and 26, 1941, a Nazi troop unit entered the town. From the tragically very few Jews that miraculously managed to hide and escape, and so survive to relate that which transpired, it was learned and widely publicized a few years later that the entirety of the Eishyshok Jews, about 3,500, had been slaughtered. It was in no way dissimilar from that which occurred to almost every Jewish community in Lithuania. The full reports ultimately made, following the Russian liberation of Lithuania from Nazi control, disclosed the disturbing facts that in many of the *shtetls* of Lithuania, the brutal massacres were carried out in large measure by local Lithuanians, with the complicity or urging from the Nazi stormtroopers. Those Lithuanians who had been involved were mostly the former neighbors and "friends" of the Jews, who had lived side-by-side from the eleventh and twelfth century.

My Dad did not tell me anything at all about his years before reaching the USA. What I did learn from him was received sporadically, piecemeal, and casually imparted, more likely to be given *extempore* as part of an unrelated matter. For example, Dad never spoke about Lithuania, most likely because he left at an early age. This despite my almost daily custom, followed upon returning from school at day's end, of sitting next to him while he was at work at his watchmaker's bench. With perpetual amazement, I watched him perform his miracles of watch

repair. I sat on the radiator cover adjacent to the right hand end of his bench (this was especially enjoyable on coming home in very cold weather, and the heat was on). We had very enjoyable and, to me, instructive conversations, mostly, I think, about me and my schoolwork, about which he was devoutly demanding, or about my older brother, Jonas. Regrettably, I recall none of those wonderful conversations with any specificity. It wasn't until I was in college, as I remember, that I found out where in Lithuania Dad had been born. We were attending a funeral of some relative, with internment at a cemetery in Long Island, New York. Located above the entrance gate to the area of cemetery in which the burial was to take place was an inscription, "Anixter Society." When I sometime later asked Dad about that inscription, he told me that it was the name of a group of people all of whom had come from the same Lithuanian area named "Anixt" or "Aniksht." Upon delving, many years later in my life, I determined that "Anixt" is the Yiddish name given to the city, of some prominence, called "Anyksciai" in the Lithuanian language, "Onikszty" in Polish. Anyksciai, now popular as a ski resort, has a population today of about 12,000. It's located in the northeastern part of Lithuania, about a hundred miles north of the capital of Vilnius, and twenty miles west of the principal city Utena. Prior to the advent of World War I, Anyksciai was part of the Russian Empire. Its Jewish population in the late nineteenth century, when my forebears departed, was about three thousand, approximately seventy percent of the total populace. Archeological findings indicate that people had been living in the vicinity of Anyksciai from the latter part of the Neolithic Age and as well as in the Bronze Age. In the fourteen century, the Grand Duke of Lithuania had invited Jewish people to settle there, and over ensuing centuries Lithuania became a particularly important and prominent center of Jewish learning and culture, Anyksciai being a significant part. During those centuries, Vilnius--Vilna--was cherished by the Jews of Lithuania and throughout the world as one of the world's greatest centers of Jewish learning and culture. As was the case with *shtetls* throughout Lithuania, Jewish communal life in Anyksciai was very vibrant. Most of the Jews were ardent Zionists. There were numerous *yeshivas* in which the languages of instruction were Yiddish and Hebrew, and several synagogues, some of which included *Beth Midrashim*, *Torah* study centers. Upon the commencement in 1941 of the German invasion of Lithuania, local militias began rampaging, and the Jews of Anyksciai suffered the identical annihilative fate of their counterparts throughout the country. German records recently made available disclosed that the Nazis overran Anyksciai in just a few days into the invasion, but did not remain. They gave control to local Lithuanians partisans. The deaths by slaughter of all but a tiny handful of the Jews of Anyksciai followed a relatively brief period of horrific and savage torture, atrocities and abuse. All of their property and belongings, even their clothing they were wearing, was confiscated. One could readily conclude that the most shocking part of the matter of Jewish belongings is that none of the belongings was ever taken away--to Germany, to Russia, to America, or elsewhere--the belongings were just distributed among or sold to the locals.

So Dad in fact had very little to tell me about that early part of his life because, when quite young--I never did learn at what age--Dad's parents, with Dad and two (or three, I'm not certain which) younger sisters (Ida, Anne, and, perhaps, Lena) in tow, left Lithuania to emigrate to South Africa, where he and his family settled in Pretoria, the capital city. They chose South Africa because my paternal Grandmother had family already in South Africa, so that they were able to gain admission from Lithuania to South Africa. Dad had some schooling before departing Anixt, probably at one of the nearby *yeshivot*, and continued his schooling in Pretoria. Ultimately, I don't know where or how, he completed his education at a *yeshivah*, and obtained

certification to become a rabbi. He was, as far as I know, never ordained--certainly never had a pulpit--but was widely deemed an observant and a learned Jew.

… Dad, at age fifteen or sixteen, was impressed into the Boer Army, which was the Dutch, native, white population of South Africa at the time, and his being drafted was necessitated by the outbreak of that which I learned was called the Boer War, B-O-E-R War. Who was fighting whom, I'm not at all sure. The material that I had relating to the (move?) to South Africa and to the Boer War and Dad's Army service is long since gone, but, at age fifteen, Dad was drafted, impressed, forced, into the Boer Army and took a bullet in his leg, at age fifteen or sixteen. At that time, 1899, I guess, the bullet was unable to be removed. He carried that bullet for the rest of his life. [Editor's Note: Mr. Deitz's father served in the Second Boer War, which lasted from October 1899 to May 1902 and was fought between the British Empire and two independent Boer republics, the South African (or Transvaal) Republic and the Orange Free State.] Dad and his family came to the United States in or about 1900 and settled in Brooklyn. Dad's Father was named Kalman. I called him Zaydeh, the traditionally common Yiddish term for grandfather. A first cousin, another of Kalman's grandchildren, a few years younger than I, was named Jerome Teamkin. He is now deceased. He was a son of Dad's sister Dora, and was a favored grandson of Kalman. The family recognized that love and admiration as being reciprocal. I believe that of all of Dad's nephews (and nieces), Jerry was closest to Kalman, probably because Jerry and his family lived not too far away from our Grandparents. As a result, Jerry spent a great deal of time with our Grandfather. I believe, but I am not sure, that Grandfather Kalman tutored Jerry in preparation for Jerry's bar mitzvah--that's the Hebrew religious ritual which accepts a Jewish male of age thirteen as an adult member of the Jewish community. Jerry and I were very friendly, especially as we got older. He had told me years ago that Kalman, when named in the traditional religious ceremony following his birth, had been given the Hebrew name Kalman Kalomovich, named after his Father, also Kalman. Orthodox Eastern and Central European Jews (generally referred to as *Aschkenazzim*, as contradistinguished from customs of the *Sephardim*, Jews of Hispanic or Portuguese origin), superstitiously believed it volatile to name someone after another while that other person was alive. In Grandfather Kalman's case, according to Jerry, at the time at which Kalman's Mother was about to give birth to him, Kalman's Father (also Kalman), had become terminally ill, and was about to die. When Grandfather Kalman was born, his Mother decided to name him in honor of and, prospectively, in memory of her husband, the son's Father. A problem existed because of the ban against identical naming after one still living. She was determined and gave the new baby boy the name Kalman Kalmanovich. That presumably was sufficiently different from Kalman to satisfy the local religious authoritarians in Anixt at the time, probably 1860. However, I never knew of Grandfather using that middle name (or middle initial) in any nonreligious circumstances. In business matters, he was Kalman Deitz; I have vague recall of seeing one of his bank account checks imprinted with his name that way.

Dad's Mother was Pearl (more generally referred to--but as far as I know, never addressed directly, other than by Kalman--as Perel Gittell, her Yiddish/Hebrew name). She was my Bawbeh, the commonly used Yiddish term for grandmother, and that was what we grandchildren called her.

My Grandparents had two additional children who, perhaps as Aunt Lena may also have been, were born, in the United States: my Aunt Dora, and my Uncle Teddy, Dad's youngest siblings.

The only home of my paternal Grandparents of which I was ever aware was a two (or perhaps three) story buff colored brick front row house at 604 Linwood Street, Brooklyn, New York (sometimes, according to my recollection, referred to--perhaps erroneously--as East New York). That home was located, as I recall, at or near the end of the elevated train line that served that area. I think that the station stop was named "New Lots Avenue." I have some few but very fond memories of visits to their home. Please bear in mind that I was born and raised in Trenton, New Jersey. Travel time to reach 604 Linwood Street, Brooklyn, involved going (either by walking or by car, depending on the family circumstances at the time) from our home in Chambersburg to the Pennsylvania Railroad station at South Clinton Avenue, Trenton, perhaps upwards of two miles away--a ten or fifteen-minute drive, and probably thirty minutes walking. The train ride, Trenton to New York, took about an hour or hour and twenty minutes, depending on whether the train was an express, stopping only at Princeton Junction, New Brunswick, and Newark; or was a local, which perforce made many more frequent stops. Upon arrival at Penn Station in Manhattan, we traveled by subway to the end of that line, and then boarded the elevated train, the "el," which took us to New Lots. The total travel time from South Broad Street, Chambersburg, to Linwood Street, Brooklyn, was upwards of four hours. During my childhood years, about once a month, generally on a Sunday, Dad traveled to New York City for business--buying merchandise, or searching for a difficult-to-find part needed for a watch he was repairing and which part he was unable to make on his own--and always making time for a visit with his parents. I and Mother and my brother Jonas, because of the lengthy travel time as well as the costs involved, saw my paternal Grandparents very infrequently, generally at some happy occasion, or at a mournful gathering. Accordingly, my recollection of visits to Linwood Street is scant; those, which I do retain, however, are warm and fond. One such memory is very vivid, most probably because I have related the occurrence innumerable times. In or about 1929--I was eight-and-a-half years old at that time, and I guess it was just prior to the October 1929 huge crash of the stock market, else we would have been financially strapped and unable to make the trip--Mother and Dad with me in tow together with my brother Jonas, six years older than I--visited my Grandparents in Brooklyn, apparently arriving just after they had finished their lunch. I greeted and, as was expected of me, hugged and kissed each of Bawbeh and Zaydeh. Previously I had been cautioned that Zaydeh, although he spoke English--with a slight but noticeable British accent acquired in South Africa--very much preferred to converse in Yiddish with his grandchildren. I presume that it was his way of educating his descendants in the Yiddish language as well as his desire to preserve its ongoing usage. Although English was spoken in our home, Yiddish being used by my parents only when they wanted Jonas and me not to know what they were discussing, I had acquired some understanding of Yiddish and, to a lesser extent, a limited ability to speak it. With the prior warning regarding Zaydeh's preference for Yiddish with which to converse with his grandchildren, I had come to visit with some advance preparation. After the hugs and kisses were completed, and I was standing in the kitchen with Zaydeh, I said to him, in Yiddish, "How are you today, Zaydeh?" His eyes twinkled immediately with pleasure at my addressing him in Yiddish. His facial expression, however, was apparently one of great seriousness. He responded in Yiddish, saying, "Well, my dear grandson, I'll tell you in this way. When a man arises in the morning and looks at himself in the mirror and fully recognizes the person he sees standing there, he is going to have a fully great day." That philosophy, imparted to me over almost eighty years ago, remains strongly in my memory, and, with difficulty at times, part of my perception of life.

The other warm recall is not at all a recollection of the event itself. About forty years ago, while rummaging through old photographs, I found a photo--three-by-five, black and white, of course--of my Dad sitting on a wooden bench outside the entrance stoop at the Linwood Street home of his parents, with a young boy of about three years of age sitting on his lap. Over the years, there being no information written on the back of the photo, Jonas and I had debated the identity of the lad sitting on Dad's lap, Jonas insisting that the photo was of him. On the other hand, I am incontrovertibly certain that it is I, because my Dad in that photo appears to be the age that I visualize him to be in or about 1924 rather than in or about 1918. In any event, some years ago I had a camera shop make a sixteen-by-twenty-inch print from that three-by-five print. I had the enlargement framed, and it is hung in a prominent spot in my home. I pass by that spot frequently during the day, and each time it provides me with fond memories. That's the background of what I know, pretty much what I know, of my parents' early years.

SI: It is interesting that he was in the Boer War, which, in some ways, was a precursor to what would happen on the battlefield in World War I, the beginning of trench warfare, machine gun usage, and the kind of depersonalized war that we associate with World War I. Did you ever, from your perspective, notice any impact on your father, having lived through that? Was he, maybe, a distant person?

MD: Nothing that I can put my finger on. No, he was a relatively contented individual. He became a watchmaker by trade, but, in or about 1912, he had come to Trenton as a traveling salesman, selling fur skin, fur pelts, to the retail furrier trade, which was his father's business. My Grandfather, in South Africa, had a seltzer bottling factory. How he got into the fur trade, I'm only speculating, that one of his sons-in-law got into the fur trade and that's how my Grandfather got involved in providing furs, which he imported. Dad had planned to visit several stores in Trenton, and arranged to stay at a small hotel in mid-city. After inquiring about a place to obtain kosher meals (because Dad was observant) the manager of the hotel sent him to a nearby home, which happened to be the home of the people who ultimately became my maternal Grandparents. There, my Dad took his meals for a few days, and met my Mother. That must have been, I guess, around the year 1908. Mother would have been eighteen or nineteen years old. The relationship between Mother and Dad ripened sufficiently that they became formally engaged to be married. I have no idea when that engagement was made, but as I believe I said earlier, they were not married until January 1914. The reason for the apparently unseemly long delay was occasioned by tradition. I don't know whether that tradition was Ashkenazic or common Eastern European, but because of that tradition, her Father forbade Mother to marry until all of her older sisters had been married. In 1910, or 1911, or 1912, or whenever it was that Dad and Mother decided to become engaged to be married, Mother's next older sister, my Aunt Fanny, was unmarried. I believe that Aunt Fanny was married in or about 1913, settling with her husband, Uncle Joe Polsky, in Leesburg, Virginia, where they opened a women's dress shoppe. As I mentioned earlier, Dad was a traveling salesman purveying fur pelts to retail furriers. Sometime in that period--I have no idea regarding the timeline--Dad came to the realization that he was fiercely allergic to the chemicals used to treat the animal skins to make the pelts saleable. He reluctantly reached the decision to leave his Father Kalman's business and give up the sale of fur pelts. He went to a trade school, I believe it was somewhere in the New York City area, and successfully completed his training and apprenticeship, and became an accredited watchmaker. I have been told that in those years, most timepieces were carried in the man's vest pocket,

attached to a fob, and thus referred to as "pocket watches." All watches were powered by a coiled spring and operated by the spring being "wound up" by a stem, unlike most of today's watches running on power from a battery powering a quartz movement. Well-qualified watchmakers were relatively scarce and highly esteemed. By the time in January 1914 when Mother and Dad were married in Trenton, Dad was already engaged in his new trade. Upon their marriage, Mother and Dad settled in Trenton and opened up a watch repair and retail jewelry store in a section of Trenton that's called Chambersburg, adjacent to the large plant of the John A. Roebling's Sons Company. I don't know whether that name is meaningful to you.

SI: Yes. [Editor's Note: The John A. Roebling's Sons Company, a long-time fixture of Trenton's industrial sector, was most famous for its construction of innovative suspension bridges, such as the Brooklyn Bridge.]

MD: … Dad was responsible for maintaining all of the time clocks, and other clocks, in the Roebling plant buildings, because the place where we lived, and Dad's store, was directly across the street, and that's how … Dad came to Trenton and how I came to be born in Trenton (in one of the bedrooms above the store).

About Dad's watchmaking talents, I recall that many years ago Dad told me that there had been in Trenton a company named the Trenton Watch Company. I had assumed that, as the company's name implied, it was in the business of manufacturing watches--in those days, more than likely, "pocket watches." Dad had mentioned that that company employed him in some supervisory capacity. Over the years since that conversation, which I don't recall ever having been expanded upon, I have speculated that such employment must have occurred in the years immediately following Dad's settling in Trenton, probably to provide supplemental income while his privately pursued watch repair business was becoming established. More than likely it was during the day, when Mother would be able to tend to the store operation. It probably also ended no later than 1916, in which year my brother Jonas was born--Mother being unable to watch the store. If my memory is correct, the Trenton Watch Company's plant and offices were located on Chestnut Avenue, located not too far from where Mother and Dad first opened their store at 697 South Broad Street. While I was growing up, those buildings formerly occupied by the watch company were, I believe, the same as those in later years utilized by the Circle F Manufacturing Company for the production of electrical wiring devices sold internationally. During my high school years 1934 to 1938, on my way to and from home to Trenton High School, I would regularly walk past or nearby those buildings, and reflect upon my Dad's employment at the watch factory. I am also reminded of my almost involuntary route from there, in the late springtime, especially if the afternoon weather was very warm. On my walk home from Trenton High after passing by the former watch factory buildings, I would be most likely to proceed further south on Chestnut Avenue, with predetermination, so as to stop in and visit the Coca-Cola Bottling Company plant. The staff person on duty, carefully watching the bottles of Coke on the assembly line, would invariably offer me an as yet uncapped ice-cold Coke from the line. I can to this very day recall the pleasantness of the drink.

SI: You grew up in the Chambersburg section.

MD: Grew up in Chambersburg, lived there until I went to college. I commuted for three years, from Trenton to Philadelphia. … Then, in my senior year, my parents and I were able to work out [an arrangement] to enable me, financially, to live at school … in a boarding house, rooming house, and in my senior year occurred Pearl Harbor. A couple of months later, I knew I had to go into service and I started scrounging around for officer's training, Navy or Coast Guard or Army Air Force. I did not want Army, because I'm not one to slosh through mud. It was widely perceived at that time, as you may or may not know, the Navy, and, to the same extent, I think, [the] Coast Guard, in those days--I don't recall anything regarding the Army Air Force--was strictly WASP-ish and a Jewish person had very little chance of being accepted for officer's training. … I chased up and down the East Coast, from Baltimore, Philadelphia, Newark, New York, Boston, New Haven. Wherever there was an officer recruitment office for [the] Navy or Coast Guard or Army Air Force, I applied, and every medical examination that I had as a result of those applications rejected me, for one peculiar reason or another. They were never the same. Interesting enough, the medical rejection reason was different in every case. In or about March of 1942, I saw an ad in *Popular Mechanics* Magazine. It may also have been in *Popular Science*, advertising, "Become a Naval Officer," ["Be an Officer"], and it had a picture of a naval midshipman and it happened to be an ad for the then newly created Merchant Marine Cadet Corps. [Editor's Note: Mr. Deitz has provided the Rutgers Oral History Archives with copies of the advertisement from both the June 1942 issues of *Popular Mechanics* (Volume 77, Number 6, Page 18A) and *Popular Science* (Volume 140, Number 6, Page 25A).] … After inquiring about it, the training was comparable to the Naval Academy and that of the Coast Guard Academy, except, in wartime, it was ninety-day officer training, and then, from the Merchant Marine Academy, you were shipped out on a merchant vessel to complete your practical training, come back, get some more schooling, graduate, and then, you become an ensign in the United States Naval Reserve. That was my objective.

SI: I have a couple of questions before we get into the Merchant Marine/Naval Reserve phase of your life.

MD: Sure.

SI: Before Pearl Harbor, how aware were you of what was happening in the world, with Hitler's activities in Europe and so on?

MD: Not very much, a little bit. I don't recall anything specific. I certainly would not admit that I was unaware, but I cannot assert that I was fully conversant. I was twenty years old at the time; what the hell did I know?

SI: Do you remember the isolationist versus interventionist debates?

MD: Vaguely, yes, yes.

SI: Do you recall if that was discussed, maybe, at school?

MD: I don't recall how it came to my attention, but, certainly, I was aware of it.

SI: Okay, but you do not recall any strong opinions expressed on either side.

MD: No, no, because as soon as Pearl Harbor took place, all of us knew that we had to serve, and we were ready to serve.

SI: Was there any early awareness of what was happening to the Jews in Europe under Hitler, maybe within the community?

MD: By me?

SI: By you, by your community; were any refugees coming into the community at that time?

MD: Oh, no, no. The only refugees that came into the community were refugees who immigrated to Princeton in the mid and later '30s, about whom I found out only after I came back from overseas and went to work as an Internal Revenue Agent with the IRS and got to check the tax returns of some of those people, who, as yet, had not become citizens and their tax returns had a different tax code application than for the resident alien or citizen. … That's how I got to know of [them], and got to know Albert Einstein, a few others that came into the Princeton community; otherwise, nothing in the Trenton community of which I was aware.

SI: You mentioned Pearl Harbor being this turning point, but what do you remember about that day itself, how you heard the news, how you reacted?

MD: I don't recall the sequence of it, as to why we all gathered in the student union building, or most of us did, to hear a radio address by President Roosevelt, and I remember sitting and listening with horror to his statements regarding Pearl Harbor and what had happened. … We knew that, inevitably, war was going to come about; nothing beyond that.

SI: To go back to your time in the Merchant Marine, can you tell me a little bit about the training and what that was like for you?

MD: Well, when I applied, in, I guess, March of '42, and ultimately was advised that I was accepted, I went through the medical examination, a copy of the report of which I showed you, of the exam that found me fit to serve as a cadet midshipman, Merchant Marine Reserve, United States Naval Reserve. I graduated college in May of '42 and I was still awaiting word to report for training, and, rather than sit around idly, General Motors had a plant in West Trenton.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: Ready?

MD: Where were we?

SI: You were just talking about your graduation in May of 1942. You were going into the Merchant Marines.

MB: Right, right. So, rather than stay home idle, to wait for orders, this General Motor plant in West Trenton was manufacturing parts for airplanes. It was called the Turnstead Division of General Motors, and I knew they were hiring. I went and I applied. I told them my background. I was hired as a payroll clerk, at a fairly decent salary, and I worked there for about a month when I got my orders to report to the Kings Point Academy, Kings Point, New York, United States Merchant Marine Academy. … I guess I reported in June; I was there until the end of August. I was able to go home for a brief period, and then, received orders to report to Pier So-and-So in Brooklyn, to the SS *John Drayton*, a newly built Liberty ship that had completed its maiden voyage from the shipyard, in North Carolina, to Brooklyn and was ready to go to deliver armaments to the Persian Gulf, destined for the Russians. … I reported on shipboard and we traveled down the East Coast in convoy, because … the Western Atlantic, the East Coast of the United States, the waters off the East Coast, were heavily patrolled by German submarines. The German submarines knocked off, I'm told, over eight hundred ships between 1941 and 1944. We got to Guantanamo, Cuba, of soon to be blessed memory. [Editor's Note: Mr. Deitz is alluding to the contemporary detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, initiated by the George W. Bush Administration to hold suspected enemy combatants. After years of protest from human rights and civil liberties groups, the Obama Administration has promised to shut down the facility.] … While we were in harbor, refueling, and perhaps there was some other reason we stopped at Guantanamo, I guess to wait for another convoy, there was a boiler room explosion on our ship. The boiler had exploded and the engineer was killed. So, we waited for thirty days for replacement parts, replacement labor, and so forth, and a new engineer to replace the one that was killed. … We ultimately took off, went around the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa, and up, again, in convoy, to the Persian Gulf, at the southern end of the junction of the common border of Iraq and Iran, which is now in the news again. [Editor's Note: The day this interview took place, a historic presidential election was taking place in Iran.] … There was an aircraft assembly plant nearby, where we were to offload the planes that we [had] brought for assembly. We brought chassis and wings and, you know, the components. It was to be assembled there and, because of the huge volume of ships that were in that area of the Persian Gulf, the port was Khorramshahr, and I believe that was Iran, a huge number of ships, we waited a month until we could be off loaded. … In the interim, we were able to go ashore periodically and visit the nearby cities of Basra, Iraq, and Abadan, Iran, (where an Anglo-Iranian Oil Company refinery was located). When the ship was fully offloaded, we headed home. We stopped in Bahrain and picked up and became a part of a convoy again and headed southward and, at about the northern end of the Island of Madagascar, the convoy broke up and we were proceeding on our own, alone. … Whenever we had any warning or sighting of potential submarine activity, the Skipper was very adept, adopting the established course of action of zigzagging, dropping of depth-charge antisubmarine explosives, and whatever else was done to minimize the risk of being struck by a torpedo. Regretfully, on the night of April 21, 1943, off the east coast of South Africa, somewhat south of Madagascar, the effort lost its efficacy and we were torpedoed. The attacking submarine surfaced and began shelling our ship. We barely got off, but, as I mentioned earlier, my lifeboat, to which I was assigned, I had certain duties that I had to execute, that we'd gone through drill and drill and drill, in the event of an emergency of this kind. I [was to] go to the Captain, get papers, get a .45 and go to my lifeboat and found it wasn't there. Skipper assigned me to another lifeboat. Normally, a complement of twelve, we were twenty-five in there, and the rest is detailed in the articles that I've shown you and a copy of which I'll send to you, and it wasn't until thirty-one days later, after seventeen of my fellow passengers …

[TAPE PAUSED]

MD: Seventeen of the other people in the lifeboat died and were thrown overboard. One of them, the chief mate, who was in charge of the boat, took his own life. This was about three weeks out, twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three days out, without food, without water. I saw it. I was awake at the time. It was nighttime and he was at the aft end of the lifeboat. He was … manning the tiller, steering, and he was navigating by the stars. He just lifted his feet up, over his head, and tumbled backwards, over the aft end of the lifeboat, and that was the end of him. When, ultimately, we were picked up, by a Greek vessel, the SS *Mount Rhodope*, I was comatose at the time and there were eight of us left in the lifeboat, of whom, on the way from being picked up and being taken to the Addington Memorial Hospital in Durban, South Africa, three of the fellows died. So, there were only four others, besides myself, that survived and I was in the hospital until, I guess, the latter part of August of 1943, and then, came home on a troop transport, the USS *George Washington*.

[Editor's Note: Mr. Deitz has made the following materials, transcribed from the original copies, available to the Rutgers Oral History Archives to better illustrate his ordeal on the night the SS *John Drayton* was torpedoed, April 21, 1943, the thirty-one days at sea endured by himself and the other survivors, their subsequent rescue, his recovery in South Africa, and his repatriation in August 1943. Introductory text added by the Rutgers Oral History Archives' editors appears in italics.

The first document is a magazine article that first appeared in the December 1943 edition of U.S. Navy Magazine*:*

We Wondered Who Was Next

As told to Scott Feldman By Morton Deitz, Cadet Midshipman 1st Class, USMMCC, USNR

(Cadet Midshipman First Class Morton Deitz, USMMCC, USNR, was born in Trenton, New Jersey, twenty-two years ago and educated at Trenton High School and the University of Pennsylvania. He enlisted on June 25, 1942. In the following dramatic eye-witness account, the young cadet tells how his ship was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine, and how he and 23 others spent thirty days of hell in the open sea. Eight survived the ordeal, but three died later in a South African hospital.)

Last April, I went on a thirty-day cruise along the Indian Ocean with twenty-three shipmates. It wasn't a pleasure trip. We spent the thirty days on a life raft, and we were there because a German submarine pack had torpedoed and sunk our ship.

Our 10,500-ton Liberty vessel discharged cargo for U.S. troops and headed out alone. About 4 a.m. April 21, 1943, our lookout suddenly sighted the wake of a torpedo.

I was studying in the officer's mess, and the gun crew's quarters were located just down the passageway. I heard them running out, and I put down my book and started up to the bridge. As

I ran the ship began to kick and toss. The ship's pilot was trying to outmaneuver the torpedoes. I had to stop running and move along gingerly, to remain on my feet.

Suddenly one hit us amidships and I was slammed against the bulkhead as I ran. I felt a sharp pain in my ankle, and when I tried to move forward I found that I had to drag my leg.

Live steam and torpedo fumes began to fill the passageway. I knew that I had to get out into the air. I dragged myself to the door leading to the deck, and I felt my stomach twist with sudden fear. The door was jammed shut.

I put my shoulder against it. The fumes were becoming thicker and making me groggy, and I hammered wildly. When I was almost ready to pass out, the door sprang open. I gulped a few mouthfuls of air and heard the whistle blowing 7 short blasts and one long run--the call to "Abandon ship." I ran to the skipper's cabin and helped him get together the ship's papers. Then I gathered up blankets, clothes, and emergency lights, and carried them to the boat stations.

There had been four lifeboats. There were only three now. One of them--the only one equipped with a motor--had been blown to bits when the torpedo hit. The water below looked black and cold. Boat Number 4 lowered first, and I found myself shivering as I watched it.

Eleven men lowered with her, while a few others waited to enter her when she touched the water. But as she touched, a big wave smacked against her and tore her right off the rope. She floated away in the darkness.

Boat Number 1 lowered next, with five men in her. The minute it reached the water, it slammed against the ship and turned over. I heard one of the men scream as he was caught under it. The others began to thrash around in the water.

My boat, Number 2, went down next. I took her down with three other men. We made the water safely and men began to climb into her. We were the only boat left, and there was nothing to do but let her fill up. I counted twenty-four of us all together.

I heard the skipper yelling to some of the officers, telling them to head for the other side of the ship, where a life raft was kept. They ran toward it, and a moment later I saw them getting off. We released our boat.

Suddenly I saw a light flickering near our ship. I strained my eyes toward it, but I couldn't see a thing. Then I heard voices yelling for help. I realized it was some of the men who'd been on the overturned boat.

The sea was stormy now, and our boat was being tossed up and down on skyscraper-sized waves. We started to work with the lifeboat--trying to head her back to pick up the men. It was no use. Perversely, each time we struggled to get the boat toward the men, waves picked us up and pulled us out toward the open sea. After a while, we couldn't hear the men any longer. Then their light went out.

I looked back at our ship. It was still standing. Finally it, too, faded out of sight.

We began to review our food and water supply. We had only enough for a few days. "Don't worry," I heard someone say. "We'll be picked up before our stuff runs out. There are plenty of planes flying over these parts."

The hours dragged by, and I watched the dawn come up. The torpedo fumes had made me sick. My ankle was still paining. A few more hours passed, and I thought I'd go to sleep to see if that would make me feel better. As I settled down, I heard several of the men yell hoarsely. I opened my eyes and saw them pointing toward the sky, and I began to yell too. There were some planes flying overhead.

Then we saw that the planes were flying away. They hadn't seen us. We all became quiet.

After a while we broke out some biscuits and ate--sparingly. We didn't feel sure any longer about being seen by planes.

The second day passed, and again planes flew by without seeing us. But the third day, we had better luck.

Early that morning, I heard the sound of heavy motors roaring above us. I looked up and saw an RAF plane overhead. We all jumped to our feet and waved. Then the plane's blinker began to work.

"Help coming soon!" The RAF men signaled. "Thumbs up!"

We waited some more and the plane went away. "This calls for a celebration," one of the men yelled. "Let's break out some water."

Our throats were parched, and we all agreed. It was true that we'd already had our water ration for that morning--but we were going to be picked up, weren't we? We began to toast each other, taking sips of the water.

The sea had been too heavy for the plane to land. Suddenly the roll grew worse. Heavy waves lashed at us, wildly.

I could feel the blood leaving my face. All the other men looked scared. If this kept up, the waves would take us far from our original position.

The storm kept up. We saw no more planes that day, or the next. The fifth day two planes passed by without seeing us.

The sixth day another plane spotted us. Signalman 2nd Class William Simmons began to semaphore with two handkerchiefs. "Help!" he signaled. "Water!" We had very little water or food left by this time, and Simmons was so weak two of us had to hold him up while he signaled.

The RAF men blinkered back, "Help coming soon!"

They went away, and a little while later they came back. They dropped two packages and left once more. The packages were wrapped in rubber life preservers. One floated right towards us. We got it. The other was picked up by a heavy wave and carried away in the other direction.

Across the package, there was a penciled note. "Destroyer leaving 5 p.m." We opened the package, and began to wait for the destroyer to arrive. The package contained 8 beer-size cans of water, a first aid kit, and about 8 cans of emergency rations--dextrose candy, chewing gum, and chocolates. We ate some of it, and put the rest away.

Around four o'clock the seas began to act up again. By five, we were away from the spot--far away. The destroyer never found us.

That night the weather grew worse. The seas began to build up higher and higher.

Around ten o'clock the next morning the waves were fifty feet high. Suddenly one of them smashed right into us. Water rushed over my head, and I knew that the boat had overturned. I began to swim, and I could hear the other men thrash around near me. The wave settled and we all caught hold of the lifeboat.

Deck Cadet Hyman Rosen, of New York City, came up right next to me. "What do we do now?" he asked. He spit out a mouthful of salt water.

"Now," I said, "we try to turn this tub back over."

Suddenly one of the men clambered up onto the boat. He was a man of about sixty, tall and thin and emaciated. His eyes were bright, and I could see his lips working.

"What have we done to deserve this?" he began to chant. "Why have we been given a fate like this? What have we done?" His voice rose to a screech, and he began to gibber with fear.

I climbed on the boat after him. He began to fight me, kicking and scratching. I said in his ear, "You want to drive everyone into a panic? Shut up or I'll knock your head off!" He quieted down and climbed off.

We began to work on the boat. We caught hold of the far end and began to rock her. It took us six hours to get her right. Our fingers were bleeding, and we were all gasping for breath when we climbed back onto her.

We got in and began to bail her out. We used our hats as scoops. After another hour, she was ready to move once more.

We didn't recover very much of our equipment. The clothes, ship's papers, most of our food and water had been swept away when the boat overturned. There was just a little chocolate left, a few cigarettes, one match, one flare, a first aid kit, and two small beakers of water. We

examined the water and had to throw the beaker away. The force of the wave had loosened its stopper and filled it with salt water.

The chocolate went quickly. We limited ourselves to a tiny piece each day, but there were twenty-four of us.

The days passed. We didn't move around very much any more. After a while our food ran out, and then our water. The men missed their smoking and began to chew and eat their cigarettes. Once or twice little fish jumped into our boat, and we tore them up and ate them. I had heard that you die if you drank salt water, but as the days passed, I didn't care too much. I began to drink a little each morning. It gave me a horrible burning sensation in my stomach, but kept me conscious.

Around the nineteenth day, Boatswain John Waltman got on his hands and knees and began to crawl around the boat. He woke us all up, and Ensign Tommy Kellegren, of Brooklyn, New York, asked him, "Where you going, Johnny?"

He grinned foolishly, "Cold here. I'm going to the galley to get a cup of coffee."

"You can't get coffee," Tommy told him. "The stove's not working. Lie down and I'll heat some up for you."

He lay down and Tommy and two others lashed him to the floor. He began to tug and scream, and we were all afraid he would upset the boat again. But in a few minutes he quieted down and closed his eyes. The next morning he was dead.

It was bitterly cold. We removed his clothes to use as coverings, said a prayer for him, and buried him in the sea.

He was the first. The next night another man died, and two more the night after that. I began to get delirious and talk to myself, and I would fall into daydreams about dying. I wondered if I was next, and I kept repeating all the Hebrew prayers I knew over and over--any prayers, it didn't matter which. Each morning I would wake up surprised at being alive, and I'd look around to see who had died during the night. There were more and more with each passing hour.

Our attitudes grew strange, distorted. There was one young officer we'd all loved and respected back on the ship--the favorite of all the men. On the twenty-fourth day he died suddenly and rolled off into the water, and all we could feel was anger at the fact that he'd rolled over with his heavy lumber jacket, because we were freezing and wanted it.

A few days later, during a period in which the sea was quiet, we saw a 3-masted bark, a Danish ship, in the distance. We began to cry at the sight, all of us, and we tried to row toward her. We were too feeble. We couldn't make the boat move, and the Danish ship didn't see us. We almost gave up then.

Many times we thought we were getting close to land. We saw land birds a few times. Twice we saw butterflies. But it was no good. We continue to find water on all sides.

There were nine of us left on the thirtieth night. None of us was talking then, because our tongues were swollen thick. I was suddenly awakened from a nightmarish sleep by the sound of a plane.

I could hear feeble movements near me, and whimpering sounds. I knew the other men had heard it. I began to drag myself on my stomach toward the nose of the boat, toward the one remaining flare. Three of the men stumbled toward me and helped me lift the flare. I moved it once, then twice, then a third time. I began to cry to myself. It didn't work. Its automatic striker was too damp.

I took hold of a match. My hands were trembling with weakness and fear. I scratched it. It didn't light. I scratched again, and a feeble flame lit up the boat. I could see eight drawn faces watching me as I touched the match to the flare.

The flare began to operate. Then red glows flashed in the air, stayed there a moment suspended on tiny parachutes. Then they floated slowly to the sea. But by this time, we no longer heard the plane. Minutes passed and grew into an hour, two hours. I closed my eyes. I think I slept for a while. Then suddenly I heard the roar of a plane again, and I was instantly awake.

It was almost morning now. Seaman First Class John Spencer crawled over to the first aid kit and pulled out a tube of gentian blue antiseptic salve. He scrawled the number "30" on the side of our ship. It was his guess on how many days we'd been out, and it was a good guess. The plane circled around us for a little while, signaled, "Ship will pick you up soon," and then flew away.

Two hours later a Greek ship came and picked us up. I saw it coming, and touched the man next to me. "We're saved," I said hysterically. "Saved." Then I saw that the man was dead.

The second document is a medical history prepared by Daniel Blain, Medical Director, War Shipping Administration's Recruitment and Manning Organization, Medical Division during Mr. Morton Deitz's treatment following his repatriation from South Africa in August 1943:

History in the Case of Morton Dietz

Lost 19 out of 24 men in life boat. They did not have life suits on, they were too warm. Had food for two weeks or about eighteen days, then only a few fish. Had no fishing equipment except improvised rod and white rag for bait.

When in the boat they knew position, thought they could make shore in about one week, were 275 miles from shore. Had life boat compass, but went by stars and the sun. Lost pilot charts.

Sighted second day by planes, told to keep chins up etc. but nothing happened. Third and fourth day were sighted by planes again.

Sixth day emergency equipment was dropped to them, wrapped in life preservers, provisions and flares. Eight ounces of water given out, all very optimistic.

Third mate was panicky, "a religious fanatic".

Life boat had lost mainsail, had only jibsail.

Mate was in command, but was out of his mind for two weeks then died. Deitz thinks the will to live was a factor in his survival. The five men rescued were 18, 22, 22, 23, 25, but many of those who did not survive were young men.

Thinks age has some weight in his survival. Lost 65 pounds. Deitz thinks he was optimistic except at the end, but thinks his religion was a factor, felt that he was being looked after.

Had only raincoat to catch water in, poured from raincoat into cans. Boat always had water in the bottom, they bailed constantly but had only small can to bail with, pump no good. Had immersion foot, still bothers him. Arms and legs go to sleep easily, circulation pour.

Patient is a little jumpy, on ship coming back was badly frightened by noise of target practice. Not normally nervous.

Wants to go back to sea, likes it, only as a war time job. Is an accountant by profession, wants to go back to it after the war.

Was told to stay off feet as much as possible, treated with opiate compresses on ankles.

Picked up by a Greek freighter, 30 miles of [sic] Durban.

What was most missed on lifeboat: Water.

Oars were saved, first aid kits saved. Used ointment ofr [sic] burns on lips, toward the end used morphine, also Energy tablets. Would have liked radio in life boat, thinks every life boat should have one.

All survivors were dark, but patient is not sure that this was a factor because many who died were dark.

The third document is a press release which promoted the appearance of Mr. Morton Deitz, then a Cadet Midshipman First Class in the US Merchant Marine Reserve and US Naval Reserve, as one of several veterans who, along with several Hollywood movie stars, would appear at war bond rallies across the nation in support of the Third War Loan Drive in the Fall of 1943.

The other veterans who appeared on stage with Mr. Deitz included: Boatswain's Mate Ward L. Gemmer, a US Navy sailor who was twice torpedoed and who shot down two German aircraft; US Marine Corps Sergeant John Basilone, of Raritan, New Jersey, who received the Medal of

Honor for heroic action on Guadalcanal (and who was later killed-in-action during the fighting on Iwo Jima); Machinist's Mate Robert J. Croak, a US Coast Guardsman who served on the cutter Spencer, which destroyed a Nazi U-boat by ramming it; and Sergeant Schiller Cohen of the US Army Air Corps, who completed 56 bombing missions over Europe and North Africa. The celebrities who took part in the bond rallies were Gene Lockhart, Virginia Grey, and John Garfield.

Morton Deitz

When Morton Dietz graduated from the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce in 1942 he was rated magna cum laude.

And it was magna cum laude that he emerged from his first sea voyage as a student midshipman aboard a freighter sunk by a pack of German submarines in the Indian Ocean off South Africa. There were 24 men in a lifeboat designed for 12 and during thirty horrible days at sea, Midshipman Deitz saw 19 of his companions die of starvation, thirst, drowning and insanity. He is one of 5 alive to tell their experiences--a story he would much rather forget. Blinded by the equatorial glare of the sun, weakened by a week of drinking only salt water, this 22-year-old lad should be resting, with medical attention, but instead is flying to give civilians enough of the sense of urgency of war so that they will do themselves the favor of saving their money and the value of their currency by buying bonds of the Third War Loan.

It was on the last April 21 that a pack of German submarines spotted the unescorted cargo ship carrying tanks and ammunition for our Russian allies. Morton Dietz, after several weeks of training at the Merchant Marine Cadet Corps School at Great Neck, L. I., had found his first cruise as a midshipman an exciting change from helping his father in his jewelry store in Trenton, N. J.

"After 11 weeks of training at the Academy I left New York October 9, 1942, on my maiden voyage, which was also the Liberty ship's first trip, bound for the Persian Gulf with a cargo of planes, tanks and trucks. We had delivered our war supplies at the designated port and were returning in salt water ballast, when at 7:30 P.M. on April 21, 1943, in the Indian Ocean south of Madagascar, we spotted two surfaced enemy submarines speeding towards us from the horizon. After attempting to out-maneuver the approaching subs our ship was torpedoed by a third undersea craft.

"I was given charge of the skipper's binoculars and papers and took my place in one of the lifeboats. The number 3 lifeboat had been torpedoed, and the men originally assigned to that boat were distributed into other boats. We had 24 men in a boat designed to hold twelve. We tried to keep our boats out of the path of the subs, which were of the latest German design, but we saw them pumping fifteen to twenty 5-inch shells into our ship. They took a seaman off one of the lifeboats for questioning aboard their sub.

"The seas were very heavy, so we headed into the waves to keep from capsizing. The following day, seas somewhat calmer, we saw planes, but were not spotted. The third day some planes saw

us and swooped low. We signal them by blinker. They replied 'thumbs-up, cheerio' and flew off. We awaited rescue. It did not come.

"We heard and saw planes which did not see us. On the morning of the sixth day we were spotted by another plane which signaled 'help coming soon'. Our signalman semaphored 'help, help, water, water, water'. The plane dropped their own emergency provisions and with the package was wrapped a message: 'Destroyer leaving Durban 5:10 P.M.' They also dropped an emergency sail kit, first aid kit, cans of water and two British marine type flares tied up in a plane life preserver.

"The seas began rising and by morning of the seventh day they were running 40 to 50 feet high. A wave over the port bow crashed over the boat and capsized it. We lost most of our equipment--compass, maps, pumps, bucket, water, some of our food and the mainsail.

"The men were by then in a weakened condition. After six hours of bailing, we were able to right the boat, climb in and proceed. We were heading for Durban and, we hoped, the promised destroyer. For two weeks we saw nothing. Our food and water were giving out. We spotted a two-masted bark, but the seas were heavy and she didn't see us.

"After thirty days there were only 9 of us left. The others had died of hunger, thirst, delirium and exposure. As each slipped into the water, we mumbled a prayer. On the thirtieth day I was awakened by clear sounds of a plane. We tried to signal it with the flares the plane had given us. But the striker on the flare was damp, so it couldn't be lighted. With our very last match we lit a flare, a parachute type which gave off 10 successive red glow fires before falling into the water. The plane apparently saw it, for a couple of hours before daybreak the following morning the plane came directly towards us.

"It was a British Army reconnaissance plane which circled above us. The signalman, with the aid of gentian violet from our first aid kit, painted on the sail a large 30 which he meant to indicate the number of days we had been at sea. A couple of hours later a freighter came along. One boy had died an hour before the rescue. We were taken to Durban where three more died in hospital, leaving five who came back. After five weeks in hospital and three more weeks of rest in Durban we were sent by train to Capetown [sic] and by Army transport ship to New York, arriving here August 16th."

Mr. Dietz has also donated to the Rutgers Oral History Archives copies of several Newark Star-Ledger *newspaper articles related to the kick-off rally for the Third War Loan Drive in Newark, New Jersey, on September 9, 1943. Please contact the Archives staff for more information.*

According to The Official Chronology of the US Navy in World War II *(2000 edition) by Robert J. Cressman, the SS* John Drayton *was torpedoed by an Italian submarine, the* Leonardo da Vinci, *on April 21, 1943. The* Leonardo da Vinci*'s crew then shelled the ship and briefly took a crew member aboard her for interrogation before returning him to the other survivors. On April 23rd, eleven survivors were picked up by a Swedish merchant vessel. On April 27th, a British destroyer rescued fourteen more survivors. The lifeboat containing Mr. Deitz and seven other survivors was located by a Greek vessel on May 21st, thirty-one days after the ship was*

torpedoed. Twenty-one Merchant Marines and six US Navy Armed Guard personnel from the SS John Drayton*'s crew lost their lives.*]

SI: To go back to before the torpedoing, can you give me some idea of what your average day's duties were like on the ship? Also, when you would go to general quarters, what would your position be?

MD: Well, there was so much havoc when the torpedo struck, general alarm was sounded by the Skipper and I don't remember where it was that I reported. I was on watch at the time the torpedo struck. I was standing on the bridge, directly above the point where the torpedo struck. The explosion knocked me on my rear end, with the result that my ankles were injured and a few other things. I went to the Skipper's cabin, as directed, and got papers to carry to secure against [the] enemy seeing them and a .45, and, as I say, got to the lifeboat and lowered it and off we were. Normal duties on the ship were relatively routine. We were four hours on, four hours off, or four hours on and eight hours off. I've forgotten. [laughter] I do remember that when I was on duty at night, we had a separate officers' bridge, … to which we were assigned because we were considered officers, and there always was fresh coffee made, in the mess, and always food, bread, freshly made bread, on the ship made, toasters, cheese, meats, roast beef, salami, all kinds of assorted meats, cheeses. … I remember, fondly, any time I was on watch at night, going down, at one or two o'clock in the morning, and fixing myself a sandwich and enjoying it immensely [laughter] and going back on watch again. Our duties were primarily to assist the Captain. We would take the helm once in awhile, but, primarily, it was just being [lookouts], watching, formal watching for enemy [activity], potential enemy activity, other ships and the like, and, also, watching what the duty officers, including the Skipper, were doing and to learn by watching. In and of itself, the shipboard activity was not at all unpleasant. We had a private cabin. There were just two of us in there, the other … deck cadet and myself, and we were on the bridge deck with the Skipper. He was just down the hallway from where we were, and not at all unpleasant. It's only what came after that was the other extreme.

SI: You mentioned that whenever there was the potential presence of a U-boat, the Captain would take evasive action.

MD: Right.

SI: Were there any other precautions he could take? Was there any armament?

MD: We had depth charges, that if we were sure that we sighted a submarine, we would [drop them]. We had a Naval Armed Guard onboard, a naval officer and, I believe, six sailors that were our formal guard of the ship. [Editor's Note: The US Navy Armed Guard was a branch of the US Navy charged with guarding Merchant Marine vessels from enemy submarine and air attacks.] They manned the big artillery gun at the rear of the ship, but the other cadet midshipmen and myself, including the engine cadet midshipman, were trained to use the thirty-caliber machine guns, or fifty-caliber, I'm sorry, fifty-caliber machine guns. They were mounted on each side of the bridge and one forward, and used a couple of times to get some practice [in] how to use it, [which] was not the most pleasant activity. That was basically it, depth charges. I can recall, not specifically, but I can recall, on at least one or two or three occasions, that we

threw depth charges overseas and heard them explode, and no enemy action resulting, following, that we saw. Whether we hit anything or destroyed anything, I have no way of knowing, but we had no adverse action for ourselves.

SI: Was there any time, during the actual attack, that they were returning fire at all or trying to, with the artillery piece?

MD: … By a submarine?

SI: No, during the attack on April 21st.

MD: Oh, when our ship was attacked? No, no; when the torpedo struck, there was nothing we could do except abandon ship. It blew a fifty-foot wide hole in the side of the vessel and it was sinking rapidly. By the time I got to my lifeboat and it was lowered, we had probably sunk halfway down, my guess. I don't know for sure.

SI: At that time in the war, the Germans had abandoned picking up survivors.

MD: One fellow from another lifeboat, I learned later, was picked up and taken to the submarine and was interrogated, and then, returned to his lifeboat. I think they wanted to know, you know, what we were carrying, where we were going, how many people onboard, and so on, but that's all hearsay. … It may be reflected in some of this material that I'm going to send to you.

SI: Did you have any particular concern about being captured by the Germans?

MD: No, never dawned on me. All I'm aware of thinking is that, "Well, we've got to abandon ship. Now, we just have to await being picked up," and, as you'll learn when you get to read the detailed recounting of my experience, there were several times during the thirty-one days where we were spotted by aircraft. Once, they dropped us some food and water and flares and stuff and, "Help was on its way," they signaled a message to us, but that help never arrived. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: Tell me a little bit about your time recovering in South Africa. You mentioned you were comatose when you first were brought in.

MD: I was comatose. We were brought aboard this Greek ship and I remember being fed, by spoon, some broth and, as memory serves me, I regained some of my consciousness at that time. … They brought us to Durban, South Africa, by ambulance to a nearby hospital, and, when I was brought into the hospital, they weighed me and I must have lost, I don't know, seventy pounds. I think I weighed 120 pounds and I'd been 190 on shipboard, from that nighttime eating, and it was a long recovery. I couldn't walk at first and got around, first, with a wheelchair, then, with crutches, and then, ultimately, with a cane, until I was repatriated in August. One thing that I did not mention; when I was able to start walking on crutches, they needed my bed. Across the street from the hospital was a European, Continental-style hotel, called; I've forgotten the name of the hotel. I may recall it. I was asked if I wouldn't mind, and it was the American consul in

Durban, I believe, who came, with the nurse, to talk with me. They needed the bed, did I mind sleeping in the hotel and taking my meals there, which was part of the arrangement, and coming over as needed to the hospital for my treatments? Fine with me; so, I was in the hotel for maybe a month or more, sleeping there, [ate] all my meals at the hotel. In the beginning, I went over three times a day for treatments and, you know, gradually reduced it, and, when I began to be ambulatory, there were some volunteers, like USO in the States, in South Africa that came and visited. … One lady, … she was British and waiting out the war in South Africa, her husband was in the British Army, she escorted me, a couple of times, in her vehicle, to show me around the town, and so forth, and so on. That was very pleasant.

SI: Did you have any lasting effects, non-physical, from your ordeal? Did you have trouble sleeping?

MD: Oh, very much so, very much so. Nightmares continued until ten years ago, only after I was recognized by the VA as a veteran, got my formal discharge paper and went to the VA medical services, which, at the time, was in West Palm Beach, on Broadway, I believe, was a large clinic, and began to be treated there. They had a mental health clinic, and then, some, I would guess, twelve, fifteen years ago, the VA opened the full hospital in Riviera Beach, not too far from where the clinic was. … There, I was assigned to a Doctor (Escaria?), who was extremely helpful, a geriatric physician, and helped me with the mental health clinic and the various medications, and so on. Ultimately, the very serious, frightening nightmares dissipated. They were very violent. I was always dreaming of violent activities, and, fortunately, today, I think this is wood, [Editor's Note: Mr. Deitz knocks on his coffee table for good luck.] that's about the answer to that question. Do I have after effects? yes. At this point in time, I'm rated by the Veterans Administration as a hundred percent totally and permanently disabled. I'm still ambulatory. I live with my difficulties, my hearing, as you notice, my eyes, but you learn to live with it.

SI: Can you tell me a little bit about coming back to the United States and what your plans were at that point?

MD: When I got back to the States, I was put on recuperative disability sick leave and I was allowed to go home. I went into New York, initially every day. They paid my transportation, but, it was easy, cheaper, for the government to do that, let me sleep at home, than it was to put me up in a hotel or a hospital, to get treatments in New York. I went to the Marine Hospital in Lower Manhattan for my treatments and, gradually, that was reduced over a period of time. In late March, I believe it was, of '44, I'm still on recuperative sick leave, I'd gone through the bond tour, which was very; it was good and bad. [Editor's Note: For more information on the Fall 1943 Third War Loan war bond drive, see the transcript of the press release on page (XX?).] It was good, in a sense, that by telling my story three, four times a day, a lot of it was productive catharsis, not enough, but it was [something]. You know, I have no way of knowing what it might have been without that beneficial effect. The other veterans with whom I was associated [were] marvelous guys, and we had five movie stars … who traveled with us, one of whom was assigned to each of the veterans to introduce and let the veteran tell his story of what happened to him, and then, the actress or actor would get up and make a pitch. "Now, in view of what he's gone through, how about digging into your wallet?" that was the thrust, theme, of the war bond

tour, but, after that, I came home and continued. They provided me with medical treatment while I was on this bond tour. Every place where we went, they arranged for treatments for me, as needed, which was fine. This was on Navy orders, assigning me to the Treasury Department [the branch of government that organized the bond tours]. The two of them collaborated. In late March, I believe it was, I believe the Merchant Marine Academy sent me; I don't remember, exactly, the order in which it occurred, but I think, no, it was the Navy that first wrote to me and said, in view of my injuries, they have determined that I would be unfit to serve as an officer and, thereby, I am discharged from the Naval Reserve. A copy of that was sent to the Academy and they sent me a similar notice, saying, "Good-bye." So, I was out of the service and, as I mentioned, I reported to my draft board and I knew that the local radio station was looking for male announcers. … Since I was able to sit on my backside and work as an announcer, this was a great and adequate thing for me to seek. I applied for a job as a DJ at the NBC outlet in Trenton, at the time, WTTM, and I was hired to be a staff disc jockey, radio announcer. I read the news, I acted as a DJ, announcing records, call-in, all kinds of stuff, and my fellow DJs were Ernie Kovacs and Jack Barry. Jack Barry went on to … [*Twenty-One*] and got involved in that mess of providing answers to one of the contestants. Ernie Kovacs, I don't have to tell you what he went to [in his career as a comedian on television]. After about a year of that, maybe it was even less than a year, a friend of my Father's, who was a CPA, asked my Father what I was doing. He knew, the gentleman knew, that I had graduated with honors from the University of Pennsylvania, Wharton School, and I had majored in accounting. A friend of his was the manager of the local IRS office. So, this gentlemen, CPA, asked my dad, "What's Morton doing? Maybe he would like a job." The net result was, I went to the IRS, spoke to the friend of the friend, and I was hired as an Internal Revenue Agent, and I was with the IRS for six years, or thereabouts, as an agent. In the interim, I got married and we had a couple of children and I decided to go off on my own. I don't know if that's responsive to what you were asking, but that's [it], I think.

SI: No, you have given me a very good overview of your life in that period. When did you decide to go to law school at Rutgers?

MD: I had decided while I was with the IRS. I had applied, was accepted to Temple at night, but the IRS interfered. They sent me to Washington to be an instructor in the new agents training school. … That killed my opportunity, and then, of course, … within that period of time, I met my wife, we became engaged. So, I had to put on the shelf my law school objective, and it wasn't until ten years after I graduated college that I was able to have enough acceleration in my career; I was doing tax work at the time, privately, and I was working with my wife's father in business. I applied to Rutgers Law School and was accepted, and we rented an apartment in Irvington, New Jersey, and I moved with my wife and two daughters to Irvington. Actually, it was Union, New Jersey, adjacent to Irvington, and, in two-and-a-half years, I finished law school and graduated at the top of my class. That was my Rutgers experience.

SI: Was there a specialty within the law that you focused on?

MD: Not in law school. There was not much opportunity to specialize. It was all pretty well structured and there were certain courses that one could elect, tax courses that I took, but, in most instances, I think I knew more than the instructor. I did not know, necessarily, the legal

fundaments, but, from a practical point of view, I knew more about the law than the instructor knew, but I don't mean to be critical of him. The specialty was only after I graduated. … Because I was editor of the [*Rutgers*] *Law Review*, I was looking for someone to do a book review on military advocacy and I was told that there was a retired judge advocate working for a law firm in Princeton. So, I called him and asked him if he'd do a book review on this book. "Sure, happy to." I sent him the book and his review was very good. I called, thanked him, and so on. A couple weeks later, he called me to say he'd spoken to his boss, the senior partner; would I like to come down for an interview? "Sure." So, I came down for an interview and they wanted to hire me. I knew, from hearsay, that Princeton, like the Navy, was a very WASP-y community, and I told the senior partner, who was a Quaker, … and my wife was with me at this last interview, and I emphasized this again, I said, "Mr. Smith, please keep in mind that I am of Jewish faith." "Oh," he says, "I know that." He said, "As a matter-of-fact, I have already spoken to the treasurer of Princeton University, to see if it would make," Princeton University being one of the clients at the office, "to see whether it would make any difference, and Mr. (Metzer?) said, 'By no means.'" So, I was hired, but, when it came to push and shove, at the end of the five-year probationary period that they had engaged me upon, that I was supposed to be made a partner, one of the partners said, "No Jew partner for me." So, fine, I left and went on my own.

SI: It seems like institutional anti-Semitism was just taken as a matter of fact.

MD: Pretty much so, pretty much so, yes.

SI: What about when you were in the Naval Reserve and the Merchant Marines? Had you encountered any anti-Semitism?

MD: I do not recall any, no, not at all, no. I can remember, on our way to the Persian Gulf, we stopped in Cape Town and we had a day or so, while the ship was being refueled, to go ashore and it happened to be a Friday. … I went to Friday night services at a synagogue in Cape Town and I became acquainted with the Rabbi and he told me that there was a very significant and relatively well-to-do Jewish population in South Africa, but it was almost, in terms of bigotry, almost [discriminated against] to the same degree as the blacks suffered, but, because the Jews had money, they were tolerated. That was the message I got from the Rabbi and, ultimately, … when I came home and I was still on sick leave, I got to meet some people and they were on the fringes of the film industry, and I had a couple of screen tests by major studios. One was 20th Century Fox and the other was MGM, and I met a young lady, through these friends, who, with her family, was staying in New York, from South Africa, to wait out the war, extremely well-to-do people. The father was the owner, president, chairman of the board of the Anglo American Mining Company, … very well-off, charming young lady, but I recalled the conversation that I had with the Rabbi. … I was very enamored with this young woman, gorgeous, young lady. I called some of the friends that I had in New York, who had contacts with South Africa, and I also spoke to this young lady's father, telling him, very pointblank, I was very much interested in his daughter, but I had heard about anti-Semitism in South Africa. He said, "You heard correctly," and I just walked away, perhaps to my regret. I think about it now, but that was my feelings in those days. I did not want to go; I knew, if I married her, I'd have to go to South Africa with her and I just … could not visualize the prospects of living in a country with that kind of reputation.

SI: To continue on with your career, at the end of that five-and-a-half-year period, when they refused you your partnership, you said you went out on your own.

MD: Right.

SI: What did you do next?

MD: I joined two fellow attorneys in Trenton. We formed a firm and I was the tax partner and I was fortunate in being able to bring with me, to my new office, all of the tax clients, most all of the tax clients, that I had served while I was with the office in Princeton, and the firm continued to use me, because there was nobody in the firm that knew about taxes as I did. So, they would funnel tax matters to me. That went on for a couple of years. The good clients, individual clients, I retained. Former Ambassador to Russia George Kennan, professors at Princeton, [the] President of RCA, all very substantial and wealthy and very fine clients, and I was fortunate in that regard, that I was able to retain those [individuals] as clients. Is that enough in response to your question?

SI: Yes.

MD: … I stayed with that firm until 1965, when the senior partner, mentally ill and in financial difficulties, jumped out of the window of our eleventh floor office and committed suicide, and he jumped off my desk, which was at the window. I don't recall that with much delight, and I continued with the other partner for maybe a year or more, until I decided that it just wasn't to my advantage. I was bringing in twice as much revenue as he was and we were splitting fifty-fifty, and he and I talked about it and he decided he was going to go and join another friend of his who was doing the same type of work that he had been doing, primarily real estate and credits and collections and stuff, in the same building, friendly departure. … I retained the office where we three of us had been, and I was there until 1970, when I bought a vacant mansion on West State Street in Trenton that … had been the home of a very successful real estate operator in Trenton, and area, who died and his widow moved out. She didn't want the house and Trenton Trust Company was the trustee that owned the house, and it was up for sale, up for sale because the neighborhood, particularly the adjoining blocks, had become very mixed, African-Americans, some Hispanic, and the neighborhood, physically, had deteriorated. So, I was able to buy the building very inexpensively. I spent a hundred thousand dollars that I borrowed to fix it up and I was able to make offices on the first floor and the lower level, and, on the second and third floor, I had apartments and I remained there; I don't remember the year that [we moved], hazy in my mind. At some point in time, I guess in the early '80s, we decided to move. I had a young partner at the time and we decided to move to the suburbs and we rented an office in an office building on a well-traveled circle, on the road between Trenton and Pennington, the Lawrenceville-Pennington Road intersection, and we were there until I decided to retire in 1986, the end of 1986. What else?

SI: Did you pick up any other career-type pursuits or was it a full retirement?

MD: It was a full retirement. … My retirement was full-time. We had bought a place in Florida and we were at that place infrequently, during the winter. When I could grab a weekend or two weekends with a week in-between, my wife and I would be able to get away, mostly with our daughters, and one of the times we would come down would be during the Christmas-New Year holiday, when I would get all of my yearend work finished. … We bought that place in 1971 and, in 1980 or thereabouts, my wife decided that the community was getting like a, what the hell is the word I'm looking for? assisted living community. People getting older, riding around in scooters and wheelchairs, and so on, which she didn't like. Fine; so, we came, we looked around. We came to Florida in July of, I guess, 1980, maybe it was '81, and one of the places we visited was Indian Spring. We ultimately bought an apartment here at Indian Spring and we were here at the Christmas-New Year holiday, with our daughters, in 1986 and, normally, I would go back the last week of December to do yearend billing. I decided, as we approached Christmas, to call my partner and ask him if he felt competent in handling the yearend billing while I was in Florida, talked with me, what he proposed to do, get my approval and send out appropriate bills after talking to the client. We did that, got the bills out and I decided, right before New Year's of 1986, that this is it. I was sixty-five years of age, going on sixty-six. I was tired. My physical problems were getting the better of me and I told my partner that I was not coming back, that he should run the office and keep me informed. We did that for several years, until he decided he was doing all the work and I was getting much of the gravy and it wasn't, he thought, fair to him. So, he just decided to take the bull by the horns, and even though all the furniture in the office was mine; a very nasty, temporarily nasty, situation. It wound up in litigation and so on, but it ultimately was resolved, but the fact remains that I had decided to retire. I had a few matters in which I was personally involved, as a trustee or executor, some of which still continue to this day, that I'm still involved in, but, as far as office practice, none.

SI: During much of this period, you had also been waging your fight to get recognized as a veteran and gain access to benefits. I know that is probably covered in the materials you are going to give me.

MD: Exactly. [Editor's Note: Mr. Deitz has made available to the Rutgers Oral History Archives a copy of a letter, with addendums, written to President Barrack Obama in support of the "Belated Thank You to Merchant Mariners of World War II Act (S-663)." The documents, available in Appendix A, provide the reader with a small glimpse of his long struggle to have his wartime service properly recognized by the US Government.] *{Mr. Deitz--In the physical copy to be deposited in the Special Collections & University Archives unit at Alexander Library, we can include copies of the documents as Appendix A. In the digital copy for our website, we can either make them into a Portable Document Format (PDF) document that readers can open by clicking on a hyperlink or simply insert a note such as, "Contact the Rutgers Oral History Archives for more information."--Shaun}*

SI: Could you give me a brief overview?

MD: Oh, there's no such thing as a brief overview. You know, we're talking about fifty-five years of effort, starting in 1944, I made a formal claim to the VA, which was obviously declined, until 1988, when Congress passed the Seaman's Act, I believe it was called, [Seaman Acts of 1988] that entitled merchant seamen to be considered veterans if they served in combat ninety

days or more, and so forth, and so on, combat areas, which brought me in the backdoor. … I filed a claim for disability and it was a multi-year fight, with the assistance of my Congressman [Harry A. Johnston, II] and his successor Congressman [Robert Wexler], successor in office. I first got benefits in, I think, 1990, ten percent disability. All the other stuff was ignored, until, gradually, it was about, I guess, four, five years ago that they finally conceded a hundred percent disability, but it was a long fight. You know how thick my files are?

SI: Probably pretty thick, several feet thick.

MD: A good couple of feet. If you want to take a look, I'll show you, [laughter] but they're stacked in a closet this high.

SI: Was it always on your own, filing your own petitions? Did you ever work with any groups, like the Merchant Marines veterans groups?

MD: No, it was all on my own. I knew … the validity of my claim. I was getting help from the Congressman's office as to what to do and how to do [it], because they had their contacts, with which they were able to guide me, but it took a long and arduous time. I had, twice, to go to St. Petersburg to appear at hearings and I think, once, we had an audio hearing, where I went to a hospital at Palm Beach, or maybe it was the clinic, I don't remember, very arduous battle, but I'm glad it's over.

SI: Are there any community or civic activities that you would like to discuss?

MD: Well, that too is an awful long period. I think what you might want to do, if I may suggest it, is, when you get back to the office, take a look at those two sheets, the second one of which I'm going to send to you, this one, and, if you need some amplification of any of those items that are listed in that *curriculum vitae,* we can do it by phone. That make sense?

SI: Yes.

MD: Because there's a whole lot of stuff there and it's just a compilation of names. You may want, for example, I was chairman of the first, newly-created Section on Taxation of the New Jersey State Bar Association. … I was asked by the President of the Bar Association and the Board of Trustees to head the section, because of my background, and I was Chairman of the section for two years, until my term limit was up. [For] that kind of stuff, you may want amplification. … I drafted New Jersey's first Professional Corporation Act. That was my field and I had a personal interest, because many of my colleagues would take advantage [of such an act], particularly if it was a multi-member firm, to form a professional corporation, whereby they could take a salary and take part of that salary deferred, tax-wise, put it into a retirement plan, let it earn tax-free income for their ultimate retirement. New Jersey never had a professional corporation act. A lawyer had to be a lawyer, individual. You could practice as partners, but you're individually liable. I worked with [New Jersey State] Senator (Cyrus Dolphy?), who was the [State] Senator from Mercer County, discussed it with him. He said, "Draft me a bill." He introduced it as I drafted it. It was enacted by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, *verbatim*. *New Jersey Law Journal* had a big article [on the passage of the act] and a letter was

produced in *New Jersey Law Journal* by one of the older practitioners who knew of my involvement with the Professional Corporation Act, wrote a nice letter, commendatory letter, to the editor [in response to] the article, recognizing that this is the first time in anyone's recollection that someone other than a legislative staff member had drafted a bill that was enacted *verbatim*. So, that kind of stuff, you may want to amplify, and we can do that by phone.

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

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 7/26/09
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 7/26/09
Approved for release by Morton Deitz 5/8/2015