RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH SHELDON DENBURG

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Sheldon Denburg on November 4, 1997, in West Orange, New Jersey, with Kurt Piehler …

Mark Weiner: … And Mark Weiner.

KP: I would like to begin by asking you a few questions about your father, especially since he was a Rutgers graduate.

Sheldon Denburg: [Class of] '19. Dad, Harry Lisle Denburg, was a chemistry major at Rutgers University, Rutgers College in those days, I guess it was, and a classmate of Paul Robeson, and was active, particularly in Jewish affairs. I think he was in the Menorah Society and is on record with the school historian for some sort of a letter that he wrote to the college president. Was it Demarest in those days? …

KP: Yes.

SD: I don't remember who. … I guess he was an early activist for the family. He was also involved with the Boy Scouts, I believe. He ran a troop in New Brunswick.

MW: Your father was born in Russia.

SD: Dad was born in Russia. His father was a baker, specifically, a *challah* baker, who came to this country to earn some money and would periodically go back and father a child, and then, eventually, his wife and the children came over. They settled in Newark.

MW: How did he manage to leave Russia?

SD: How did he manage? No idea.

KP: Why did he settle in Newark? Did he have family there?

SD: You know, I really don't [know]. I wish we … had done more historical research. … There may be parts of the family who know these things, but, I don't. … I think there are other bakery ends of the Denburg family who were in Newark and that's what probably brought them there.

KP: You are not positive.

SD: I'm not positive. I can remember visiting my grandparents. They had a home on Stratford Place in Newark and the walls reeked of chicken fat. I mean, you could smell the cooking and I thought it was marvelous food. My mother thought it wasn't. She couldn't believe how badly my grandmother cooked, but, I thought it was wonderful. [laughter] The kids grew up in … a cold water flat. They had one skate among the family. … It was really a poor bunch of kids, but, the grandmother was a very strong woman and really kept the family together. It was her responsibility, I think, [to ensure] that the family stuck together and developed. For example, it

was one of the boys, Ben, who was an athlete in the family, and he played a lot of basketball, and he wanted to play pro ball, quit school, and the dictum came down from the mama, "Ben can quit school to play basketball, but, he can't quit the violin lessons," that sort of thing. … She was what they called a *peruque macher*. She made wigs. The Orthodox community, among the Jewish women, wore wigs, and [she was] also known as a *schetal macher*, and that was her side business. … Herman Denburg, who was the oldest of the boys, was a very industrious, bright guy, never formally educated. I think he had a couple of years of a business school, and he was the oldest, and he founded what later became Barton Press. My dad is the only one who went to college and he got a scholarship, a State Scholarship. …

KP: You mentioned that you loved your grandmother's cooking, but, your mother was disdainful of her cooking. Why?

SD: Well, because … it was greasy stuff, you know, and it appealed to a kid, but, to someone a little more sophisticated when it came to baking and cooking, [laughter] not that my mother wasn't respectful of her, [she] just didn't think much of her cooking.

KP: I was just curious.

SD: … I guess it was similar food that everybody was eating in those [days], but, it wasn't the way my mom cooked.

MW: How did your parents meet?

SD: I really don't know, but, my mom was also born in Russia-Poland, I guess they called it the Pale, and … she came from a rather well-to-do family. Her parents were in the lumber business and they had a large home near a lumber mill. My father's parents came from much meaner circumstances. They lived in a little town called (Schlutz Gebenia?), which may no longer exist, I don't know, and … it was from this mean background that my father's family came from. My mom's family never achieved, financially, in this country, interesting. … They spoke a more elegant Yiddish, … her father was well-schooled, but, [they] didn't make it in the "Golden Medina."

KP: It sounds like you spoke a good amount of Yiddish while growing up.

SD: I spoke a little of it.

KP: However, clearly, your grandparents spoke Yiddish.

SD: Well, they did, absolutely. Yeah, they spoke quite a bit of it. … I grew up in the Weequahic section of Newark, which was largely Jewish, not totally Jewish, but, I mean, percentage wise, you didn't feel uncomfortable going to school there if you were Jewish, as opposed to other parts of the city. … I ended up going to … Maple Avenue School and Weequahic High School. Weequahic High School, in those days, was a spectacular place to be.

We had more kids go on to graduate degrees than from any school in the state. We had a wonderful principal by the name of Max Herzberg, who had written a book on mythology, and he was just a terrific educator. … I remember, we had a class reunion not too long ago, and one of our surviving teachers, I think it was Ben Epstein, came to talk to us, and he said, … "Teaching at Weequahic was like teaching in Camelot." It was everything that was perfect.

KP: You are not the first Weequahic alumnus to say that.

SD: … Remarkable school.

MW: Did your father ever tell you about his days at Rutgers while you were growing up?

SD: Oh, yes. He spoke about it. I don't remember too many of his memories of school. I remember going back with him on Alumni Day and losing consistently to Princeton. It was an unbelievable kind of a thing, ... watching him and all of his friends stand up and sing *On the Banks,* and going to the alumni parades and watching what looked like antiquated people, because I was a kid. [laughter] I guess we look the same now. … Also, I think Luther Martin was the Registrar in those days and … I remember Dad saying, "He knew every kid by name," and it was a much smaller school. … When I started school in 1944, in the Summer of '44, the school … seemed so small, and it was. I think, today, that the security force outnumbers what was the facility when I was at school. It changed.

KP: You are probably correct.

SD: I'm sure it does.

KP: Your father graduated in the same class as Paul Robeson. Did he ever share any stories or memories about Paul Robeson?

SD: I don't know that he and Mr. Robeson were … "buddy-buddies." I'm sure they knew each other, because the school's classes were so much smaller. He had a lot of respect for Paul Robeson, and he would buy books about him when they came out, and he was always proud that he was part of that group, but, I don't have any personal recollections of anything he may have said.

KP: Your father was very active in Jewish affairs at Rutgers.

SD: Yes, he was.

KP: In his day, Rutgers was not very open and friendly towards Jewish students.

SD: Oh, he mentioned some of the signs, … signs that might appear on Rutgers [campus], "Let's put all the Rutgers … Jewish students on a boat and send them back to Palestine," or something to that effect. There was a lot of anti-Semitic opinion on campus in those days.

KP: You and your father shared the fact that you both had to go to mandatory chapel.

SD: Well, he didn't mention anything about chapel to me. I guess they went, as we did, in the early years, to Voorhees Chapel, which was a little awkward at times, but, it wasn't a totally unhappy experience. It was spiritual. It was pleasant enough for me.

MW: Were you bothered by the fact that you had to attend chapel services?

SD: A little bit, at first. Then, I could see the bigger portion of it.

KP: Your father remained very involved with the University, as you have, despite some of his grievances about Rutgers.

SD: Stayed involved, contributed [to Rutgers]. … I think the old chemistry lab, [Milledoler Hall], he and his second wife made a contribution towards Rutgers and I think they named that hall after him. I remember going down there with him and the President having a nice, little luncheon for us, Bloustein, I think it was, at the time. …

MW: Where were you born?

SD: I was born in Newark, 1925.

MW: Do you remember the days of Prohibition from your youth?

SD: I grew up in the Weequahic section, went to Maple Avenue School, local Hebrew schools, and I just remember that it was the Depression, and you were very careful with what you spent your money on. I remember the hobo jungles in Newark and guys coming around to do some work for a little bit of food. … We always had a little box that we put the extra change into … to be sent to Israel to help out, a box, for charities. … Someone from the Pru used to come around and get a quarter a piece from us for life insurance, I just remember [that], and prices seemed to stay the same forever and ever. There were penny postcards, three-cent stamps, and nickel ice cream cones. … To a certain extent, I can't get out of that mode. I look at prices today and I get shocked.

KP: You became used to the prices from your childhood.

SD: Somehow or another, things didn't change that much for me.

KP: Was your family religiously observant?

SD: They were. I mean, we weren't kosher. We used kosher soap in the house, and we went to services, but, … I guess we were considered in the Conservative group, in those days, although my grandfather was a member of the *Anshe Russia shul* in Newark, which was a very Orthodox

operation. … I was just overwhelmed when I would go there for services on … Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. … The women were up in the balcony, and the men were down below, and they were all covered with their prayer shawls, and you could smell the snuff that they would take to keep them awake and alert during the service. [laughter] …

KP: The kids must have also done that.

SD: Oh, you can just see me and imagine and everyone had a different prayer book, like, at least, [when] you go to services today, everybody is using the same prayer book. Everybody had their own prayer book, but, they all seemed to be able to follow the services at their own speed. … There was no English in the prayer books. … The choir, it was an all-male choir, and it sounded like the Don Cossack choir, all Russian melodies [that] these cantors were singing, and the hooting and hollering of the choir was marvelous to me, [laughter] … and the rabbi would give his sermon, and the women would be crying up in the balcony. It seemed the more tears they shed, the better off the sermon was. [laughter] I hated the rabbi for that, making my grandma cry.

KP: You spoke about Weequahic High School and the Weequahic section of Newark.

SD: The Weequahic section, ... a lot of the Jewish families tended to move, from other parts of Newark, into the Weequahic section.

KP: You said that you might have encountered overt anti-Semitism in other neighborhoods.

SD: You might. … I found that, you know, in the Boy Scout camp and other places, it was always a shock to me any time someone would call me a kike or something like that. I didn't even know what the heck it meant, because, coming out of Weequahic, nobody knew. Nobody spoke to you that way, but, I found it in the Scout camp, I found it in the Army, I found it all over the place. I was living in an isolated, … insulated area, so-to-speak, when I grew up in Newark.

KP: A number of interviewees, even those that did not live in Weequahic, have commented that overt anti-Semitism was pretty rare.

SD: Well, I don't know. … I'm sure there were other areas of Newark where it might have been somewhat different, but, growing up [in Weequahic], it certainly wasn't where I was, and finding it in the Scouts and finding it in the Army was really a bit of a shock to me.

KP: Your father was active with the Boy Scouts when the Boy Scouts was a rather biased organization. What motivated him to become an active Scout leader?

SD: I really don't know, just, I guess, an interest in kids, and the ideals of Scouting must have appealed to him.

KP: You were a Boy Scout.

SD: I still serve. … I mean, I was with Troop 65 as a kid, became an Eagle Scout, went to Camp Mohican, which is no longer a Scout camp, but, was then, for the Robert Tree Council. … After I got married, I got back into Scouting. I serve with the … Essex Council and that was consolidated with four other counties into the North Jersey Council.

MW: Did your father hold any strong political beliefs?

SD: I once asked Dad, I said, "What are we? Are we liberals? Are we reactionaries?" He said, "We're conservatives." … I wasn't even quite sure what a conservative was. He was strongly a … conservative Democrat, very Roosevelt oriented. I remember, he took us to Washington and we saw Roosevelt. … It was like something magic. I mean, he looked so fantastic, all tanned up from some Southern trip or whatever, riding in an open limo, and the crowds adored him. He was pulling us out of a Depression, although it would take a war to do it. He was at the height of his popularity and he looked like something out of heaven. [laughter] … He radiated.

KP: Did your family vote for Roosevelt consistently?

SD: Oh, yes, certainly. I can remember, when [we were] … in third or fourth grade and Roosevelt was running against Hoover, … the teacher did a poll, figuring that we would vote the way our parents were probably talking about, and Roosevelt won in our class, and, of course, he carried the election, but that is as far back as my political remembrances go.

KP: Your father was a conservative Democrat.

SD: … He was not a conservative … the way a conservative today is conservative. He just felt that he was in the middle, you know. He wasn't reactionary, he wasn't radical. God knows we knew what radical was. I had an aunt and an uncle who were registered members of the Communist Party, card carriers. … I would get books … for every birthday or every holiday about how these kids got their ass kicked in until they got to Russia, where they were treated like princes, you know. … [laughter] It was interesting, and my father was horrified that I'm on these lists and that the Dies Committee would come by and do something horrible to me, because I was on the mailing list, but, my aunt and uncle eventually got disillusioned and dropped their cards.

KP: When did they become disillusioned?

SD: … Well, my aunt and uncle, who were the Communists, split. … I don't know what happened with him or his sympathies, but, my aunt probably after the war. After the war … was over, [she] started to lose her sympathies for the Communist Party.

MW: Your family supported Franklin Roosevelt. Were you or your family affected by any of the New Deal programs?

SD: … My dad was always involved with the family business, as far back as I can remember. So, we did better than the average family was doing, [because] we had jobs. So, the Depression wasn't as onerous as it was on a lot of other people.

KP: Can you tell us about your family's business, Barton Press, and its origins?

SD: … That's interesting. Herman Denburg, who was the oldest of the boys, he had an older sister, Sara, had a real estate business in Newark and noticed that a fellow by the name of Harry Barton died and his business was up for sale. Herman approached the estate. The business didn't consist of much. It was a couple of offices, in which he had a mimeograph machine, and a multigraph machine, and an addresseograph machine, and a typewriter. … Unfortunately, physically, he was deformed, had very little going for him below the waist. … They used to bring him up and sit him in his chair, and he would run off letters, … handle the addressing and the mailing for various fraternal organizations, the Elks, the Legion, and things like that. … Herman thought it might be an interesting business to set his brothers up in, and he brought the business, and two of the brothers went into it, and then, Herman got involved in it, and then, Harry, I think, was the last of them to get involved in it. … They developed it from a simple lot to something rather impressive.

KP: When did your family buy the business?

SD: I don't know what year he bought it, but, I think we incorporated it in '22.

KP: It was a fairly old business.

SD: Oh, yes. It goes back, right.

KP: Hence the name Barton.

SD: It was … Barton Business Service. They kept that name for awhile, and then, changed it to Barton Press, as we got more into the printing [aspect] of it.

MW: Was your entire family involved in the business?

SD: My father and his brothers and one sister [were involved] and Dad was very active in the organization of the printing businesses throughout the State of New Jersey, particularly locally. He was president of the Master Printers' Association of Newark and Vicinity. Master printer meant someone who owned his own printing shop. … It later became Printing Industries of New Jersey, which I became president of for awhile. … He was active in getting us to join the Printing Industries of America, PIA, and he was also the prime negotiator between union shops and the unions in the area. He would negotiate the contracts. [It would be] kind of interesting when he would be talking to the fellows and he said, "Now, look, … I know just where you are coming from, because, when my father was a baker, was on the picket lines, I would bring him

his lunch." So, he kind of had them at a disadvantage. [laughter] … He was very disarming, but, he was very effective, a bright guy and a wonderful man, highly regarded.

KP: Managing a business during the Great Depression must have been a real struggle.

SD: I imagine it was and I don't know too much about it. I know nobody was making much money and pennies went far.

KP: Were there ever any fears over losing money?

SD: No, I knew that money was [scarce]. We all had a lot of respect for money. Pennies counted. … [There was] a famous restaurant in our area called the Tavern Restaurant, owned by a fellow by the name of Sam Tieger, who, I think, was a Prohibition character in his day. It was outside of Weequahic Park, … on Meeker Avenue and it was a very popular, very successful restaurant in the area. … I could remember … Mama saying, "Don't order the roast beef, order this, because it's twenty-five cents cheaper," or whatever. … You can't forget these things. Certainly, I didn't forget them. That's why, today, I still find it difficult, somehow, paying these prices. [laughter] My kids have no problem.

KP: Did you ever go on vacations in the 1930s?

SD: I was fortunate that I was able to go to camp. All the boys in the family went to Camp Cherokee, in Beachlake, Pennsylvania, because Barton used to print the camp book, … and we would sign all the kids up together, so, we got a big discount, twenty-five dollars off the seasonal price, plus, a free jacket or something like that. … That's where we spent our summers, generally.

KP: Was that a Boy Scout camp?

SD: No, that was a boys' camp, but, after I joined the Scouts, I would go to Camp Mohican. … To give you an idea of what camps cost in those [days], Camp Mohican was ten dollars a week, but, if you signed up before May 10th, this is how I seem to remember this, it was eight dollars a week for the first two weeks, a crazy number to remember, but, it gives you a sense of how things were in those days.

MW: When did you join the Boy Scouts?

SD: When I was twelve. …

KP: Who sponsored your troop?

SD: It was Troop 65. The Scoutmaster was a fellow by the name of Charlie Cohen. Charlie worked for Bamberger's, in the upholstery department, and, in effect, we were his family. … It

was at the Young Israel Synagogue, on the corner of Lehigh Avenue and Bergen Street, upstairs from the drugstore, a small, little *shul*, and they gave us one room, Thursday nights.

MW: Were most of the Scouts in your troop Jewish?

SD: Probably the whole troop.

KP: Did you go to the National Jamboree in Washington?

SD: Oh, gee, that was a dream, somehow, but, I never got there.

KP: However, you were aware of it.

SD: Oh, sure. I got *Boy's Life* … and I used to read everything that came my way.

KP: Newark was a …

SD: … Wonderful town.

KP: The population was very dynamic.

SD: I would travel every place on that bus. I could take the 48 Maple Avenue Bus, the 14 Clinton Place Bus, and go wherever I wanted to go, and you went. There was no problem. I would go to the Newark Museum every Saturday morning, and, generally, stop by Bamberger's and look at the Scouting goods department, and I admired a Buck sheath knife that was three dollars. It took me years to accumulate the money to buy that knife, [laughter] but, I bought it, and I still have it.

KP: Did you go to the movies?

SD: The Park Theater, the Roosevelt Theater, the Hawthorne Theater, the Mayfair Theater, they were all [within] reasonably walking distance, and ten or fifteen cents, and five cents for a bag of candy that would last you through the whole performance.

KP: Did you work during high school? Did you work at Barton Press?

SD: On vacations, we'd go down to Barton and do folding and hand inserting, and we'd earn a quarter for the day. … That was big money. Of course, I baby-sat whenever I could, for another quarter a night, but, ... I didn't have any full-time, after-school jobs.

KP: Besides the Boy Scouts, what other activities were you involved in during high school?

SD: I was on the school patrol, and I was in the John H. Logan Honor Society, and I was manager of the basketball team. We had a great basketball team at Weequahic, in those years, and [I was] a member of various after-school clubs.

MW: You were still in high school when Pearl Harbor was attacked.

SD: Yes, Pearl Harbor happened in 1941.

MW: Do you remember exactly where you were when you heard the news?

SD: I remember exactly where I was. I had a classmate by the name of Bobby Kampf, and we were at his house. When the news came over on the radio, we immediately started outside to dig up his lawn and plant a Victory garden, and his father came home shocked that we had torn up the lawn, but, his father was an ex-Navy vet and was very depressed at hearing what had happened at Pearl Harbor. … That was the day. I mean, that's where I was and I remember it very clearly.

KP: As soon as you heard the news, you started a Victory garden.

SD: Digging up his garden, his lawn. [laughter]

MW: Did your family follow the war in Russia?

SD: Not particularly. They had no sympathies whatsoever with Russia.

KP: You mentioned donating to Palestine earlier. It sounds like your family had Zionist sympathies.

SD: Yes, but, everybody … contributed to the Jewish National Fund, I think it was called in those days. … It seemed the thing to do. … You never even thought twice about it. It wasn't political even. Mom had family who had made *aliyah*, had gone to Israel, from Russia, in the early 1930s and they're the only ones who survived [the Holocaust]. We had a family guild, the Denburg Family Guild, and, every month, we would meet someplace, and we had a pretty extensive family, and we would send money to the families that were left in Europe, and then, the letters started coming back unopened, "Can't find [the addressee]," and that was just about the end of everything.

KP: How long did the family guild last?

SD: I really don't remember. It just kind of dissolved slowly.

KP: However, you remember these family guilds from your childhood.

SD: Yes, sure. They would get together, and everybody would give the news of the family, and then, we would play bingo, and we would eat cake and coffee.

KP: How many people would come to a guild meeting?

SD: We could have a hundred or so.

KP: That is a large group.

SD: Yes. There was a lot of associated family that came along.

KP: Did it fade away in the 1940s or later?

SD: Oh, I think, by the late 1940s, it was pretty extinct.

MW: You were sixteen when Pearl Harbor was attacked. Did you think, initially, that the war would affect you directly?

SD: It never occurred to me, at that time, you know, that I would be in the Army. Who knew how long the war would last? No, I didn't think about it at that time.

KP: Were you still a Boy Scout at the time?

SD: … By sixteen, I guess I was not. I had been involved in a senior Scouting group and Charlie Cohen wanted us to stay together as much as was possible. … There used to be a salvage squad that was associated with the fire department, and the idea of the salvage squad was, if there was a fire, they would run in and cover the furniture with … rubberized drop cloths, which would save as much as possible against fire, smoke and water damage, the contents of the apartment or the house, and it was sponsored by the insurance companies in the town. So, we learned how to spread [the cloths], [laughter] we learned how to jump into safety nets and do things like that, and that was our pre-war or war effort involvement in the Boy Scouts and senior scouting. … That no longer exists.

KP: There was an elaborate air raid warning system in Newark and many drills.

SD: Oh, sure.

KP: Do you recall these drills at all?

SD: You know, I think back a lot and I can't. I know that my wife's father was an air raid warden in South Orange. … Offhand, I just can't remember too much about that.

KP: How did the war change Weequahic High School? You were only sixteen, but, the seniors were seventeen and eighteen.

SD: I wasn't particularly aware of … any change of pace, of any change even in the phys. ed. I know they introduced a course at … Weequahic on aeronautical mathematics. I ended up taking that class. … We would have, in class, kids come back who had graduated from bombardier school and navigational school … talk to us about how important mathematics was in the Air Corps, but, there was no Junior ROTC or anything like that, as I can remember.

KP: Did the high school or the Boy Scouts organize any bond drives or scrap drives?

SD: There were bond drives, of course, and there were all sorts of things like that, but, I just don't remember anything particularly in the school. There may very well have been. I just don't remember.

MW: After you graduated, why did you decide to go to Rutgers instead of enlisting?

SD: I did enlist. … First of all, I took the exams for what was called the ASTP, the A-12 and the V-12 programs, and, if you passed the exam, then, theoretically, you would enter the ASTP program, the Army Specialized Training Program. … After you took basic [training], you would then go back to school, which sounded interesting to me. I took the test and I passed them, and then, I enlisted. … If you enlisted, they would call you up six months after your eighteenth birthday. So, I decided I would enlist, go down to Rutgers, get as much as I could get, and, when they called me up, I'd be called up, and, that way, I'd have that much more schooling, and that's what happened.

KP: How did paper rationing affect Barton Press?

SD: … Sure, paper was rationed, and so, most commercial jobs didn't get printed. We were printing for the Raritan Arsenal and other things like that.

KP: Did the business do well during the war?

SD: We stayed busy.

KP: It sounds like government contracts filled the void left by commercial business.

SD: That's right. You had to be doing that, for the most part, or you couldn't get paper.

KP: Was Barton Press unionized?

SD: We were, absolutely.

KP: Do you remember which union represented Barton Press?

SD: Yes. We had the Typesetters' Union, the Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union, we had the male and female Bookbinders' Unions, two different ones, and, eventually, we got the Amalgamated Lithographers', when we got into litho[graphy]. There were five unions.

KP: Your father had a lot of experience with unions.

SD: That's right. He certainly did.

KP: Were there ever any strikes?

SD: We've had slowdowns. I don't remember ever having a strike.

KP: Were there actual picket lines?

SD: … They did have slowdowns.

MW: Did your father influence your decision to go to Rutgers?

SD: Absolutely. I couldn't imagine going anywhere else. … It was in the blood. [laughter]

KP: You have very early memories of Rutgers.

SD: I sure do, and my sister went to … NJC, New Jersey College for Women, which later became Douglass, and, sure, we were Rutgers people.

MW: Were you here on a scholarship?

SD: … When I came back from the [service], I had the GI Bill.

KP: When you first arrived on campus, Rutgers was a very small college.

SD: Well, it started to grow even then, because they moved [in] the ASTP kids. The Army was moving in. I remember, they took over the gymnasium and all sorts of [things], made a mess hall up there. They were moving in … when I was down there.

KP: You entered Rutgers in the Summer of 1943.

SD: Right. … There were summer programs. … They were doing everything they could to accelerate the programs.

KP: The ASTP moved in, but, the number of civilian students was shrinking.

SD: Sure, we were shrinking a lot, but, ROTC was a big thing on campus. I don't remember the major's name who ran our group, but, he was a vinegary type of guy and would say something

like, "When the time comes and you've got to take this hill, you'll look at the guy to the left, you'll look to the guy to the right, and you'll say, 'Sorry you guys won't be here, but, I'll make it,'" you know, something like that, and I can remember going to Buccleuch Park, where we would … do our parades and marches, and kids would come back from Fort Benning and other places, where they'd been in infantry training school, in their sharp little uniforms, and ... put us through our steps, and the Major was so proud to introduce these kids, and then, two weeks, three weeks later, we'd get the report back that they were gone already. Infantry lieutenants didn't last very long. … Most of the kids, it seemed to me, that died, from Rutgers, were killed in Air Corps training accidents, enormous numbers of them.

KP: You mentioned that you took a special course in high school. Did you consider joining the Army Air Force?

SD: No, no, I hadn't. My eyes were never great to begin with. I didn't think I'd be accepted in the Air Corps. It never occurred to me. …

MW: Why did you join the Army?

SD: It was the Army, the Navy, or the Marines. You just decided one or the other. … I don't know why.

KP: You initially majored in chemistry.

SD: My dad was a chemistry major, so, I was taken with the idea.

KP: Were you interested in chemistry as a child?

SD: Yes, I sure was and I achieved pretty well in my freshman year. When I came back from the service, somehow or other, … I seemed to have lost my ability to study. I just couldn't concentrate on the books and I was doing abysmally. I was screwing up. Chemistry, I didn't do too well in, and math was not so good. I was on report in both of these things, to my shock. I was getting "4"s in these subjects, and I couldn't believe it, and I switched my major.

KP: Usually, we hear about men entering the service as poor or average students and returning to Rutgers as better students.

SD: That wasn't me. [laughter] … I went the other way. I'd find myself reading the book and reading the book and … it didn't mean anything, nothing was sinking in, at least for … awhile.

MW: Did you enjoy living in the Quad?

SD: Yes, I liked the Quad. At first, when I came down as a freshman, … I lived at 82 Somerset Street. I think we called it the "Zoo House." It was right next to the church on Somerset Street, and my room was right up against the [train] tracks, the Pennsy tracks, and I remember the first

time a train came roaring by at night, and the window's shaking in the frame, [laughter] and the searchlight from the locomotive seemed to flash across the walls of the room, and I thought it was, like, a bomber going overhead. Eventually, I learned to live with this sound and not even [flinch], but, at first, it was rather frightening. … Then, I think I was asked to join Phi Epsilon Pi, and I was living there for awhile, and then, they moved. The fraternity house was taken over by the Army, and so, I moved home, and I commuted by train. I [have] a marvelous memory. … I was back from the service and still commuting for awhile by train, and I had a mathematics prof who would see the train coming in, down in New Brunswick, and then, station himself at a particular spot, assuming that he could figure out the deceleration [of the train] and where the door would be when the train stopped, and he never made it, and he was always shocked that he would always end up in the middle of the train, as far away from the door as he could possibly be. [laughter]

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

KP: During the war, many Rutgers traditions were either declining or postponed for the duration.

SD: I think that probably was so. … The campus life was not like it probably used to be, before the war, but, I didn't know what it was like before the war, because I wasn't involved, you know, in it. … I was home a lot during that first … half-year at Rutgers. … I don't think I was part of the campus life, particularly.

KP: Did you go to any dances?

SD: Not as a freshman.

KP: Did you attend any athletic events?

SD: I imagine I probably did, but, I don't remember much about it.

MW: Were you involved in any activities or clubs at Rutgers?

SD: … Not as a freshman.

MW: Were you more involved after the war?

SD: Yes.

KP: Were you surprised that you were able to spend an entire year at Rutgers?

SD: I only spent six months at Rutgers, but, I got credit for a full year.

KP: When did you have to report to the Army?

SD: January 22nd of '44.

KP: Where did you report to, initially?

SD: Fort Dix; I mean, to the post office. I was trying to think back, I can't remember how I got to Fort Dix, whether I took a train or they took buses down. All I remember [is] Fort Dix.

MW: Were you sorry to leave Rutgers?

SD: I was kind of excited to be in the Army, because it felt like that was the place to be. It was a righteous war, at least, I thought it was a righteous war, and I guess it was, compared to some of the other wars we've been in, but, I was really kind of excited at the idea of going into the service.

MW: Since you were active in the Jewish community, had you heard about the anti-Semitic activities in Germany?

SD: The atrocities? vaguely. It wasn't quite as clear then as it became. I think we heard a lot. We probably did.

KP: You mentioned that you were glad to be in the Army. Since Camp Kilmer was right across the river and hundreds of GIs were filtering into New Brunswick, did you feel funny being a civilian at Rutgers?

SD: Funny? No, I knew I was going to go in the service. … I mean, I enlisted before I graduated from … [high school].

KP: You were just waiting to be called up.

SD: Right. …

KP: What did you do at Fort Dix?

SD: At Fort Dix, I was put into a barracks with a lot of other guys who were going somewheres or another. … If you were signed up for ASTP, then, you went down to Fort Benning, generally, to get basic training, and I pulled something like thirty-six out of forty-eight hours of KP [for] the first couple of days I was down there, and then, was sent down to Fort Benning, to the Harmony Church area, where the ASTP boys were getting their basic training, and then, after a couple of months of basic, you were being sent to school. They broke up the program while I was still down there, during basic, and people were starting to get shipped out, upon completion of basic, to repple-depples, replacement depots. I got sick while I was down at Benning, … just about the time we were taking bayonet work, and got a terrific case of lobar pneumonia. They thought I was going to die. They sent … home a message, "Come on down, if you want to see your son again before he goes," and, fortunately, I pulled through, … but, Dad did come down. … When

they heard I was so sick, they asked, "Did anybody know anybody who was down in Fort Benning?" and they said, "Yeah, get in touch with Doc Adlerstein. He's a dentist from the area. He's down there." So, they called Doc Adlerstein, got in touch with him, and this little major shows up with a big cigar, and he's blowing smoke at me, and I'm dying from pneumonia, but, he was a cigar smoker. [laughter] Of interest was, I later married his daughter, the Major's daughter. … It was just a wild coincidence. I met her at a party, back in Newark, many years later, and it was only through mutual speaking, back and forth, that we realized who she was and what … the past relationship was, [laughter] but, I knew her father before [I knew] her, … [under] very interesting circumstances. … When I got out of the hospital, I was sent home on a recuperation furlough. … When I came back to Fort Benning, the ASTP guys were gone, and we were put in a casual company, and, for whatever reason, and I have no idea why, they sent me to Camp Grant in the medics, and I took medical basic at Camp Grant. … Shortly before we were supposed to be sent overseas, I was assigned … to go to a lab school at Atlanta. The hospital escapes me at this time. … I went down there for lab school, and, after four months of lab school, I was assigned to the 306th General Hospital in Tacoma, Washington, they had activated the 300-Series of hospitals. From Fort Lewis, Washington, we were then sent down to Fort Jackson in Columbia, South Carolina, to do parallel training at a hospital down there, and we trained there, took over all the jobs, and then, we're sent up to Camp Kilmer, where they taught us how to get on and off a boat, and we took a few more shots and went overseas, and that was an interesting experience. We wake up one morning and see the sea covered with boats. It was … an enormous convoy. … As far as your eye could see, there were boats. You think of the enormous job of putting something like this together. We landed in Le Havre. …

KP: When did you land in France?

SD: Kind of late. At this point, the war's winding down. We landed the day before Roosevelt died, which was in April, '45

MW: Do you remember where you were when you heard that Roosevelt had died?

SD: I think it was in Le Havre, at that point, as we were getting off the boats, or it could have been a day later, and V-E Day followed very quickly thereafter. … We were sent to the town of St. Valery en Caux on the Normandy coast, to what was then known as Camp Lucky Strike. There was a whole series of "cigarette camps" that were set up along the Normandy coast, Lucky Strike, 20 Grand, Old Gold, Philip Morris. There may have been others, but, those are the ones that I [remember]. Old Gold, remember, there was a cigarette [called] Old Gold? … This was the largest tent city in the world, at that time. … Lucky Strike may have been the biggest of them all and it was on a former German Air Force base, right on the Channel coast. … It was known as a "RAMP camp." It stood for "Repatriated Allied Military Personnel." They would send these kids, as they were being released from the [prison camps], they called themselves "*krieggies*." "*Krieg*" was German for "War." … They were American PWs who were being released from these camps and they came back to our hospital. We set up a very rudimentary hospital, just to check these guys out, give them a very fast physical, and possibly get them in shape, so [that] they could go home, see if they were in shape to go home, and we did this for

awhile, and then, they packed us up and sent us down to southern France in these cattle cars, these forty-and-eights, [Mr. Denburg describes the cars in French before giving the English translation], "Forty men or eight horses," and we traveled down there, and we went to the Saint-Victoret staging area, outside of Marseilles, to get ready to ship to the Pacific. Supposedly, we were going to Tinian as a consolidated hospital operation in preparation of the jump off to the Japanese mainland. … Before we left, they dropped the first A-bomb. … After we left, they dropped the second, and then, instead of going … towards the [Panama] Canal, which would take us to the Pacific, from Marseilles, we ended up traveling northwest, and we were sent back to Boston, to Camp Myles Standish. They broke up the outfit.

KP: You were heading towards the Pacific without returning to the United States.

SD: Yes. Initially, the intent was to go to [Japan]. Sure, the war wasn't over.

KP: Did you take a train to Fort Benning?

SD: I imagine. … I'm pretty sure we took a train out of Newark.

KP: Had you traveled to the South before?

SD: No, that was a new experience, short of being in Washington, but, that was a cultural shock to me, to see the way the blacks were treated down there at the time. It was a surprise. … Certainly, I was a liberal Easterner, … despite my father calling us conservatives. We were really quite liberal and it was a shock to me to find that.

MW: Did you encounter any anti-Semitism in the South?

SD: Not in the South as much as in the Army. I found it, you know, not overtly, [but], there was some of it.

KP: Do any incidents stick out?

SD: No, not offhand.

KP: At Fort Benning, you learned that the ASTP program had been dissolved.

SD: Yes. The cadre was so delighted, the guys who trained us, you know, to see us go into active duty, or heading for it shortly, [laughter] instead of having to go to college.

KP: Were you or the members of your ASTP unit disappointed that you were being reassigned to active duty?

SD: Oh, I imagine … there was. … Once you're in service, there were very few guys that looked forward to the idea of combat, when you realized … all the guns you were dealing with,

and the death, the potential of it, but, I think there was a lot of shock when they broke the outfit up. With a lot of these guys, … that's why they joined. They joined to go to school.

KP: What was basic training like? Do you remember your drill instructor?

SD: I'll give you a side view of him. … Now, remember, I said the bayonet course is when I got sick. I was sitting around in this barracks, getting some preliminary instruction, and this fellow says something like, I'll paraphrase it, "This is a M1A2 bayonet, nine inches of chilled steel. We want to get you guys to the point where you don't care what's in your gun but what's on the end of it, and, someday, you're going to come back and show your kids this thing and say, 'See that nick? That's where it glanced off some Heinie's rib.'" …

KP: He sounds like an old school Southerner.

SD: For that particular [class], that sergeant was. I think they were hardworking instructors. It was a very serious effort.

KP: Were most of the ASTP students from the Northeast?

SD: No, they were from all over. I think most of the ones that I met at Fort Benning, for whatever reason, were, in large measure, from the Northeast, but, there was no reason why they shouldn't be from all over.

KP: Did you ever attend services while you were in the Army?

SD: … Yes, there weren't that many Jewish chaplains. At Fort Benning, as I remember, the service that I went to was handled by civilian volunteers from the Jewish Welfare Board, JWB, or whatever. First time I heard a Jew with a Southern accent, I couldn't quite believe that it was for real. [laughter]

KP: While you were stationed at Fort Benning, were you ever allowed off base?

SD: No. … We weren't getting passes in basic training. Yes, I must have, [because] I remember going to Columbus, Georgia, which was the local town. Yes, I'm sure we did. On the weekends, we must have gotten some sort of break. … The Chattahoochee River is the dividing line between Alabama and Georgia. Fort Benning was on both sides of the river. It was an enormous camp. There were probably over 400,000 people, or close to that. The other side of the river, from Columbus, Georgia, was Phoenix City, which was like the Wild West, whorehouses and gambling casinos. … The paratroopers, who trained at Fort Benning, kind of made Phoenix City their home and probably eighty percent of the kids in the stockade, at any one time, were paratroopers, who were being urged by their cadre and their officers to be tough. They wanted this devil-may-care, "life doesn't mean zoo," attitude, because it didn't among the paratroopers, but, this was their hometown.

KP: Did you ever go to the "Wild West?"

SD: No. … I ventured, briefly, to get a look at the scene.

KP: It really was a wild town.

SD: Kind of. It seemed that way. … I do remember going to a USO which was at a "Y" in Columbus, Georgia, and they had a reading rack, and I took some little message from the reading rack, and it [said], "Marriage: Time Enough For The First Kiss." I was so [surprised]. [laughter] … It was real deep Bible Belt country and we had a lot of those guys in the service. We had a lot of Bible Belters in my barracks as well.

KP: In the 1920s, anti-Semitism was rampant in the South, especially with the rebirth of the Klan.

SD: I didn't find much of it. There was some. In some cases, you'd be the first Jewish person they'd ever met. People would be surprised, and you'd get to talking, but, if you were pretty much a decent guy, there didn't seem to be any trouble.

KP: One veteran told me that, when he told Southerners that he was Jewish, they literally said, "You can't be. Jews have horns."

SD: Well, you know, I'll give you something like that. When I graduated from Rutgers, I went out to Carnegie-Mellon for a summer program, … some printing courses, because I was going to go into the company's business, and we're a bunch of ex-vets, for the most part, who were taking these classes, and I met a guy from Texas. He was in the 36th Division, the Texas Division, and we're walking into town, from the dorm, Scoball Hall, and we get to talking. He's a lovely guy. He was shocked that I was Jewish. Now, mind you, the war is now over. I am the first Jewish guy he has ever met and he gives me this business, "Let me look at your back," show horns or whatever he was expecting. He couldn't quite believe it and I found him kind of extraordinary. … He was still in that Texas Division of his. It was a rather insular kind of group.

KP: Do you have any other memories of basic training? Did you pull as much KP duty at Fort Benning as you did at Fort Dix?

SD: No. They were more interested in getting you trained. You know, they didn't have the time to put you on KP, for the most part. … You'd pull fire duty or something like that, fire guard watching.

KP: Guard duty?

SD: … It was guard duty with a flashlight. You'd walk around and check the furnaces. God forbid there'd be a fire, you know, those wooden barracks.

KP: How many weeks into basic training were you when you got sick?

SD: [I] may have gone about halfway through. I hadn't gotten to the range yet. I hadn't gone on bivouac yet.

MW: Were you treated with penicillin?

SD: Penicillin, … when you're in the hospital, … in our hospital, was only for the kids who had spinal meningitis and ... a lot of kids got spinal meningitis on bivouac. If you had pneumonia, you got sulfa, which worked, but, they would reserve the [penicillin] for the super critical cases, which was spinal meningitis, and the sulfa that we got was pretty crude stuff. The (sulfalidimide?) … was like the earlier drugs, and you had to be careful, because it tended to crystallize out in the kidneys, and they'd give you sodium citrate along with that stuff.

KP: You eventually served in the lab of a hospital unit. However, your first experience with Army medicine was as a patient.

SD: Right.

KP: How well were you treated as a patient?

SD: Very well, I thought. I mean, I recovered. … Medicine in the Army was pretty good in World War II. You had top notch doctors who were being drafted and sent into service. … Nurses were top notch. Of course, the diagnostic techniques, the drugs and all, were not as great as they are today, but, the care was quite good, particularly in a large facility.

KP: Before going overseas, you returned home. It sounds as if your parents were relieved to see you after getting a telegram that you were at death's door.

SD: Well, I recovered, … but, I had a full month of recuperation furlough. The Army said, "Well, let's let him go home for awhile. Why keep him around? We can't do anything with him anyway for a month, until he gets stronger."

MW: Did you realize how sick you were?

SD: I wasn't aware of it. … I was in a coma there for awhile and I didn't know it.

KP: How long were you in the hospital?

SD: At least three weeks.

KP: That is a long stay.

SD: Sure, but, they didn't have the same kind of drugs [as we do today].

KP: When you returned to Fort Benning, you were placed into a casual company.

SD: [In] a casual company, … they just kept you busy. … We did roving guard duty and things like that, until they reassigned you. We were in the permanent barracks, which was beautiful, red brick stuff, … a lovely mess hall. I drove [on] guard duty. We drove C&R cars around in the Sand Hill area. The Sand Hill area was where the armored divisions had done their training. … General Patton's house, I remember passing by this thing, and his group had been … sent to Europe already. The Seventh Armored had been down at Fort Benning and trained. It was screwed up badly, got chopped up all over, wherever they got into combat. They had been there. … That was most of my experience … in the casual company, … roving guard.

KP: You next went for basic medical training.

SD: Right, Camp Grant.

KP: How long was the basic medical course? How did that training differ from basic infantry training?

SD: Well, we had no weapons work. We didn't have to handle weapons, so, we learned about bandaging, and this and that, and how to give plasma, and how to handle wounds, because we were being trained to be EMT people, Emergency Medical Training people, and then, if you were picked to go to tech school, to become something different, a little more advanced, other than what they would teach us, that was something else.

KP: If you had not gone to tech school, you might have …

SD: I would have ended up being a combat medic.

KP: Where were the other trainees in basic medical training from? What were their backgrounds?

SD: We were everything. I mean, it wasn't kids who were going to be pre-meds who ended up in the [medics]. I don't think the Army was that specific. … How did I get there? I have no idea.

KP: Did you ever apply for the medics?

SD: No. I think what happens is that they decide [based on need]. You know, someone says, "We need hospitals, so, … let's send the next batch into medicine," or whatever.

KP: Leaving basic early, due to your illness, and then, being thrown into basic medical, I have the feeling that you never fired a weapon.

SD: I fired a weapon when I came back. I didn't have enough points for discharge, when I came back from Europe. I had damaged my leg, somehow or other, [while] disembarking, and my knee locked, and I was hospitalized for awhile when we got back to Fort Dix, and then, got reassigned to the Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Harrison, Indiana, an Army prison camp. Everybody in the camp had been convicted by a general court-martial. A general court-martial is the highest court-martial that the Army gave. They could give a death penalty, they could give you life imprisonment, they could do all sorts of [things]. These were murderers, black marketeers, deserters, a pretty rough crew. They had a dispensary inside the compound, and I was assigned to that dispensary, to be the lab tech, and, there, everybody had to be familiar with the weapons that were used, in case of a riot. You had everything but rifles. We fired shotguns, we fired .45 caliber pistols, we fired grease guns, but, we didn't fire any rifles, because they carried too far. [You were] liable to kill people nowhere near what you were aiming for.

KP: How long were you stationed there?

SD: At the prison camp? about three months.

KP: The experience left quite an impression on you.

SD: … I had gone to Camp Crowder, Missouri, … for reassignment, and, from Camp Crowder, they sent me up to Fort Harrison, Indiana. …

MW: When you landed in Europe, was that when you first learned about the German atrocities?

SD: Oh, we knew about them before then.

MW: Before you were sent to Europe?

SD: Yes. Sure, we had some sense of that. … It was interesting. At Le Havre, which was where we landed, the harbor facility had been completely destroyed. We docked in the middle of the harbor, and they tugged out sort of a float with a gangway on it, and we walked down this thing, ended up in LCIs, and chugged our way to the beach, and the LCI pulls up on the beach, the front drops down, and we splash off into an inch or two of water. We were carrying our barracks bags, and [laughter] there's this kid with a beret hanging over his eye, a cigarette hanging out of his mouth, and a Sten gun hanging over his shoulder, and he looks at us and says, "*Oh, la, la*," you know, "Look who's here." [laughter] We were kind of late when we arrived, but, nevertheless, we did splash into some water.

KP: Before heading to Europe, you were sent to lab school in Tacoma, Washington.

SD: No, in Atlanta, Georgia.

KP: Was the school in a hospital?

SD: Yes. I think it was Lawson General.

KP: What did you learn? What was your specialty?

SD: We had four months of training. We had bacteriology, blood chemistry, sanitary chemistry, paristitology, malarialogy, hematology, and … had histology, which was the preparation of tissues, because you might have to work with the autopsies. It was four months of pretty heavy training, lots of class work.

KP: It sounds like you spent a good part of your time in the classroom or studying.

SD: We studied. We're in the labs and in the classroom, and took lots of notes, … had lots of physicians, and others who were teaching us, and we piled a lot in. It's amazing how much of that I remember. … I can quote you parasites, you know, and I still know my malarialogy. Today, I talk to people and they look at me kind of shocked. [laughter]

KP: Did you ever consider going into medicine?

SD: Yes, I thought about it.

KP: You really had quite an introduction to the field.

SD: … I think a lot of people expected me to, and I'm a medical buff, but, I never went into it.

KP: Hypothetically, if not for the family business, you might have gone into medicine.

SD: I might have. Had my dad been a doctor, I might very well have thought about it. I probably would have.

KP: Did you enjoy the Atlanta area?

SD: I loved Atlanta. As a matter-of-fact, I've got kids living down outside of Atlanta today. It's a marvelous city. Atlanta had … more beautiful women; I was so impressed with the women, and I was kind of fortunate. … My dad had some friends who had moved to Atlanta and were members of the Standard Club. Again, the Jewish population in Atlanta belonged to the Standard Club, or the Progressive Club, or another club. It depended [on], if you were a German Jew, you belonged to this, and if you weren't, you belonged to that. …

KP: Atlanta's Jewish population was large enough to develop these divisions.

SD: … They weren't big, but, they had that, and I had access to the Standard Club. They had a lovely pool and other things like that, and I could go there on weekends, and I did, and it was a wonderful town.

KP: Did you date while you were in Atlanta?

SD: Yes, I knew a couple of WAVEs from a nearby naval base, but, nothing serious.

KP: Did anyone wash-out of the lab technician's course?

SD: Did we have flunk outs? Yes, we had a couple, not many. They kind of screened us before they sent us through.

KP: You were part of a pretty bright group.

SD: Yes, it was a bright group. …

KP: It sounds like those four months were equivalent to a year or two in college.

SD: We had a lovely bunch of guys. … When we were on the boat, going to Europe, [we] somehow started a bridge game, and we played on the boat, and we played at Camp Lucky Strike together, we played on the train going down to southern France, and we had a great bridge game.

KP: Was your entire lab technician class sent to Tacoma or did the Army break the group up?

SD: … The ones I went to school with, I didn't serve at my hospital with any of them.

KP: You were then sent to Fort Lewis, Washington, near Tacoma.

SD: … That's where we joined the 306th General Hospital.

KP: How long were you stationed in Tacoma?

SD: Just a couple of months.

KP: What did you do at the fort hospital?

SD: Well, we went on hikes, we bivouacked, we set the hospital up in tents, we checked our equipment out, … we learned who everybody was, and there wasn't much physical training, as such.

KP: Who did you report to at the 306th General Hospital? Where did you stand in terms of rank?

SD: I was a low down. I was a T-5, which was a corporal with a "T" under it. We had two stripes with a "T" under it and it didn't get any better. … I was in the Army a year when I made PFC. … A month later, I made T-5. "Don't sew them on, they're coming too fast," you know, and I never got any more than that. … We had a lot of people who were not medics, originally,

who were … sent to our hospital, MPs and other things like that, when they decided they didn't need that outfit anymore, but, they needed the hospitals, and a lot of these guys came in already ranked, so, the TO, the Table of Organization, was pretty well filled up, and although I was doing staff sergeant work, or tech sergeant [work], they couldn't give me the rank, because the … TO was full.

MW: At the 306th General Hospital, did you work with POWs?

SD: They were American PWs, yes, released.

MW: What kind of shape were they in?

SD: They were in bad shape, for the most part. They had been malnourished, and their uniforms hung on them, and we fed them and checked their physical profile to see whether they … were in shape to go home or had to be further hospitalized at another facility.

MW: Shortly thereafter, the first atomic bomb was dropped. You were on your way to Japan.

SD: … We were up in Normandy while we were doing this RAMP camp stuff, and then, they finally shipped most of these guys out, and we were sent down to southern France, to get ready to ship to the Pacific.

KP: On your pre-interview survey, you mentioned your colonel, Colonel Zimmermann.

SD: Jesus, I mentioned him?

KP: Yes. [laughter] What do you remember about him?

SD: … When I came to Camp Grant, Camp Grant was run by Colonel McConky. … You dreaded the name McConky, and he had a littler terrier that ran in front of him, and when you saw the dog, you … would think, "Christ, here comes the Colonel. … Everybody straighten up," and, to our distress, McConky was given our hospital, the 306th General Hospital, and … he turned out to be a wonderful guy, but, then, we found out that McConky really was … too old to go overseas and run a hospital, or perhaps didn't measure up physically, … and they turned it over to this Colonel Zimmermann, who let everybody know that Zimmermann was spelled with two "n"s, so, "Here we go again," but, … he took the hospital to Europe.

KP: Was he a physician?

SD: I don't remember. Presumably, the heads of hospitals were physicians.

KP: In training, when did you actually start doing lab work? Did you begin before you went to Europe?

SD: When we got to Europe, we never opened up our lab, because … we were running our hospital … just to check out these prisoners. We didn't do anything sophisticated with them. … I was taking blood pressures and doing other things like that. I didn't do lab work. … I did lab work in South Carolina, when we did parallel training with the base hospital, and then, when I got to Fort Harrison, Indiana, and I was in charge of the lab there, I ran the laboratory.

KP: When you were overseas …

SD: [We] never opened up the lab, because we were expected to do it in Tinian. …

KP: You went overseas in a huge convoy. Were there still concerns about enemy submarines?

SD: Subs? Oh, sure.

KP: Even that late in the war?

SD: Oh, of course. We had our lifejackets on at all times. … We went overseas on the *John S. Ericsson,* … [the *Kungsholm*], which was the sister ship of the … *Gripsholm.* The *Gripsholm* was a big Swedish exchange liner, and they had taken over the *Kungsholm* and made it the *John S. Ericsson,* made a troop ship out of it, and we ate two meals a day, standing up. We slept in bunks that were like five deep, or four deep, anyway. It seemed like four or five. … It wasn't a particularly pleasant trip. Coming home was a lot better. We came home on a hospital ship, the *Goethals,* I think it was. We came home with our lights on and there was no fear of subs.

KP: You were destined to take the *Goethals* all the way to the Pacific.

SD: Probably, yes.

KP: You did not end up in the Pacific Theater because of an accident of fate.

SD: I had an experience on the boat that bothers me to this day. The officers, the doctors, and the nurses, and the sanitary … corps, were on a different deck, ate different food, pretty good food, compared to what we were eating. … They're isolated from us, like on a bridge above us. [One day], someone threw pennies down, and, to my dismay, guys dove for these … things on the deck, and I felt so … angry at the concept of it. … It never left me. I have never forgotten it.

KP: You really felt like you were a second class citizen.

SD: I really did.

KP: They were harassing you.

SD: The nerve of it. …

KP: What did you do to pass the time?

SD: We played cards.

KP: Bridge?

SD: We played a lot of cards.

KP: Did you play any particular game?

SD: Yes. You do craps games. … As a matter-of-fact, there was always a craps game going on, if not onboard ship, at least back in the barracks, and the payday craps game were generally run by the sergeants who were permanent cadre in the area, and they would rake every pot, and they made a lot of money. They made enormous amounts of money.

MW: When you thought that you were going to Japan, I take it that you were relieved when the second atomic bomb was dropped.

SD: Relieved?

MW: That you would not have to fight on the home islands.

SD: Yes. … It was exciting, and it was awesome, when you heard about these bombs, but, I don't remember that I was relieved at the idea. I mean, I may have been, I just don't remember being relieved at the idea of that, maybe a little disappointed that I wasn't going to see that area of … the world.

KP: You had seen a good chunk of the United States in the Army.

SD: Yes, I traveled quite a bit.

KP: We talked a little bit about the South, but, what did you think about the rest of the United States?

SD: I'll tell you what interested me. … When I got … back from service and was assigned to Fort Harrison, Indiana, there used to be a commentator on the radio called Fulton Lewis, Jr., the "Golden Voice of Reaction." … I went to hear him speak once at the Masonic … Temple in Indianapolis and I was appalled at what this guy was saying and the way everybody seemed to love him. You know, I couldn't really quite [understand it], because it was totally alien to me.

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

KP: This continues an interview with Sheldon Denburg on November 4, 1997, in West Orange, New Jersey, with Kurt Piehler and Mark Weiner. Please, continue.

SD: … [I was] listening to the way the crowd loved everything he said. … It was really kind of surprising, because it was the first time I realized how [many] regional differences there are within the country, because, coming from the East, it sounded so foreign to me. They related so well to Fulton Lewis, Jr.

KP: Did you figure out why?

SD: I just realized that … things are different, very different.

KP: What did you think of France, although you were at Camp Lucky Strike, surrounded by Americans?

SD: I never got in to see much of France. I got a pass. I got to go in from St. Valery to Rouen, and I got a twenty-four hour pass to visit Paris, and that was really what I saw of France, other than the trip down along the tracks, over broken bridges, to Marseilles. I finally saw Marseilles, *Rue de Canabiere*, things like that.

KP: You were not in Europe for very long.

SD: No, just a few months. I was very lucky, in terms of this war. You know, it could have been disastrous.

KP: Did you ever find out what happened to your basic training and ASTP group?

SD: … Sure, I mean, I spoke to guys, not that I knew, but, we could compare notes, and a lot of these guys ended up in the 104th and 106th Division, and they got pushed into the Bulge without any experience whatsoever, and they were just torn apart. The Bulge was full of ASTPers.

KP: A number of men that I have interviewed were put in that situation.

SD: … In some divisions, they [the Germans] captured the encryption machine. I mean, that's way back [at headquarters]. The Germans ran through them like ---- through a tin horn. They weren't ready for it.

KP: Through interacting with the American POWs, did you get a sense of how the war, particularly being confined, had affected them?

SD: Guys we're talking about, (*Kriegsgefangenen*?), that's the word I'm thinking of, the Krieggies, we had all kinds, guys who'd been in Air Force prisons, … other types. … How the war affected them? I don't know.

KP: Did anyone ever share his experiences with you?

SD: Yes, but, the little that I can remember, I'll tell you a cute little bit. When you're a PW, you learn survival techniques. So, it was a little chilly and I was in charge of a ward tent. Now, a ward tent was a conglomeration of three or four tents that had been put together in a single line. You could lash them together to make a big, over-all tent, and we had space heaters to heat the tent up, and I said, "Guys, we need some wood." "Don't worry, Doc, we'll get you wood." So, the next morning, I wake up and three tents are down on the ground. … They've used the tent pegs to stoke … the space heaters with. I didn't say anything. … When you need wood, you take wood.

KP: How were your creature comforts, food, etc., at Camp Lucky Strike?

SD: … They were pretty decent. We had squad tents that we lived in and cots. We didn't have to sleep on the ground and we had a pretty good mess hall. The thing you had to be careful [of] was not to get off the road, 'cause a lot of roads were not cleared of mines, and we lost a couple of vehicles and personnel to uncleared roads.

KP: In France?

SD: In France, yes.

KP: Was that a real threat?

SD: Absolutely.

MW: Did you have any contact with German POWs?

SD: We had German PWs working around the hospital. … Of course, we're on the Channel coast and the war wasn't totally over yet. P-38s, painted black, used to come flying over low. … That's a pretty frightening looking plane. It was a twin-bodied plane. The German PWs, our Germans, were terribly intimidated by P-38s, and whether they'd been under strafing attacks by them or not, [I don't know], but, every time they'd come over our field, these guys would dump their picks and head for the ground. …

KP: There were some bad memories there.

SD: Probably.

KP: Could you speak German?

SD: No, I spoke some Yiddish. … When I came back to Rutgers, I took German and the German was very helpful with my Yiddish. … I don't speak good Yiddish today, but, I'm a little bit more fluent than I used to be.

MW: Did you have any animosity towards the German POWs after you found out about the atrocities?

SD: I didn't. … I don't think I did. I'm not sure. The average German GI, the equivalent of a German GI, was not the SS trooper. These were not the guys who were doing most of the dirty work. I'm sure they did some dirty work.

KP: Did you give the German POWs orders or did you deal with them through someone else?

SD: I didn't have much contact with them.

KP: There were nurses in your unit, particularly at Camp Lucky Strike.

SD: The nurses were all lieutenants, at least, second lieutenants for the most part. They were some nice kids, for the most part, but, they were off limits to the enlisted men.

KP: Was there a lot of dating?

SD: I presume there must be something going on, you know, but, it was nothing that we could get involved in or even think about. It was almost a capital offense to be seen … messing around with a nurse.

KP: You mentioned that going home on a hospital ship was more relaxed.

SD: [It was] relaxed. We had running lights on and there wasn't the disciplines required that we had before, lights and the like. …

KP: Did you ever see a USO show?

SD: In Europe. Yes, I saw Bob Hope. … This is kind of cute . At … Saint-Victoret staging area, there was an amphitheater that the [German] PWs had built. So, the Bob Hope show comes, and he's standing on the stage, and he says, "How 'bout a big hand for the guys who built the theater?" [laughter] The audience is very quiet. He was shocked at the reaction, and he looked around, and someone whispers in his ear. He says, "Aw." He spits on the stage or something like that. That was the only USO show I saw.

KP: [laughter] You saw one of the more memorable ones.

SD: Yes, he did a lot of work for the [USO].

KP: You were in Europe on V-E Day.

SD: V-E Day. … We ran a parade, and the mayor came in his sash, and we paraded up and down, and that was it. It was on some muddy field outside of Saint Valerie en Caux.

KP: On V-J Day, you were actually on the ship.

SD: … We were onboard ship, I guess, when they signed … [on the decks of the] *Missouri*.

MW: Was there a celebration?

SD: On the ship? not particularly, nothing I can remember. I mean, there must have been something, but, I don't remember.

KP: Where did you land in the States?

SD: Fort Myles Standish in Boston Harbor.

KP: Were you anxious to go home?

SD: Well, that's when my leg locked in position there and I went right into the hospital at Fort Dix. … I must have cracked a cartilage or something in there, locked the leg. Things got back into shape and I was able to move around again. They sent me to Crowder, and then, to Fort Harrison, Indiana, and I finished up my time there. I got into trouble again with the leg at Fort Harrison, [was] sent back to [Fort] Dix, and I was in the hospital there, … but, the operating schedule was really extended. A lot of guys were in worse shape. … If you wanted to triage it, who needed service first? I didn't. It looked like I was not going to get back to school. I mean, I was slated to get discharged after the medical treatment. So, I opted to get my discharge and I would take care of my leg afterwards, which is what I did, and I was judged to have at least a ten percent disability, so, I went back to school under PL 16, which was 105 dollars a month, and the other guys were getting seventy-five. I lived like a king on that thirty dollars extra. I mean, it was lot of money.

KP: You were in an Army prison camp for three months. You really knew how some of the worst offenders lived.

SD: … Yes, but, that was an interesting [time]. I had no experience whatsoever with this, and I'm working in the lab, and we had prisoners assigned to us to work in the dispensary, angel-faced kids, you know, and I said, "What are you here for?" "Oh, Doc, you wouldn't believe the way I got fucked." [laughter] … They would spin you a story. "Oh, my god, … you shouldn't be here." So, I went back to the barracks and I'm talking to some other guys who were not medics, but, were in what was known as the P and S section of the … camp, Sociology and Psychology. One of them says, "Shel, come over to our office," and he pulls out the 201 file. … Everybody had a 201 file, … the profiles of your intelligence and all your records, and he says, "Give me the guy's name." I'd give him a name and [he gives me] voluminous material, from the Red Cross, from the sheriff of the kid's town. I mean, what an animal this choir boy was, you know, and he

was not alone. Everybody had a story, which they almost believed, but, they were really bad offenders, in most cases.

KP: What was the range of the offenders that you came in contact with? Did you come in contact with any murderers or were they imprisoned in a more secure area of the camp?

SD: At Fort Leavenworth, they had guys in solitary confinement and higher security. Ours was not a high security prison. I mean, it was a high security prison to the extent that we had double gates and watchtowers. It looked like a concentration camp, kind of, inside. You had to flash your badge to go in, … in one door, close the door, and then, out the other door, armed towers, searchlights at night. … I think most of the guys were deserters and black marketeers, maybe a rapist or two.

KP: Still, they were unsavory people.

SD: They weren't good examples.

MW: When were you discharged?

SD: … I left to take an early discharge from … the hospital. I signed myself out, so-to-speak, and have surgery done, so, I could go back to school for the fall semester.

KP: Who did the surgery?

SD: The surgery was done by Dr. Henry Kessler, from the Kessler Institute. … During the service, he ran the Mare Island Rehab[ilitation Center] for the Navy, on the West Coast. He was a great rehab person, orthopedic surgery. … They didn't know anything about orthoscopic surgery when I had this leg operated on, so, they pulled the cartilage, and, when you pull the cartilage, you get arthritis, eventually. You know, it just happens; you can't avoid it. You've got raw bone on raw bone and it gets worse and worse. It gets jagged after awhile. Eventually, I had a total knee replacement.

KP: Although your time in the service was short, it made a physical impact on you.

SD: Hey, I got away lucky. … I can't complain.

KP: Even though you were not in combat, you still have a physical reminder.

SD: Yes, a small price, considering what other guys went through.

KP: Did you consider staying in the Army?

SD: No. I really didn't. I knew I wasn't going to make a career out of it. I have a couple of friends who did and it worked out for them very well. They got educated, they got their doctorates, and they retired [with] twenty years of service.

KP: It sounds like you were eager to be a civilian again.

SD: Yes, I think so.

KP: When did you join the VFW and the DAV?

SD: Did I mention all that?

KP: Yes.

SD: The DAV, I joined, I think, more recently, a few years ago. … I never joined the [American] Legion. I always read them as being very reactionary somehow. … I think I joined the VFW shortly after I got out of service. … Later, [I joined] the DAV.

KP: Were you active in either organization?

SD: No. I get vaguely embarrassed by these guys who wear their caps and uniforms. … [It is no different from] the Boy Scouts. They love the uniform business. [laughter] There's no reason for it. They are attracted to it, fine. I like golf. Whatever turns you on.

MW: How soon after your discharge did you return to Rutgers?

SD: As soon as I got out of surgery and could hobble around on a cane, I was back at school. I was back at school by … December of 1946.

MW: How had the campus changed from the Rutgers you knew before entering the service?

SD: It was growing in leaps and bounds. … At what used to be Camp Kilmer, there were temporary barracks for … married vets, and we had Quonset huts for classrooms, in some cases, and they were starting to build across the [Raritan] River. I mean, things were moving at a tremendous rate.

MW: Did you go to school on the GI Bill?

SD: Sure.

MW: Did you use any other part of the GI Bill?

SD: I took advantage of the GI Bill for the [low] interest veteran housing. I took a GI Mortgage, four-and-a-quarter percent.

MW: Did you join any more organizations during your second tour at Rutgers?

SD: I joined what was Zeta Beta Tau, the fraternity. I was active in the German Club. I was the business manager of *The Anthologist.* I would go to lectures. … I remember, the Art Department had some terrific lectures. I participated in the active life of the school.

MW: Why did you switch from chemistry to business for your major?

SD: I just felt that I wasn't achieving as a chemist. … I thought that I would end up in the family business anyway, I might as well learn … [something that would] be more helpful.

KP: You mentioned before that you had a hard time studying chemistry.

SD: I don't know [why]. I really don't know. It was really confusing to me why, but, I did have a problem. … An interesting sidelight to the military business was, the … ROTC had what we called the "Milly Ball." So, here we have the Military Ball, and, all of a sudden, we're all there in uniform, with decorations, and it was really quite a turnout that first year at the Milly Ball.

KP: People were wearing real decorations, not the ROTC stuff.

SD: … The real stuff, yeah, not ROTC ribbons.

MW: Had you won any decorations?

SD: I didn't win anything for any sort of combat, just area, other than the Good Conduct Medal, which was nothing special, just the Victory Medal, which everybody got, and the … European Theater [Medal].

KP: The Military Ball …

SD: It was a fun thing.

KP: People were really decked out.

SD: It was really … kind of nice. …

KP: Did you go to a lot of the balls and dances?

SD: Yes, I went to the hops and it was enjoyable.

KP: Each of my students must read a semester's worth of *Targum*s, ranging from the 1930s to the early 1950s. They are quite envious of the social life of that era, the balls, the hops, and the general interest in the sports teams.

SD: That they don't have today, you mean?

KP: It is not the same.

SD: … Who feels this lack, the kids who are reading [the *Targum*s]?

KP: Yes. They think your world …

SD: Was different? It probably was a different world, but, it was … less wild, in many cases, than what you have today.

KP: We have also noticed that you guys were quite innocent.

SD: Innocent is a good word for it. I mean, you had house mothers, you didn't booze it up quite like gets done today. Beer was the big thing. I guess there was some drinking, but, not as much of it. … [As for] drugs, nobody was touching that stuff.

MW: How did you meet your wife?

SD: My first wife, Marjorie, I met as a blind date. … I married her in early '49. I was probably close to being out of school when I met her.

MW: Was she a NJC student?

SD: No, she was [from the] University of Georgia. She was a Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Georgia and she had graduated college by the age of eighteen, I think. She was a really brilliant kid.

KP: You mentioned that you switched to business administration with the notion that you would probably go into the family business. It sounds like that was something that you wanted, but, also, your family wanted it, too.

SD: … If I had wanted to be a chemist, … I'm sure they would have been delighted just as well. Of all the Denburgs who are with Barton Press, I'm the only one whose kids are not in the business. You know, I didn't encourage them to come into the family business.

KP: All of the other Denburgs are continuing Barton Press for another generation.

SD: All of my cousins, we represent the second generation, have kids in the business, have kids with us, not mine.

KP: It sounds like you wanted your children to do what they wanted to do.

SD: Absolutely.

MW: When did you graduate from Rutgers?

SD: '49.

MW: Did you join Barton Press right after graduation?

SD: I went right down to Carnegie-Mellon for a summer program, and then, that September, I started at the office.

KP: What was your first job at Barton Press?

SD: … We would take additional classes at night. The Printing Industries of Metropolitan New York, which we were members of, also, ran programs for its members, estimating, production, and the like, and we were always taking classes at night, and most of us went right into sales. … I had two other cousins who went in service about the same time I did and two younger cousins who were still in school.

MW: Have you stayed active as a Rutgers alumnus?

SD: Active? not really active. I mean, I contribute, occasionally go to a function, but, I have not been really what you'd call "active."

KP: How often do you go to reunions?

SD: Every five years, I make sure I go to that fifth [anniversary]. …

KP: Do you march in the parade down College Avenue?

SD: Sure.

KP: You also taught, for a time, at what is now Rutgers-Newark.

SD: Yes, I was in the adjunct faculty. I taught a course in how to purchase printing. … It was just one of the courses offered to the community. It was not a for-credit course and the purchasing agents, other paper salesmen, and production people would take the program. [I] taught for years.

KP: It sounds like you enjoyed teaching.

SD: I enjoyed it.

KP: You do not make a lot of money as a part-time teacher.

SD: I remember … suggesting that Rutgers offer this program, and I had outlined what I thought they'd want, and they said, "Would you like to teach it?" I was really surprised. I had never thought about it and I said, "Sure. … What's the compensation?" I had figured it out to be an eight-week program, eight sessions. "Twenty-five bucks a night." "Terrific." Two hundred bucks extra that I was going to make. … I knew what camera I was going to buy with this, a .35 millimeter camera, and I kept making the course bigger and bigger, you know. [laughter] I got it up to fifteen weeks. Every year, it was broadened.

KP: Barton Press has grown quite a bit since the 1950s. What about the company and its achievements are you most proud of? Have there been any trials or set backs along the way?

SD: [The printing industry] has changed enormously. As a matter-of-fact, we sold the company in April … to a fellow by the name of Robert Kashan and his associates. … [When] we started out, we were letter press printers. … We went into printing and typesetting from what used to be Barton Business Services, mimeograph-multigraph business, and so, we had the typesetters, and we had lockup men, and a letter press, we were setting type, we were printing the letter press, where you ink the form, and you press the form right against the paper. … We were printers. We were … early going into photo lithography. We were really kind of pioneers in the New Jersey area and we joined the litho union, because that's where you needed to go to get any kind of a trained lithographer. We had to get into the union. A large portion of the business was photography and assembly of negatives. Today, that is all electronic. We get a disk, and we convert it into film, and all of the assembly has been done electronically. All of the color scans are often there before we even get it. A large portion of what was the printer's business is no longer being done by the printer, so, you have to recapture your overhead under a lesser volume, or get more volume. It took us a long time to wake up to the fact that we weren't doing things quite right. … We were getting into some trouble, so, we sold the company. … We're now part of what I think is a very healthy effort.

KP: You were in Newark during the 1967 riots.

SD: We were in Newark in those days.

KP: I came across a 1973 article in the *New York Times* about the firm, featuring you and some of your family, when you were still based in Newark. When did Barton Press move to West Orange?

SD: About seventeen, eighteen years ago. This building was built by West Orange to … entice the Edison people to stick around. … Edison Voicewriter was bought out by McGraw Electric in Chicago, and they were operating here for a number of years, and McGraw was threatening to pull everybody back to Chicago, and they built this building as a more modern manufacturing facility, the entire first floor to be manufacturing space, the second floor to be offices. … For awhile, they did operate here, but, McGraw pulled them out anyway. The town was stuck with this building, and we … had outgrown our facility in Newark, and Newark was getting really

quite dangerous. At night, we were operating a night shift, you have to operate a night shift, people were mugged in the parking lot and things like that. … We needed more space anyway. We checked out Newark, because it had been good to us as a place to operate. We did a lot of work with Prudential, and Blue Cross and the banks, but, there wasn't any facility available that would work. … When this building [became] … available to us, we bought it. It worked out well. We refinished the place, made offices for this portion, black-topped, did a lot of things to make the building look nicer.

KP: You once ran for the Democratic Committee.

SD: Yes. I was a Democratic Committeeman in South Orange.

KP: Did you ever think of running for a political office?

SD: No, it was a kick, just a lot of fun. … Years ago, Dennis Carey … used to be the boss of Essex County. I remember going up to his office once. Meyner was governor, and they decided to get a letter out for Meyner, and Carey got these two freshmen from the House of Representatives, Pete Rodino and Hugh Adenizio, later became Mayor of Newark, and these guys [were like], "Yes, Mr. Carey. Yes, sir. Yes, sir." … They were signing the letters so [that] I could copy the signatures. We were multigraphing this letter. … Under Dennis Carey, … the Democrats controlled every job in the county. Years later, Peter Shapiro was running for … County Executive, and he was running against the party man. I decided I'd go on the ballot as a committeeman, backing Peter Shapiro. … Nobody expected me to win, but, I went around and hit almost every house in the district, to their surprise. [laughter] … I had the time, and I told them [that] I was frankly in opposition to the powers that be, and I ran away with it. … Then, we had the first … organization meeting of the county. It was held at Bloomfield High School. … The Democratic boss of the county then was Harry Lerner. … This guy shows up. They brought him in in a wheelchair. Well, it was like the second coming of Christ. Everybody … owed their jobs to him. Everybody who was a committeeman, just about, was politically connected as well. They … worked for the county or they worked for the cities. It was an interesting experience. They looked at us like … we came from the other side of the world. There weren't many people who had achieved [public office] against the party.

KP: Being a businessman, have you ever had any problems with the fact that, until recently, there has been a very strong Democratic organization in West Orange? Was that a problem in the business world?

SD: I don't think so.

KP: Did you ever feel obligated to contribute?

SD: … You mean contributing to the parties and stuff?

KP: Yes, that this strong organization probably affected your getting a job with the county.

SD: Pretty much that. … We did make modest contributions to both parties, not looking, particularly, for favors. We did printing for both parties, but, we were not politically active in any sense of the word.

KP: It sounds like you got involved to help out Peter Shapiro.

SD: At that particular time, yes.

KP: On your survey, under political affiliation, you wrote, "I vote the man, not the party."

SD: Right.

KP: It sounds like you lean Democratic, though.

SD: Yes, I think I lean Democratic, but, for example, I think I'll be voting for Christie [Whitman] this year, rather than the Democrat. It's how I feel who's doing the best job. … Party doesn't mean anything to me.

KP: You mentioned that you wanted your children to do what they were interested in doing. What do they do?

SD: … Our oldest son … went to Carnegie-Mellon and is a computer person. He's a consultant. He also is a very successful magician. … He makes as much money doing magic shows as he does in computers. His sister graduated from [the] University of Rochester and Miami Law School. She works for Southern Bell, as an in-house attorney. She's got three kids down there, in Miami. When I remarried, Nancy had two kids. The oldest, Eric, went to Cornell. Right now, he works for Ziff-Davis. He's in charge of strategic planning for the magazines … in Manhattan, just had a kid, and Pamela, his sister, has two children and lives … outside of Atlanta, Marietta, and she is an accountant, and they're great kids.

MW: Did you encourage any of your kids to go to Rutgers?

SD: If they wanted to, but, they didn't. [laughter]

KP: It sounds like you would not have minded if one of them had picked Rutgers.

SD: No. I wouldn't want to push them, though.

KP: It was up to them.

SD: Right.

KP: None of your children served in the military.

SD: No. The only one who would have would be my son, Larry, but, his number in the lottery was never even close to being called.

KP: You thought World War II was a righteous war. By implication, you felt that other wars were not as righteous.

SD: Well, I … wasn't sure about Korea. When we started with Vietnam, I was kind of [like], "My government, right or wrong, my government," and I was basically for it, until it became rather obvious that we had no right to be there, and then, I became violently anti-war. I never did anything violent about it. I was kind of vociferous, but, that was about it. [laughter]

KP: When did you begin to think that Vietnam was a mistake? Do you remember the year?

SD: No, I can't remember the year. …

KP: Was it before the war was over?

SD: Oh, yes. I could see that they were faking the numbers and escalating this thing far beyond what anyone ever intended it to be. … I started to get the impression that we didn't have any [right to be there]. What were we doing there? Of course, it was all that "domino theory." I mean, that sounded right at first, and maybe it was right until the end, but, I didn't think so.

KP: Did you stay in touch with anyone that you served with?

SD: No, I mean, not to this day. There were a couple of desultory letters, back and forth, but, it hasn't kept on.

KP: Did your hospital unit ever have a reunion?

SD: No. … If it did, I wasn't invited. [laughter] I never heard of it.

KP: You have not only been to some of your Rutgers reunions, but, you have also attended quite a few Weequahic reunions.

SD: Weequahic reunions every five years, also, and my fraternity just had … another reunion, my chapter, this is last weekend.

KP: Oh, very recently.

SD: Yes, not that I'm a big fraternity man, but, it was interesting because of the event.

KP: Is there anything that we forgot to ask you about?

SD: I don't think so. You stirred memories up that I haven't even remembered. [laughter]

KP: For the record, one of the reasons Mark found this interview so appealing is the fact that we are going over to the Edison site this afternoon.

SD: Oh, yes. That's convenient.

KP: You said that this site was built for Edison.

SD: The McGraw Edison Company.

KP: When did the Edison Company move out of West Orange?

SD: Edison Voicewriter Division was out of here [when we got here]. The museum has been here for many years.

KP: Have you ever had any contact with the Edison Voicewriter?

SD: Well, we tried to sell to them and we weren't successful at that. I mean, I was selling printing for years before we moved up here, but, they were not one of our clients.

KP: I saw the list of people you were greeting today. It sounds like you have an impressive array of clients at Barton Press.

SD: Yes. It's a good shop.

KP: Thank you very much. We really appreciate your participation.

SD: Thank you for coming up.

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

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 2/5/02
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 2/7/02
Reviewed by Sheldon Denburg 3/02