

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE H. ELWOOD

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 Mr. George H. Elwood on January 15, 1996 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler. I guess I would like to begin by asking a lot about your parents in Hancock, New York because you were born in Hancock and you still work and practice law in Hancock. It sounds like your father had roots in Hancock, New York, too.

George H. Elwood: That is correct. I am a native of Hancock, and my father was born in Downsville, New York on a dairy farm. This was twenty-seven miles from Hancock, but he went to the Walton School. And he had to walk ten, fifteen miles everyday to get to school. This was really quite a chore for him, and he worked on the farm. When he was graduated from Walton, he met somebody who suggested that he go to Princeton. He went to Princeton University, and Bob Clothier, who was one of his classmates and a former president of Rutgers, and he had Woodrow Wilson as one of his professors, and John Foster Dulles (Secretary of State) was in his class. The Interwoven Stocking Company president, Tommy Mettler, who had his office in New Brunswick, was in his class, so he had a very interesting class. I went back to a few reunions with him at Princeton, and met a few people now and then. When I came to Rutgers, he said that I had "to go see Dr. Clothier and introduce yourself," which I did not want to do. It was the last thing I wanted to do, and he wanted me go down and see Tommy Mettler. But I did it, and I am glad I did now. [laughter]

KP: This tie with President Clothier, was that one of the reasons you ended up at Rutgers?

GE: What happened was that it was during the war when I applied, 1944. I was graduated from Hancock Central, and I had my heart set on going to Princeton because that is where my father went. He took me down once to the Princeton versus Navy football game. I remember the quarterback Dave Alerdice for Princeton. You know, I thought it was a pretty neat place, and that is where I wanted to go. Well, I applied and I was not accepted. Well, he took me down to see Dean Hermans, who was the admissions officer. He said, "Well, I think, you know, coming from Hancock, you probably ought to go down to Lawrenceville and go to prep school for a year. And then we would probably take you in here. Or go down the road and go to Rutgers, and if you do okay, transfer down." So I was not interested in going to prep school, and so my father said, "Let's go look at Rutgers." My father did not try to convince me that I should do that. He did not say that his classmate was the president of Rutgers. He just left it completely open. I almost went to Colgate. I was accepted at Colgate, but it was a small town like Hancock, Hamilton, New York, and I was not interested in going to another small town. New Brunswick was a big town to me at that time. It was a big city, and so I said, "Well, I just as soon try Rutgers." So I came to Rutgers with the idea that I was going to transfer after a year. I can remember, after one year, I was seventeen when I came down here, that was in June, I got out of high school and on July I came down here. We were on the quarter system, and I spent nine months down here, so I finished my freshman year. The war was still going on, and I had taken Army ROTC at Rutgers and knew I did not want to go in the army. [laughter] I thought I would like to go into the navy. So I said to my father, "I am going to come home and enlist in the navy." I went home and enlisted in the navy and I went. One thing I always remember, it was tough for me that first year at Rutgers because it was a suitcase college. Students were all going home on weekends. And my father told me when I came down here, "Now there are two things I

want you to do. I don't want you coming home every weekend. I am sending you away to college, and I want you to stay there. And I don't want you to start smoking." That was good advice on both counts, but I ended up, when I was in Tokyo Bay on the USS *New Jersey*, I was out there and I was thinking, "God, I would give anything to get back to Rutgers." ... I forgot all about going to Princeton because I met such good friends while I was here that freshman year. And I joined Lambda Chi Alpha. I found that my best friends today were the guys that I lived with at Lambda Chi on 164 College Ave, which is now no longer there. [laughter] Some of my best friends I had throughout my life, and I have kept in touch with [them].

KP: You met them your first year?

GE: First year, most of them I met my freshman year. We all came in early. ... Some were here six months, some nine, some three, and then went into the service. We most all went into the navy. Then we came back in 1946. I went into Wessels Hall for my sophomore year under the GI Bill. Then I was able to get into the fraternity house my junior and senior years. My freshman year, I was in Winants Hall, up on the third floor. After, then, I guess, after the first two quarters, then I joined the fraternity and I moved in there for my last quarter. But it was really a great experience. I met some just great people, and the professors down here were great, although it was awakening to me that I did not know how to study. When I came down here, I did not know about taking notes in class, and I went to see Edward M. Burns. I said, "Here I am down here as a history major and I loved history in high school, and I did not have any trouble." And he said, "You just are not studying enough." Well, I really was not studying enough, and I did not know how to do it. [laughter] Then I got the hang of it, and it was all right, and I really enjoyed it.

KP: Your father, how was he able to afford to go to Princeton?

GE: Well, you know, this was 1904, and, you know, we never talked about that.

KP: Did he have a scholarship? Did his parents make enough from the dairy farm?

GE: Well, you know, he was just a farm boy, and he never said whether he had a scholarship. And I am wondering why I never asked him that myself. The question was never raised.

KP: You never heard stories about how he had to work nights?

GE: No, and I don't think he did work. I think he just went and studied. He expected me, when I went, to go and study. Of course, he helped me out. He paid my way, but he lucked out because, when I came back from service, I had the GI bill. [laughter] All he had to do was send me a check once a month for spending money. My tuition, room, board, books, everything was taken care of. Then, when I went to law school at Fordham, I got a Veterans' scholarship. I had to take an exam for that, but I didn't get it until my senior year. I didn't realize it was available. He paid the full shot, and I did not work. Of course, tuition was 275 dollars a semester, but still you know, money was not plentiful in those days, either. I never worked going through college or going through law school.

KP: Your father, after he was at Princeton, he became a schoolteacher.

GE: Yeah, he was a schoolteacher in the Downsville school system. My mother, who was Florence Augusta Doyle, that was her maiden name Doyle, she went to a normal school, which was like a teacher's college. He taught school in Downsville for a couple of years. First, he went to law school. He went to New York Law School. In those days, you got out in two years instead of three. He was out in 1910. He did not have any law office to go into, so just to make money and survive, he taught school. But then he opened his own law office in Downsville, which is smaller than Hancock, and Hancock was 1,300 people. He started coming to Hancock a couple days a week, then finally he found that there was more business in Hancock than in Downsville, so he set up full time in Hancock. He was there and he never encouraged me to go to law school, he let me make my own decisions. He did not say I had to go back to Hancock and practice law, but you know, I liked it there, it was natural, and I just went back when I was out. I did not deserve to become a partner, but he made me a partner my first year. So, you know, it was very good relationship.

KP: It sounds like you father gave you a lot of autonomy.

GE: Oh, yes, definitely. The only thing he said was, "Don't smoke, and don't come home every weekend." [laughter] Other than that, he gave me a lot of independence.

KP: That's interesting because, in terms of smoking, were you tempted at all in the navy because of all the cheap cigarettes?

GE: You know, I tried smoking. First of all, I tried cigars when I was a real youngster and got very ill. Then I tried smoking and I didn't like it. I did not like the taste. And I think, even if he had not told me that, I wouldn't smoke because it just never appealed to me [even] with all my peers doing it. And they even tried to get me to take Copenhagen Snuff. I tried that, I got dizzy, became ill, and you know, it was just something that was repugnant to me. And I am fortunate from that standpoint. [laughter] ... I used to have a cigar once in a while, you know, but nothing serious.

KP: You father went to Princeton, and he had a very prestigious class. Do you have any sense about what drew him back to Hancock and the Hancock area after law school?

GE: Well, he was a rural person, and he wanted to go back to his roots.

KP: Really. You mean he was never lured by the idea of a Wall Street law firm?

GE: No, nope, [it] never appealed to him. [He was] just glad to go back to where he came from and set up a law practice. That's what he wanted to do.

KP: How did your parents meet?

GE: You know, I don't know that. And my mother died when I was twelve years old. And I never really, you know, knew too much. And the last two or three years of her life, she had asthma and she was in poor health. She was in and out of hospitals. It just did not lend itself for open discussion. It was always, "Be quiet, don't do this, you know, your mother's sick." We had to be quiet. So I never did find out how they met, except they were both from a small town and it was easy to do. [laughter]

KP: How did your mother's passing away, for you at such a young age, how did it effect the family? It must have been hard on all of you.

GE: It was hard. I had a sister, who was ten years older than I was, and of course, she was not at home at the time. I had another sister, who was home. It was a very difficult thing to handle, but you know, you got to get on. That is what everybody said, "Pull up the bootstraps and keep going." And that is what we had to do. It was tough, but we did it.

KP: Your father also remarried.

GE: Then he remarried, my mother died in 1940, and he remarried in 1943. He married a wonderful person, and she was a schoolteacher in the Hancock school system ... I had her for junior high mathematics and spelling. And her daughter was a classmate of mine and we graduated together. So when my father married, my stepsister moves into the house. [She was] somebody I had gone to school with from first grade all the way through. She came into our household, but everything was fine. She ended up living in New Jersey, now in Cherry Hill. I am still here in Hancock. You know, for stepparents, they each had children by a prior marriage, but everything worked out fine. We never had any problems.

KP: Was your stepmother also widowed?

GE: Yes, she was a widow. As a matter-of-fact, her first husband died before her daughter was born. My stepsister never knew her own father. So my father was the only father she ever had.

KP: Your father did not serve in World War I.

GE: No, right ...

KP: Had he been too old and married before the draft?

GE: Yeah, I think he was too old at the time, you know, 1917, he had had a daughter.

KP: What did your father think of World War I? Did he ever express any thoughts in terms of the American involvement?

GE: No, he did not really talk about that too much. And even in World War II, I think, he was worried that I was going to participate, and he did not talk about it too much. I can remember the

day I left. He stayed home from the office, which he never did. [laughter] And then I was getting ready to go, and he just said, "Take care of yourself." [laughter]

KP: It sounds like your father was a man of few words.

GE: He was, you know, they talk about attorneys. My father said, "It was better to know when not to talk than to know when to talk." That was another little piece of advice he gave me. He was not plentiful with words, but when he had something to say, he said it and everybody knew it. He was a pretty good trial lawyer, too. He really did not talk about it, but he was the supervisor of the town of Hancock at the time when the war was over. And somebody told me he was riding around town in a truck with everybody else and having a big celebration.

KP: It sounds like it was also a bit unusual. [laughter]

GE: Yeah, right. That's right, so you knew that he was overjoyed just like the rest of us.

KP: What kind of cases did your father have? I am sure he did a lot of small cases, wills and deeds and so forth.

GE: Well, it's a general practice in a small town. They had a lot of trials, but it was farmers. It might have been a boundary line dispute. Just all kinds of things that you could imagine that he could deal in. You know, as he was doing this, he never told me as I was growing up what was going on, or anything that was happening. It was not until I got involved in it that I really knew what it was all about because you were supposed to keep confidences when you are an attorney. You don't talk about it at the barbershop or at the restaurant. He did not even talk about it at home, he did not tell anybody what was going on. I kind of picked up the same thing from him, as in keeping the professional confidence with your clients. It is just something you just don't talk about, although you talk about a specific case once in a while. All kinds of cases you can do in a small town. Condemnation cases, where the state highway goes through, and they don't offer enough money. And the City of New York comes up and takes all your farmland, and you end with a county where you are like an island. You got two big reservoirs there, and the city is taking all your property. So you have condemnation claims, you have business damage claims, you have claims for riparian rights. They change the flow and temperature of the water, so there was a lot of activity in that area. Of course, you do a lot of real estate transactions. You do a lot of estates, wills, probates. I did quite a bit of small business incorporating, you know, the automobile dealer, the guy that runs the gin mill. We represented the local bank, so we did a lot of mortgage foreclosures, which I did not like doing, but it was a source of revenue so you did it. [laughter] I did all kinds of work. I did some negligence work, automobile accident cases. I did criminal work when I first started out. You do anything when you first start out. You just wait for people to come through the door and you do it. But as you get older, you get a little more selective and you don't do that. I did a lot of municipal work. My father did municipal work, he was supervisor of the town. He was the chairman of the county board of supervisors. I was a town supervisor at a very young age. I ran for district attorney, in the Republican primary, and I lost by about twenty votes or something. It was alleged that I was a handpicked candidate of the

bosses and that is how my opponent beat me, [laughter] as it turned out. I'm glad it turned out that way ...

KP: Really?

GE: Yeah, really, because I ended up getting a political appointment from Rockefeller, at the time, as an estate tax attorney, e-s-t-a-t-e tax attorney. So I got a lot of experience while Rockefeller was in, and then while Malcolm Wilson was governor. I had experience in surrogate's court. Really, that much better work than criminal work as a DA. So it turned out for the best, as far as I am concerned, that I did not win that. [laughter] If I had that would have been fine, too, you know. At the time, I was really disappointed, but upon reflecting, the way it turned out it was better for me, I think, it was better.

KP: A good friend of mine is a general attorney, and one of the things he was struck by, especially when starting out, was the ebb and flow of work. Sometimes you have more work than you can almost handle, and at other times you are sometimes sort of waiting for people to walk in the door. How was your father's practice affected by the Great Depression?

GE: You know, I would not have know we were in a Great Depression. Of course, ... he was a supervisor for quite a bit, and sometimes he was a village clerk, also. So he always had something to supplement his law practice with, a check that you could count on coming in, even if it was not a great amount. But it was something you could rely on. At the time, I was really not aware that it was tough financial straits because I got most everything I wanted. I got him to take me to New York to see the Cleveland Indians play the New York Yankees, you know, in 1938. John Allen, Bob Feller were pitching for the Indians and Mel Harder. And I was a big Yankee fan, Joe Dimaggio, Lou Gehrig, Red Ruffing, Lefty Gomez and Bill Dickey. You know, I could do things like that. My wife, Ann, who was from Walton, New York, she really knew she was coming up in the Depression. I think my father did pretty well. You know, we were not rich. My father was still paying for a house at that time, but we just were not destitute, and we seemed to have everything we wanted. I was not aware of the Depression until I got through it, and, you know, started reading about it. [laughter] I really was not aware. My father was the patron of the Order of the Eastern Star of the State of New York during the Depression. He was travelling all over the state of New York for meetings. Things were going on and we were not slowed down, but we did not own a house in the country. We did not own property in Florida. We did not take big trips. You know, we just had a very comfortable living in a small town.

KP: Your parents were Methodists. How active were they in the Methodist Church?

GE: Well, my father was Sunday school superintendent at one time, always went to church. My mother sang in the choir. Her sister, my Aunt Julia, was in the choir. Of course, I went to Sunday school. I was in the youth group. Everybody in our family, we all went to church. Just because our parents set the example, we did it. My wife and I, she grew up going to church, so when we married and had children we said, "Well, we better go to church." After we got married and didn't have kids, we did not go so much. After we started having children, we said, "Well, we better go and set an example." So we did. And they did everything, except they did not like

Sunday school. We said, "Okay, if you want to go to church, you don't have to go to Sunday school, but you have to go to one or the other." That is what they did. We had three children. Today, out of the three, one of them still participates in the church and so forth. The other two don't do too much [laughter], but at least our conscience is clear. We showed them here are your choices, if you want to do it, you can, but you don't, you don't have to. We still go. I am the chairman of the pastor-parish relations committee in our church. I was finance chairman for thirty years, probably, and I've been on the board of trustees. My wife taught Sunday school. She is an Episcopalian and has never joined the Methodist church ...

KP: Is she very active?

GE: She's very active, and you'd think that she was a Methodist. She took care of the funeral dinners when people died, and for years, she would arrange that. I still serve on the committees, but we are away quite a bit. I'm semi-retired. I'm trying to get fully retired. So we are not around an awful lot. When we are, we usually go to church.

KP: So you still practice some law?

GE: Some, yeah, a little bit. On April 1, 1992, I sold my law office assets. You don't sell a law practice. You can sell your assets. You can't sell clients. It is really a personal service profession, but I sold the copy machines and the typewriters, the tables and the chairs, a great law library. I sold that, but I stayed there to finish up things that I had pending. This year, I still have one I am still working on. [laughter] The arrangement was anything I had I would finish up. That was my compensation. If anything new came in, I tried to introduce my client to the successor firm. If they wanted to stay with him, they did, if they didn't, they'd go elsewhere. It has been pretty nice and really gave me a chance to get away. Because of all the years practicing, we never went any place for a long period of time. When you are the sole practitioner, you know, you just cannot get up and take a month and go someplace. Our vacations were when I would go to the American Bar Association meeting and take the whole family. That would be our vacation, except then we'd take a week and go to Maine or Montauk, but we never did anything really extravagant. So when I finally got to this point where these fellows came in and have kind of taken over, and it freed up time. Ann and I have been doing a lot of things that we wanted to do. So it has been pretty neat.

KP: You mentioned you were going to a jazz concert this weekend. You even have a belt that says "jazz" on it. Your love of jazz, where did it come from? Did it date back to the '30s?

GE: Well, it started with my sisters, who always had the big band music on the radio. Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Duke Ellington, Count Basie. Then I played the drums. And today they have their own kind of music, and that was ours back in the '30s. I liked it very much. Then I came to Rutgers and was in the band here for a year, my freshman year. Then when I came back after World War II, we had little band in the fraternity house. I would have loved to play drums with them. It was a jazz band, but there was another guy already in there that was better than I was. [laughter] So I was just in the audience. But then, when I got out of Rutgers and went to New York, and there's the greatest campus in the world, Manhattan. I found

Eddie Condon's down in the Village. I found Nicks down in the Village. I found the Central Plaza on Second Avenue between Sixth and Seventh Street. I found the Stuyvesant Casino. I found Lou Terassi's. I found Child's Paramount, Jimmy Ryan's. I just hit these clubs. And, also, they were still having the big bands in the theaters in New York. It was dwindling off, but I was still hitting some of the big bands. And every Friday and Saturday night, you know, I was out to hear some music. So that is where I really became a jazz fan, in New York City. Fortunately, my wife likes music. She was not a big jazz fan. She liked the big band, but fortunately, she likes jazz and she likes sports because that is what we do. When we got married, we got married in New York City, at St. Bartholomew's Church. We did not have a big wedding, or a big reception, but we had a reception at the Hotel Astor. My friends from Rutgers, I had them there, and they said, "Where are you going for your honeymoon?" I said, "Well, I'm staying here in New York City." They asked where we were going tonight. We said that we were going to Nick's in the Village. They did not believe it, so they said, "We will see you down there." So after the reception was over later that night, we saw them down there at Nick's. [laughter] PeeWee Erwin was playing there that night, and we have been going to jazz ever since. We would come back to New York. She was in Bellevue School of Nursing, and she worked in the operating room. Then she came back to Walton after being down there for two or three years. She was the head of the operating room in Delaware Valley Hospital in Walton. After we were married, and when we had the opportunity, we would go back to New York. If Rutgers played Columbia, we would always go to Baker Field for the game in the afternoon, and Saturday night we would go down to the Central Plaza. Then when that closed up, we would go up to the Metropole on Seventh Avenue. In 1955 we went to a Giants game on Sunday and saw Frank Gifford get knocked out by Chuck Bednerick. And he was out for a year, but we just kept coming back.

KP: It seems like you enjoyed New York City a great deal in your younger years.

GE: Oh, we love New York. We're kind of strange people in Hancock because most people are intimidated by the City. You know, it is not like it was back in 1952 when I graduated or in '49 when she graduated. But still, if you know where to go and you go at the right time, you can still have a good time ...

KP: It sounds like you still like to go in on occasion?

GE: Yeah, we're going down this month. I am going to the state H.T. bar meeting and Fordham has a State Bar luncheon. We always go to that. I am the former chairman of the Real Property section of the State of New York Bar Association. They always have a nice dinner and reception at the Rainbow Pavilion on the sixty-fifth floor, there in the Rainbow Room. We will go to that and go to a couple of jazz clubs while we are there. Usually, we will take in a play. You know, we will go down for baseball, as soon as opening day rolls around, and we will go out at night to hear a little music. One of our goals is to visit every major league park in the country. We are down to seven; we have seven baseball parks to go. We are working on that. [laughter] We go to all Rutgers football games and usually go to the away games, but don't get to many basketball games because of the weather, and we are starting South, also. We do like New York.

KP: Growing up did you know that you wanted to be a lawyer?

GE: I thought I did, but I wanted to be a jockey, first. I was always interested in sports. I was the sports editor in our school paper.

KP: Did you play any sports growing up?

GE: Oh, yeah. ... When I went into the Navy, I was 110 pounds. I was a little lighter when I was in high school. I played basketball, not first string but I was on the team, JV then varsity. Baseball, I was the scorekeeper. In football, believe it or not, in our senior year, this would have been the fall of 1943, and we could not field a team because of the war. All we had was intramural football. And then we had tackle football, but they were going to be able to play one game. We were going to play Walton Central School, the only game of the season. They asked for interested people to come in and sign up, so that they could get a physical. And I went down and signed up. The coach laughed at me and said, "You know I can't have you, you're are not big enough." He said, "I could not have you on the field." And I was disappointed, and I said, "Okay." Then probably a week later, I got a phone call from the coach. He wanted me to come down to his office. He said, "You know, we lack one guy to field a team. We have to have twenty-eight men or something, and I have twenty-seven." He said, "Do you think you could come out for the team?" [laughter] So I "had to get the consent of your parents," so I went to my Dad, and of course he signed it. So I came out for the team. He had me as a guard, of course not on the first team. All my friends were bigger than I was. I was small. Man, I could not believe the way they roughed me up in practice. Here I thought, "You guys were my friends." [laughter] Then when we had the big game, and I was sitting on the bench, and it was a good game, hot and heavy, all of a sudden, the coach said, my nickname back in those days was Spike, he said, "Spike." And I said, "Oh, my God. Does he want to send me into this game because I don't think I want to go?" He said, "Get those people back from the field. They are getting too close, get them back behind the fence." I said, "Amen." I did not actually play in that game ...

KP: But you were on the football team?

GE: Oh, yeah. I was on the team and was ready to go. I wrestled at Rutgers.

KP: There's sort of a lead into World War II. That seems like a pretty major effect of World War II on a small town that you could not have football.

GE: That's right, we only had one game. And basketball, my father would drive some members of the team to all their games. You know, we had gas rationing back in those days, and he had a B card. X was the best, but he had B. They would have to arrange private people to drive the team to away games. My father was the chauffeur for some members of the team to go to the away games. It really did effect it and the same when I got to Rutgers. I was always a sports fan, and I followed Princeton, of course, but I do remember when Rutgers beat Princeton in 1938, maybe that is why I decided to come down here, too. At Rutgers, we played Lehigh twice. We played Lafayette twice, and the ASTP team that was here, and that was our football season in the fall of '44. That was not quite what I was looking for. I actually went out for basketball at

Rutgers, too, in '44. Pete Kenelly was the coach. Of course, I didn't make the team, but I had the fun of going out there and didn't get cut for three or four days, so I really enjoyed it.

KP: Where were you when the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred?

GE: Okay, Pearl Harbor, I was at home listening to the Giants, Washington Redskins football game on the radio. I was a freshman in high school at the time.

KP: You mentioned that your father was sort of tight-lipped. I know he was Republican, but what did he think of the New Deal or the inching towards war?

GE: I never heard an opinion from him. I knew he was not a New Dealer, and he was against FDR all the way. I knew he was for Hoover and Willkie and Landon and was always against Roosevelt. Of course, Roosevelt was in the whole time I was in high school. 1932, I went in, and I graduated in '44. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the president that entire time. I knew that he was not for FDR or any of his programs. He never said anything about the war effort or whether we should have gone in. He just supported it.

KP: So he was not for example an American Firster or an isolationist?

GE: Oh, no. Once Roosevelt made the decision that was all right with him. Then he supported the country and supported Roosevelt, but he did believe in changing horses in midstream. [laughter]

KP: So he was for Dewey in '44?

GE: Yes, right, but also he told me that he knew people who knew Dewey. And he thought that Dewey might be quite a ruthless man if he got to be president. I thought that was quite an admission coming from him ...

KP: It sounds like your father ...

GE: Yeah, he was a "dyed in the wool" Republican, and it rubbed off on me. He sounded like he might have had some doubts about Dewey afterwards, but I don't know why because he was a Princeton man, too. [laughter]

KP: He never elaborated on it?

GE: Nope, never elaborated on it.

KP: Could it have been some of the dealings he had with Dewey as governor?

GE: Could be, could be. He was on the constitutional convention, you know, when New York had a new constitution in 1938. He was a member of that constitutional convention. He never

elaborated on why he said that. At the time, I did not know enough to keep digging and digging to get the information.

KP: Your father was quite active in the community. How did the war effect his law practice, but also his political standings? Like being on the bond drives?

GE: No, he was not on the bond drive. He was just staying home, taking care of business. He was a supervisor of the town ...

KP: He was not on the draft board was he?

GE: No, he was not. My uncle was on the draft board, but my father was not on the draft board. My wife's mother was the secretary to the draft board, but he was not in that. He just took care of business. He took care of his law practice. He took care of the township. He played golf and he played bridge, and that was his diversion.

KP: A lot of rural areas during the war had an increasingly hard time getting farm workers. Did you see that in Hancock?

GE: No, at that time, if people were born on the farm, they stayed on the farm. It doesn't happen today. We don't have as many farms, as we used to, mainly because the City of New York took so much land and wiped out the farms. There was no problem getting farmers in those days.

KP: So you did not have a problem where there was a real concern for farm workers that you remember?

GE: No, not that I remember.

KP: During the war, did you do anything, besides eventually enlisting? Did you take part in any scrap drives or bond drives at school?

GE: Well, we did the bond drives at school. We saved the saving stamps, bought those. I had forgotten, but I think we did go around on scrap drives. I'd forgotten all about that. You have just refreshed my recollection. We also would go to the Legion Hall to spot for airplanes, at night. Of course, you know, at the time, we were dark at night and you had all your blinds closed. You had the rationing. We were aware of no meat, no sugar, shoes, tires, gasoline, and, but, we also would go out to the Legion to spot airplanes.

KP: As a freshman in high school, did you think you would get into this war, or did you think it would be over?

GE: Well, you know, I really didn't know, but was hoping that I would not. But I was preparing myself to go. If I had to go in, this was early, even before Pearl Harbor, I thought if I ever went in service, I would like to be a paratrooper. I went to the World's Fair 1939, '40. I went with my friend who lived across the street. We went to the parachute jump, and we got in that. As we

were going up, I started to get a little nervous. I said, "Jim, gee, are we getting near the top yet?" Jim looks up and says, "Yeah, we're right there." As he said this, they let us loose and you have this free fall. What a feeling that was, and then you hit the bottom. That took care of being a paratrooper. [laughter] You know, it had just intrigued me, and I ... took a book out of the library and read all about paratroopers. I read about the training they had and thought I would like to do that. Then after that and coming to Rutgers, and going into the ROTC, I was not big on guns. I was not a hunter. My father was not a hunter. All of my friends were hunters, everybody in Hancock. I even belonged to a hunting club in Hancock ...

KP: But you don't hunt?

GE: But I don't hunt. I was even the president of the hunting club. You know, I was the only guy in the club that did not hunt, until a good friend of mine, who came along later, who was in the navy in World War II, also. His father was in and then he came in, and he and I were the only two that weren't members. It was a good cross section of the community, a good social outlet. To get back to Rutgers and taking these rifles apart and putting them together at night, I mean in the dark, and seeing the movies that they would show us about what was going on in Germany and Russia. And I said, "Boy, that does not appeal to me." That is why I decided I would go into the navy. It turned out at Rutgers in Lambda Chi, I had a roommate my first year there, and he was not a member of the fraternity. Wally Goodman was his name, and we were just looking for revenue for the fraternity, so we had a few fellas living there, who were not actual ...

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

GE: I was rooming with Walter Goodman in Lambda Chi Alpha, and he was not a member of the fraternity and was just living there because the fraternity needed revenue. He was paying his rent and for room and board. He was the captain of the swimming team. I told him I could not swim and I was going into the navy. And I heard you have to take this swimming test when you get in boot camp. He said, "Well, I will teach you how to swim." So he took me over and threw me into the pool. I thought I would drown, but he taught me enough. So when I went to boot camp, and you have take the swimming test. You have to climb this ladder way up to the top of this tower. Then you have to jump into the water and have to swim a certain distance. For some reason, I thought I should not have to take swimming lessons in the navy. I thought that would be degrading. I thought, "Oh, I have to pass this test." So my last quarter here, I was over at the pool, practicing long distance and jumping in the pool and everything. I was afraid of the water. It was very difficult for me to do this. When we got to this test, they blow the whistle and then you start to go up the ladder. Then you go to the top, and they blow the whistle again. And then you step to the edge of the tower, they blew the whistle and you jump. I did not wait for any whistle. Once I started, I said in my mind, "I am just going up there and am going to jump, so I don't get up there and freeze." I just went all the way and jumped, and they did not reprimand me for it. And I managed to pass the test. Now, in a way, I wish I had taken it because I would have really learned how to swim. I got enough to get by, but am not really a good swimmer. I accomplished what I wanted to at that time.

KP: It is interesting that you wanted to be a paratrooper, that ROTC and the parachute jump at the World's Fair talked you out of it. What did you think war would be like? Had you gone to any old movies or did any movies from the '30s that you saw in the local theater stick in your mind?

GE: At the time, I was in high school and going to the movies, you know, I don't remember those movies. I remember *The Plainsmen*, with Gary Cooper, and *The Lives of the Bengal Lancers*, with Errol Flynn and Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire in *Top Hat*. I don't remember the war movies, but it was afterwards, you know, *The Best Years of Our Lives*, with Frederick March and Myrna Loy, *Battleground*. ... It was afterwards that I really started to notice them. I knew that I would be better off in the navy rather than in a foxhole.

KP: It sounds like you attribute ROTC to a good part of that.

GE: That's right.

KP: When you graduated high school, had you thought of going right into the service before going to college?

GE: I wanted to go to college. I really wanted to go to college. My dad told me that the best years of his life were in college, you know, until he got married, you know, when he was single. He said it was just a great time. I just had this feeling that it was going to be the greatest thing in the world, especially since I thought I was going to Princeton. I loved the campus down there. Rutgers has a nice campus, too, but not as nice as Princeton. But in 1944, this was a small college. So it was something I wanted to do. I had a sweatshirt my father bought me and it had college pennants all over. It had Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Cornell, Army, and I just loved that. Some of my teachers knew that I wanted to go to Princeton. They were always kidding me. I had a notebook with a Princeton decal on it. You know, this is before people really had this stuff. You know back in '43 and '44, you didn't see people walking around with sweatshirts with college names on them. So I wanted go to college.

KP: It sounds like you had no question ...

GE: No question ...

KP: ... that you were going to go to college when you grew up.

GE: And there was no question that I was going to go to law school. We had a course in civics in high school, and you had to write a paper on what you wanted to do. That is when I really started getting serious. I said I wanted to be a jockey. Well, when I was in the sixth grade, I did want to be a jockey. I was small, and I knew I was small, and I knew you had to be small to be a jockey. I figured I am going to be small, I am going to be a jockey. Then I just decided I was going to be a lawyer. I never wavered from that once I made up my mind when I was a freshman. And the best course I ever took was right here at Rutgers, public speaking.

KP: With which professor?

GE: It was with Reager. He had a summer camp in Roscoe, New York, which is thirty miles from Hancock, but I did not know him at that time. I found out that before the year was over. That professor told you how to prepare, how to make a speech. He had a great little book on how to speak well. It turned out that my wife's uncle, Harold Stevens, had a nephew, Edwin Stevens, who came to Rutgers and graduated in '38, in the class with Martin Agronsky, I think. And he was an assistant professor here for a while. Then he went to George Washington where he was head of the speech department. So I met him after I married Ann and found out he had been at Rutgers and was in the speech department. I mentioned Reager, and, well, he was a great friend of his. I told him about the book I had, and there was a sequel to it. He got it and autographed it for me and gave it to me. And when my three children went to college, I said, "If there's anything I want you guys to do, I want you to take public speaking," and not one of them took it. [laughter] Anyway, that was great, great course. I really, really enjoyed that course. I wish I had taken more. I liked my history and my political science. I took the liberal courses here. I loved it, sociology, psychology ...

KP: It sounds like you liked college.

GE: I loved it. I loved it down here. I loved my friends down here. It was just great.

KP: You came to college to Rutgers when it was civilian, very small. It was a small college, relatively, after you came back from the navy. Do you have any thoughts on that, especially since it was a suitcase college?

GE: Well, you know, I don't like suitcase colleges. I like when people stay there on the weekends. Even today, Rutgers is still kind of a suitcase college. One son went to Fordham at Rose Hill. And that was sort of a suitcase college, except for the ones who lived on the campus. And now they have more dorms up there. I wonder today if I would come here because it is so large. When I came here it was small, but, still, if you got in the College of Arts and Sciences, you were still in a small group. You were still dealing with the same people. I don't know, but when I was here it was, and when we came back after World War II, and it was getting larger all the time. Then it became a state university. I don't know, I think it would still be my top choice. I finally had a great-niece who came here this past fall. That's the first person in my family that's ever come to Rutgers. I said, "This is great." ... When I found out she applied, she wanted me to write to the admissions office. I said, "This is not going to mean anything, if I write a letter, especially since you are a relative of mine. What do they think I am going to say?" She wanted me to, so I wrote a letter to the admissions office. And I told them that I was a big Rutgers alumnus, and my niece's daughter was coming. It was just great. I found out what all her activities were, and she was a good student. Well, anyway, she got accepted. She was elated, I was elated. She came down here ... before the semester started and doesn't like it at all. Now I think she wants to transfer out, but I think they convinced her to stay the whole year before she makes up her mind. She does not like it, so maybe that is the way I would be. I don't know.

KP: Any thoughts in terms of your first year, partly in terms of the ASTPs?

GE: Yes, I did, because a classmate of mine from Hancock, Don Marino, came to Rutgers in July. He was up in Wessels Hall as an ASTP, and I was here as a civilian. We would get together once in a while, and it turned out that my wife's brother was here at the same time, but I did not know him then because I did not know her. He was here and got an appointment at the Naval Academy, so he got discharged from the army. My friend from Hancock was here, and I would see him once in a while, but I will tell you, no one was here in the summer on the weekends. I was in Winants Hall. Very few people were around and it was hot. I was having a hard time adjusting to the studies. I was reading Shakespeare, and I just could not get into it. I was trying to do work on the weekends and it was hotter than blazes. It was kind of tough for me, especially the first quarter. Then once the second quarter started, in September, people would stay around a little more. I would go into New York. One of my sisters lived in New York at the time. So on a weekend, I would shoot in there and go to a play with her, or something like that once in a while. I had to learn how to study, and so it was kind of lonesome down here for me, especially the first quarter.

KP: Did you have any awareness of how, I would not say ill-prepared ...

GE: Ill-prepared.

KP: ... you were for college? Did you have any sense of that before you got to college?

GE: I did not know until I got here. I didn't know you should write down a word your professor said. I would just go in and sit there. I would go home and read the material. I just never really studied it. You find out that the professor is telling you something, and you'd better remember it, and you better give it back to him when you get the exam. All these guys I did not know were taking notes. And, boy, that first quiz after a couple of weeks. Gee, I ended up with a D and here I was knocking off As in Hancock. We had history A, history B, history C. I could not believe what happened. I could not believe the test when I saw it, as to what I was supposed to know. That is when I went to see Edward M. Burns. He said, "Well, you got to study harder." I was doing what I did in Hancock. That was not adequate to get through here, and the competition you had was no comparison to the intellectual guys that were in my class. They were smart and sharp and articulate and vocal. I was like a little sunflower seed sitting in the back of the room, scared to say "boo."

KP: This was your first year?

GE: Yeah, first year.

KP: Did the navy change any of that?

GE: I think the navy helped me a lot. It gave me another year of maturity. I was away for about a year and half almost, except for the two little leaves I had. It gave me a lot more confidence. Then coming back and taking that public speaking course, as a sophomore, that was great. I think that did it, and I think the navy helped it. For me, the navy was great for me. I ended up

with the GI Bill, and I did not get shot. You know, I came out of it unscathed. I am one of the few fortunate ones.

KP: You joined a fraternity your first year here. How did that take place in terms of your fraternity?

GE: It was one of the older fellows on campus. It was Tom Gibson, and I had just met him. How I met him, I was walking around campus with my high school letter on, "H" for Hancock. I had gotten a letter for basketball. It was the proudest thing. I meet this guy, and he said, "Hey, what is that letter for?" And I told him. And he said, "You are in Rutgers now. You don't want to wear high school letters around here." He says, "That's history. You want to forget that, or you are going to get in trouble if you wear that." Here I was so proud to wear my "H" and I took it off and never wore it again. You know, I met him. As a result of meeting him, I got invited up to the house, became a pledge and joined.

KP: Do you remember your initiation at all?

GE: Oh, yeah, it's secret, you know, the initiation, but I remember it very well. In Lambda Chi you get a number, your chapter was Phi Zeta and I am Phi 385. I was the 385th man at Rutgers to join Lambda Chi. My close friends, who went in with me, were Phi 384 or 387 and so forth. I remember that initiation very well. Afterwards, we did not have the drinking parties that they did when Calahan died down here of acute alcoholism in about 1989. We did have parties and we did drink, but they did not force it on you. We were all underage, because it was twenty-one in New Jersey, but I did not do any serious drinking there. I saved that until I got into the navy. [laughter] The fraternity was a nice initiation and a nice party afterwards. Just a "esprit de corps" in the fraternity.

KP: It sounds like your social life also picked up being in the fraternity that first year?

GE: Oh, yeah, you know, more people to do things with. You are living in the house, so you do more things. Of course, socially your freshman year there was not a lot going on. We did not have a military ball. We did not have big dances. There was nothing going on. It is just that we had sociability in the fraternity, but there was no big social events going on. That came when we got back, after the war.

KP: It is a standard question I ask. One is about Dean Metzger. Everybody seems to have a Dean Metzger story. Do you have any stories?

GE: I remember Dean Metzger, and I can picture him today. But I never really had any close contact with him, and I don't have any stories about him. One person I do remember Luther Martin, who was the registrar, what you would call the director of admissions today. I met him several times. He was just a gentleman through and through. I enjoyed him very much, but I can't remember knowing Metzger personally. I know the name and know of him.

KP: Chapel, you mentioned that you were a regular churchgoer. What did you think of the chapel services?

GE: Well, first we had to go once a week at lunchtime, or noontime on a Wednesday, I guess. Basically, they had us singing Rutgers songs, and I thought that was pretty neat and I liked that. Then on Sundays, you know, I was away, I was independent, and I did not have to go, so I did not go very often. Once in a while, I would go, but here I grew up in this family that went to church all the time. Finally got out on my own and said, "Well, I guess I won't go to chapel on Sunday." I did not mind it once a week, going in on Wednesdays, and this was especially the freshman year when you did that. When you came back after World War II, the veterans were not going to go down to learn the words to all the fight songs. They would just pick them up on their own. They did not have to teach them that in chapel.

KP: You mentioned that your father wanted you to introduce yourself to President Clothier, which must have been a very intimidating experience, partly because I have heard President Clothier was a very aloof figure. Even though he was very accessible, he was still rather foreboding. Do you have any recollections of this?

GE: I remember going in to see him. I remember him. He was very pleasant and very nice, but you know, it was just a conversation. My father wanted me to go in and introduce myself and I did. I don't remember anything unusual about it. He was just a very nice man. Like you say, he is a little aloof.

KP: You mentioned that you and your fraternity brothers decided on the navy. When did you know that your one year at Rutgers was going to come to an end?

GE: Well, I knew, I came down here when I was seventeen. I was going to be eighteen May the 19th, so I knew I had to do it. And my third quarter would end at the end of March, so that was it. And in April, the quarter was over and I told my dad that I was coming home to join the navy. He came down and picked me up, lock, stock, and barrel. We went back and enlisted. Then I had to wait a few weeks before I got in. Then I was called in May and I went in.

KP: Did you have any problems getting into the navy?

GE: No, no problems. You go in, take your physical and I don't remember any kind of written exams that we had. We probably had something, but I had no problem at all getting in.

KP: Where did you initially report with the navy?

GE: Well, I went to Binghamton to enlist, and then for our physical, they sent us to Albany, New York. Then we came back home and waited for the papers. We got the papers and then we went to Albany again. Then you get to Albany, they assign you to boot camp. They assigned me to Sampson Naval Base in Geneva, New York, right on Geneva Lake ...

KP: It sounds like you were very close to home?

GE: I was very close to home, but you don't go home until boot training was all done.

KP: You had some ROTC. What did you think of boot camp for the navy?

GE: You know, boot camp to me wasn't too difficult. ROTC helped out a lot with that training and the marching. And I joined the Drum and Bugle Corps. I had been in the band in high school, and as a result of that, I got a lot of little fringe benefits. I did not have to do KP, never did KP when I was in boot camp. You had to get out in the morning and march them to the mess hall and then you march them back. If you happened to have a program at night, you march them. Being in the Drum and Bugle Corps had a lot of intangible benefits. I did not have to do a lot of things. I remember taking fire training, and I was scared to death. You have to go into these buildings with flames coming out and fight these fires. And they were big hoses and I was small, I was 110 pounds. And they never put me in the front. I was glad that I was like the third man back holding this hose. And I was glad, but, you know, we had good training there. We had a company commander who was a real gentleman and he said, ... "You treat me right and I'll treat you right." And then he had his assistant commander, and he did all the dirty work. You know, he was the guy who made us shape up and did everything. The way it worked it was a good mix, having a nice guy for the company commander and the tough guy for the assistant company commander. My boot camp, it wasn't bad. Of course, you hear scuttlebutt before you go. "The G unit is a tough unit, and C unit is the best unit." Luck of the draw, I got the C unit. [laughter] Then I would write back and tell my friends, who were coming up, I said, "Well, you better hope you get the C unit if you come up here." So that is the way it went. So I was there twelve weeks, and then we got a leave. I had my first rum and coke, in my navy uniform, down in the bar at the Hancock House. I was around that week and then back to Sampson.

KP: Where did you hope to go in the navy? What specialty did you hope for?

GE: Well, you know, I just wanted to get in and get out. And I just wanted to put in my time, and I wanted the war to end. At first, when I was in boot camp, I didn't even think about that. The war was over in Europe by the time I got out. Well, I was pleased about that. Then when I was on the *New Jersey*, the USS *New Jersey*, BB-62, they assigned me to a deck division, division one. Division one, I was assigned to go down in the lower handling room. That's the powder room. That is where they shoot off the sixteen-inch guns. This is where you got to take six powder kegs that weigh one hundred pounds each, and you got to put them in the chamber, and then they shoot off these sixteen-inch projectiles. They sent me down there to do that. I couldn't even pick up one of those bags. I weighed one hundred and ten pounds, the bags weighed a hundred. To get down there, it is like going down six floors. It is way down in the bottom, in the bowels of the ship. So I said, "Well, I've got to go see the commander because I can't do this." I said, "Christ, I can't even carry these things." He said, "Okay, we will talk about this," so they still sent me down and put the earphones on me, in the lower handling room. Well, I was not too happy about that. And, being in the deck division when I got in the *New Jersey* in the middle of September of '45, right after the peace treaty was signed, we had to start "holy stoning" the deck because they had painted the teak wood, the wooden deck, for camouflage purposes during the war. Now they wanted to get this off, now. We were up there

“holy stoning” the deck. Man, was that hard work. It was okay, but then I found out that the supply division, the S division, needed somebody in the disbursing office, I hiked right down there to see the disbursing officer, Thomas Mullaney, Lieutenant JG. I told him that I would love to come to work for him, and he said, “Well, where are you from, and what is your background?” I said, “Well, I went to Rutgers and I was taking a pre-law course at Rutgers.” Well, he was going to St. John's Law School, so he thought, “Well, this guy was all right.” He said, “If you can transfer out of your division, I’ll put you in the disbursing office.” I went to see my commander, and this was a gentleman, also, and I found that when I went in. And he had already seen me before, because I wanted to get out of carrying the powder bags down there. I told him I would like to transfer to the S division because I had an opportunity to go into the disbursing office. He said, “Where are you from?” And I said, “Hancock, New York,” and he said, “Well, do you know the Hancock House?” I said, “Certainly I know the Hancock House. It is run by Ma Bell.” He said, “Well, I have had dinner in there.” Things just kind of went, and he said, “I think I will approve this transfer for you.” So I got transferred to the disbursing office in the S division. Then I felt like I was doing something, you know. You figured the pay and you kept track of the dependants for the whole ship. And we had over 3,000 people on there. I just felt that my ability was being used for something rather than “holy stoning” the deck and working down in the lower handling room, being on the deck division. One thing, they liked me in the first division because we would go out for training exercises every once in a while. We were in Tokyo Bay at the Yokosuka naval station. Some people call it (Yokuska?), but I always call it (Yokosuka?). And we would go out on a little training exercise every once in a while. There was one thing that, that had to be done when you go out. They had to put somebody overboard. They put them into a bosun’s chair. Some of the guys in the division hang onto the line for you, while you go over. And I don’t remember what it is I had to do, but I was the guy they sent over because I was so light ...

KP: Which must have been a scary experience.

GE: Yes, it was. That was another reason for wanting to get into the Disbursing Office. I just felt that once I got in there, that my abilities were a little more useful for them.

KP: Where were you when the first atomic bomb went off?

GE: Okay, I was in the middle of the Pacific, and on the USS *Audubon*. It was a troop ship. We had gone from Sampson on a train to Camp Shoemaker. And [we were] there a little while. Then [we went] to Treasure Island and then out. We were to participate in the invasion of Japan. That is why they were sending us out.

KP: You were destined for the USS *New Jersey*.

GE: At that time, ... we really did not know, but we knew we were going to participate in the invasion of Japan. That is why we were going. We were in the middle of the ocean, and then we hear about the bombing in Hiroshima and the other in Nagasaki. So we were happy, but you still could not let your guard down because the Japanese did not necessarily know it was going to be

over, either. We were still careful. They took us to Samar Island in the Philippines, and it was a naval receiving station, and we waited there ...

KP: They apparently put you to work.

GE: Yeah, they put me to work with the Seabees. [laughter] [I was] digging fence postholes in Samar, and it was hot, and tough work. I was glad to get out of there. I was only there a couple of weeks. Then we got on another troop ship the USS *Lauren*. I didn't know, but our destination was Okinawa. The *New Jersey* was at Okinawa at this time, but when we got up there, we hit a typhoon. I had dysentery and I was in sick bay, and I was being fed intravenously in there. And we had this typhoon and I was in sick bay all through the whole thing. Finally, when it was all over, instead of going into Okinawa, we went on, to Tokyo Bay. Then, when we go to Tokyo Bay, and the *Jersey* went up from Okinawa and it was there. And I must say that the veterans on the *New Jersey* were very unhappy that they signed the peace treaty on the *Missouri*. The *New Jersey* had seen more action than any of the battleships in World War II. The only reason it was on the *Missouri* was that Harry Truman was the President, which is understandable, but they [the *New Jersey*] had seen all the action out there. They were commissioned May 23, 1943. They were out there all that time. They thought it should have been on their ship. I think if it had been signed a couple of weeks later, it might have been on there. But, anyway, these guys were unhappy about that. So that's where I went aboard the *New Jersey*, in Tokyo Bay.

KP: Did it surprise you how long you would have to stay in the navy?

GE: I was only in a year and half, and I thought they would keep me longer than that ...

KP: You did not think that after the atomic bombs were dropped that you would be going home?

GE: Oh, no. I thought I would be in another couple of years. You were discharged on a basis of a point system. ... I was at the bottom of the totem pole. I got two medals, you know, from being in the Pacific during the war, Asiatic-Pacific Theater and World War II Victory Medal. But you know, these other guys, who were plank owners. Plank owners, you go on when the ship is commissioned. These men had been on the ship since May 23, 1943. Those guys were entitled to get out in a hurry. I knew I was not getting out until I was done. I was really surprised when I got out in August of 1946.

KP: It is interesting you came aboard a ship that had been functioning well for a long period of time and gradually you saw as the crew melted away. Do you have any thoughts on that?

GE: Yes, these were experienced men on this ship. We are coming in with a bunch of inexperienced people, like me. My gang, Sampson, they were water tenders and firemen. They had to learn how to run the ship when we went out on training exercises. Of course, we had good people to train us, because they were still on there for a while, but some of the few hundred were taken off, even after we got on there. We were the occupational forces in Tokyo Bay. Let's see, we got in there in September. We went out a couple of times on training. At the end of January,

we headed back to the States. We went to the Golden Gate Bridge. There was a ship there with a band on it to greet us. A lot of the guys had their families there and a lot of them got off in San Francisco. We stayed about six hours or twelve hours. Then we headed down to San Pedro Bay and more guys got off there. Then we had new replacements coming in all the time. Then, why, when we were in San Pedro Bay we would have to go out on training exercises to teach everybody all over again what to do.

KP: Battleships, from what I have read, were very sort of structured places. Admirals dreamed of commanding battleships as captains. Do you have any thoughts on it in terms of the discipline?

GE: Well, we had discipline, no question about that. And I just think that the battleship was the mightiest dreadnought there is. Of course, today you have the carriers with the airplanes, but we even had a couple planes on our fantail. We had to catapult them off and get them back on. It was just a monstrous weapon for a country. When you see one of those battleships, it is a sight to behold.

KP: So you were glad to be on a battleship?

GE: Oh, yeah, I was happy, very happy. We had a library. We had what you called a Gedunr stand, an ice cream stand. We had a laundry. You know, we were a floating city. We had more people on the *New Jersey* than lived in the village on Hancock. We had 1,300 people in Hancock. We had over 3,000 on the *New Jersey*, but everybody had their job. We had a Marine detachments on our ship. Do you remember Frank Reagan? He was an All-American football player, from Pennsylvania?

KP: I have heard the name, it sounds familiar.

GE: He was the head of that detachment. I, of course, realized he played for Pennsylvania, and so when I met him, I thought it was pretty neat. He was a practical joker, and when we got back to the States, Tom Mullaney went and got a supply of money for payday for the guys for liberty when we got back. Well, Reagan took the money drawers and hid them on Mullaney. And, you know, how much money did he have for three thousand men. I thought Mullaney would have cracked up. Finally, Reagan confessed that he had done this. I did not appreciate that, because I know how I would have felt if I was in Mullaney's shoes.

KP: Well, he would have been personably responsible.

GE: Yes, he was personably responsible. Then my opinion of Reagan, even though it was a practical joke, I said, "Gee, I don't know. I don't think I could pull that on anybody." His wife has provided Paul Stillwell, who wrote a history on the *New Jersey*, [with] ... a few of the pictures. [They] are courtesy of Mrs. Frank Reagan. So she gave a lot of pictures for that book. Then he went and played for the football Giants. "Well then," I said, "I guess he's all right after all." [laughter]

KP: You mentioned this small city that you were floating around on. It's also very cramped. It is not as cramped as a destroyer or a submarine, but it has still got a lot of people in very little space. You as an enlisted man as compared to an officer ...

GE: ... had a lot less space. In the deck division, I was quite conscious of it. Then when I got into the disbursing office, and after we let off the first group of veterans in San Francisco, we left a chief petty officer and another yeoman, I stepped into the disbursing office. And they had sacks, and I had my own sack right in the disbursing office. So when the day is all done, you get ready to go to bed at night. You just go into the disbursing office and pull your sack down. We had about two of them in there, this other friend and I moved up to that elevation. So we were sleeping in there. In the morning, we would sleep as late as we could and then the mess hall was just down the hallway. And we would run out and grab breakfast at the last minute. Once I got in there, I was not as conscious of it, but, yes, it was very cramped and crowded. The later years, after the war, they changed things quite a bit. They got some air conditioning in, and they gave them more space for everybody. And they did not need as large of crew as they did during World War II.

KP: So you were conscious that during peace time things were getting more comfortable?

GE: Yes, it was getting more comfortable.

KP: How uncomfortable was your sleeping arrangement when you got there?

GE: You know, I just knew that we were crowded, but it didn't bother me.

KP: I assumed you had freshwater showers?

GE: We had freshwater showers

KP: How was the food?

GE: You know, I don't have any bad recollections. It wasn't that great, and I know on Thanksgiving and Christmas, they would go all out to give us a better meal. At the time, I liked Spam, and we had a lot of Spam. I don't care for it today [laughter], but I liked it then. We had powdered milk, and it wasn't anything to write home about, but I understood the circumstances and I accepted it.

KP: Getting to the *New Jersey*, you did quite a bit of traveling. You ended up in the Philippines. When you got on the *New Jersey*, how often did you get off of the ship?

GE: Well, we had liberty, occasionally. While we were there, I wanted to go to Tokyo and I wanted to go to Yokohama. And I went to each place once. We were in Yokosuka, and you had to take a LST, a landing ship tank, or LSM, landing ship medium, to get to these places. It took forever to get there. I mean, half your day was shot travelling to these places. When you got there, everything was off-limits. And, you know, I went to say I had been there. But I might

have gone to Tokyo a couple times, but I really did not care to go. We had an enlisted men's club in Yokosuka, and it did not take you long to get there. You go in, drink beer, eat peanuts, your friends are there, bat the breeze. So we would go there rather than going into Tokyo or Yokohama. It was not a leave, but a liberty, where you had eight hours maybe. ... I can't remember how often I got it. One thing I do remember, when I was standing watch for the deck division, I saw this aircraft carrier coming into Tokyo Bay. And they announced on the PA system that the USS *Boxer* was standing in. I had a classmate from Hancock that was on the *Boxer*. Once again, I went to see my commander and arranged to get a little boat to take me over to the *Boxer* and had a reunion with my friend from Hancock in Tokyo Bay. When I got in, there was another fellow from Hancock that I did not realize was on the ship. The three of us had a little reunion there. That was probably my greatest memory of having any time off from the ship ... One other time ... I think I had to be in the Philippines, in Samar, and I don't know why, but I had to go to a Coast Guard ship. You talk about discipline in the military. This was the most disorganized little ship I had ever been on. You know, just easy going, laid back, but it was a small ship. The way they dressed and comparing that to the militaristic USS *New Jersey*, it was quite a change. And I thought, "I wonder what it would be like to serve on one of these things?" I can't remember why I had to go on that ship but I had some duty to do. I think it had to be in the Philippines, I can't imagine where else it would have been.

KP: It sounds like your officers were very accommodating to you. Were they career officers or were they ...

GE: Mullaney was a reserve, he was not lifetime. My commander, you know, I think that he was not regular navy. We had regular naval personnel on the ship, the captains, the admirals, and a lot of your bosun's mates, chief petty officers and warrant officers. They were mostly regular navy. The two I had the most dealings with were not regular navy. That probably helped me get into the disbursing office.

KP: Did you know, because you were in the disbursing office, who was married, who was not, who was going through family problems, who was having kids? Do you have any memories of that?

GE: No memories at all. We just had the dependants and deductions, and most of my friends were all single and they wanted paydays. And when they needed a special payday, I could sometimes arrange a special payday. I even loaned them money out of my own pocket sometime. These were guys that were gamblers and playing craps. They were always short of money, but I did not do that very often. I got to know a lot of people from being in that position, too.

KP: You mentioned gambling, how prevalent was it aboard the *Jersey*?

GE: There was a lot of gambling. I did not get involved in it. You know, I like to go to the racetrack today, and I like to go to Las Vegas today, but I am not a heavy hitter or anything. Couple times a year and I'm happy. Some of the guys really got into it pretty good.

KP: So there would be big stakes?

GE: Oh, yeah. Sure.

KP: Did you ever think of staying in the navy?

GE: No, I just could not wait to get back to Rutgers. When I got out, you know, you could have gone in the Reserves. And I wonder, now, maybe I would have liked it if I had. I did not want it at the time. I wanted to wash my hands of it ...

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

KP: This continues an interview with Mr. George H. Elwood on January 15, 1996 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. You mentioned that, as we were just cut off, why you didn't join the Reserves.

GE: I was happy that I didn't when the Korean War came because a lot of my friends were called back in at that time. Of course, I was not called back. I had a friend in the disbursing office. He eventually ended up with a commission. He is now a commissioned officer in the navy. When we went out for the decommissioning of the *New Jersey* in 1991, a great thing to do, but very sad because we all served on it, I met him again. And he was staying in the officer barracks in Long Beach, and I was staying in the hotel. You know, if I had stayed in, I probably would have ended up doing the same thing he did, and I'm happy that I didn't.

KP: It sounds like you have a lot of affection for the ship, and that you had overall a very positive experience.

GE: That is correct, and the people that I met, just like my fraternity brothers, the people that I met in the navy were just outstanding people, especially in the disbursing office, and, also, men I went to boot camp with. We stuck together all the way through. They were, as I said, they were firemen, water tenders, and they were the initial group that I went in with. One went up to Niagara University, another guy went to Holy Cross, and you know, they were just great people.

KP: How long did you stay in touch with people from the *New Jersey*?

GE: I stayed in touch with about three of them, actually four them. One was the disbursing officer that came in after Mullaney, Paul Allen. I stayed in touch with Slim Moody, Robert G. Moody. He and I slept in the disbursing office, there in the sacks. He stayed in and became an ensign. He has visited me in Hancock and met my family. My wife and I, when we go to San Francisco for American Bar meetings, we'd get together with Slim and his wife. When we had the decommissioning of the *New Jersey*, we got together on the ship. There is another fellow who lives in Lockport, New York, I have seen him once, maybe. There is a fellow out in Dedham, Massachusetts. I talk to him on the phone. You know, I have not kept as close touch as I did with my fraternity brothers because, you know, we have reunions to come back to.

GE: You mentioned that you went to the decommissioning, did you go to any other reunions of the crew?

KP: Well, we have the USS *New Jersey* Veterans. And it started out in Long Beach, and I did not know about it. The next one, I think, they had in Atlantic City. I think I read about it in the *American Legion Magazine*. I came down to a Rutgers football game and then left early to get down to Atlantic City for this reunion. We got there just in time for dinner, and there was this table that was vacant, so we sat there. And we found out that it was the head table, and so we got evicted. We ended up sitting at another table, and my gosh, there was this guy there named Harry Fagan, who went in boot camp with me all the way through. And here he was at this reunion. So I met him, and I met some other people that were plank owners. And we have had several reunions since then. People you have become real good friends with because you know you really have something in common and you go from there. We have met some great people at these reunions. We have had reunions in Atlantic City, to Indianapolis, to New Orleans, to Daytona Beach, to Nashville, Norfolk, you know, trying to go all around the country. Then we had this one in Long Beach for the decommissioning, and we got on the ship, and you could not go down below decks. I took my wife. And we went below decks, and I found the disbursing office, and I showed her where I worked. I could not get in the door, but it had the same nametag over it, "Disbursing Office." I showed her where the head was that we used. [laughter] That was just the greatest thrill to get on there, and walk through that, and to be able to show her.

KP: You had not been on that ship since ...

GE: I was on it one other time, in 1947 or '48. And it came into New York City, and we were having the American Legion Convention in New York City. I went down and went on the ship then, and one of the fellows that I knew from the disbursing office was still on there. So I went on and saw him. Then I never got on it again until decommissioning. They did have a reunion in Long Beach in '88 or '89, where you could go on the ship and everything unfolded very rapidly. And we were committed that weekend for a jazz concert, a jazz festival in Indianapolis, three days, and we had already paid our money up front. We already had our plane tickets. I was trying to figure out how to work this in. My wife said, "You know, you can go, and I will just go to the jazz festival and you stop at the jazz on the way back." We tried to work it out, and I finally just gave it up and did not do it. So I did not get on it. Then you could go throughout the entire ship. Now the only hope, after this decommissioning, is that they have the Battleship Museum Historical Society. We have a committee appointed from the New Jersey assembly, Joe (Assolino?), I think. And [he's] trying to get the government to release it to our society, bring it back and have it as a historical museum. You know, that's what I am really hoping for. We went on the USS *North Carolina*. That is a museum in Wilmington, North Carolina. We went to a jazz concert down there in the Wilmington Hilton, on the Cape Fear River. Right across the river is the *North Carolina*. We went right over there, and I went through that ship. I took my wife and took her down in the lower handling room. And it is not as large as the Iowa class battleships, such as the *New Jersey*, but that was a thrill going through that. Just to get back to the decommissioning, you know, you don't shed a tear over an inanimate object, but a heck of a lot of people did that day, I tell you. [laughter]

KP: You had mentioned that you were in the Philippines and briefly in Tokyo. Any thoughts on the different places and people you encountered?

GE: Well, I was very unhappy with the Japanese for the attack on Pearl Harbor, and I just could not warm up to them. I think I wrote home, and I called them "Moldy Japs." I was just not impressed with anything, not impressed with them. I just did not want to have anything to do with them, and I just wanted to visit. I was there in the area, and I wanted to say, "Well, I did it." The Philippino people, actually, I did not have much to do with. I was at our naval station. So I did not have much to do with them.

KP: Did you ever make it to Hawaii while you were in service?

GE: Not in service, not in service. Subsequently in law school, we did have a fellow from Japan, you know, of Japanese decent in our law class. And I never held anything against him, and he was a nice guy. You know, I have gotten over all that, but it was just at the time.

KP: You felt the animosity?

GE: I certainly did, I certainly did.

KP: Did you ever have any discipline problems aboard the *Jersey*?

GE: No, I never had any myself. My close friends never had any, and I don't remember anybody. ... I don't remember it in boot camp, I don't remember it on troop ships, troop trains. I don't remember anything. I would like to say one thing about a troop train. It went from Sampson to Camp Shoemaker. We got on the train, and I took a turn to the right, and everybody else took a turn to the left. I got on a train with compartments. I got a private compartment to myself. All the rest of the compartments were for officers, and I'm a seaman second class out of boot camp, and I end up with a porter taking care of me in a compartment. I don't know how it happened. So I went all the way cross-country in a compartment. I did find out I had friends from boot camp, in addition to my real friends. [laughter] All these guys wanted to come back. The porter would make up the bed. That was great. And I loved trains, anyway. Coming to Rutgers, I would take the Erie to Jersey City, and then take the tubes over to Journal Square and then into Newark. Then get the Pennsylvania down into New Brunswick. When I went to law school, I'd go down to Jersey City and take the tubes over. And my wife did the same thing going to Bellevue. When I had this compartment, I thought that was great and someday I'd have to do this again when I really can enjoy it. I did take a trip back when I got leave. I came back from Japan and was in southern California and got a leave and went home on the train. I came back on the train. On the train back, we had an accident. One of the trainmen was killed. My stepmother made me lunch. And I lost that. I got blood on my hat, not mine, somebody else's. I had a friend from Hancock, waiting in Chicago to meet me. He was in the army. I told him I was coming in, and I had a layover there. So I was worried about getting off of that train and getting into Chicago. Here you would think I have some trauma or something, and all I could think about was how I could get into Chicago, I got to meet this friend. I got a bus and got into Chicago and met him. I sent a telegram back home and said I was fine except I lost the lunch.

That was it. Then I took another train trip when we were discharged from Bremerton, and we all got discharged out there because you got money, extra money and mileage. We made money on it. It was a wild, wild trip on the way home. They locked us in the car, you know, there was a lot of drinking going on. Everyone was celebrating on getting out of there. I loved those trips cross-country. My wife and I finally, I think, 1992 or '93, we took a trip cross-country on the train, and we got a compartment, you know. We went all the way down to San Antonio, up to LA, up to Seattle, back into Chicago, and we left out of Syracuse, and we had a compartment ...

KP: Oh, you really did it right ...

GE: Yeah, we really did. It was something we both wanted to do, you know, and that was it.

KP: You mentioned that you had traveled some, before your father taking you down to New York and Princeton, but it sounds like your travels had been fairly confined.

GE: Exactly, I had never gone any place. We did get to Chicago once, visiting relatives in Aurora, Illinois. We never did anything else. It was very confined. That was when I was growing up. But with our kids, we took them to San Francisco, St. Louis, Washington, Montreal. We were able to do a little bit more for our family.

KP: What did you think of the different parts of the country and people from these different regions? You encountered a lot of people.

GE: You know, everybody was nice. There are nice people all over this country. There are nice people in New York City, despite what everybody says. They think we are different because we are from upstate New York. You know, wherever we go, people are people. You find good ones and you find bad ones. I never found any place and said, "Oh, I would not want to go there because I did not like the people." I never found that. I think it is just that we got a great country and we [should] appreciate. I have a daughter, who went in the Peace Corps, Guatemala for two years, and she came back. She said, "Well, I know two things. One, I appreciate my country more than I ever did, and two, I'm not going to be able to change the world." [laughter]

KP: Did you have any encounters with any black sailors, on board the *Jersey*?

GE: You know, we had Philipinos on, in the mess hall, and they were the personal servants for the officers ...

KP: You had no black stewards at all?

GE: Nope, we did not have anybody on there. Nope, I never really had anything to do with blacks until I got into law school, and we had two fellows in law class, except when I got into jazz and started meeting musicians. I met a lot of them. You know, in Hancock, you don't have many, although now we are starting to get more. In service, we did not see any. I can't remember anything, any connection with them or doing anything with them.

KP: You got discharged in Bremerton and came cross-country. When did you arrive home and when did you come back to Rutgers?

GE: I got discharged in Bremerton on August 3, 1946, so I was home three days later. We went out in Bremerton with the regular navy men who were the bosun's mates and the firemen. We were little guys on there, just for the few months on the ship. They were going to give us a send-off. They took us into the place, and I never had too many beers until that day. [laughter] I got indoctrinated that day and got sick and everything else. It was probably a good thing, you know. But we left Bremerton and came back, probably in those days, three or four days later, I'm back home. September, I was in Rutgers.

KP: September of '46?

GE: September of '46, I came right down here.

KP: How had Rutgers changed?

GE: Rutgers had changed because there were so many people here. There was a handful of people here in July of '44, even April of '45 when I left. When I came back we had barracks. We had married people with children, living out in these barracks in Camp Kilmer. Guys were going to class with dungarees on and camouflage. You know, when I came down here, it was hot. I did not wear a jacket and tie all the time, but we dressed up. These guys did not care how they came to class. They were there for an education.

KP: Well, I have been told that the veterans really left an impact. One of the things people said was that a lot class rituals and the hazing of freshmen by sophomores was not accepted by the veterans.

GE: That's right. They were not going to accept that. Like they were not going to go down and learn songs at the chapel. In the fraternity, we did not have hazing like they might have today, or a few years ago, but we did have a little hazing. And we had guys that were veterans. One was a house manger, and he put some of the guys through there, but it wasn't really hazing, nothing harmful to anybody. You know the veterans were not going to put up with that stuff.

KP: One of the things that struck me with the Class of '49 was that they are very loyal to the sports team. Athletics was very important to your class, in a different way than other classes.

GE: You know Frank Burns was the quarterback of that football team. And he was our class president, and we all knew him. He was successful, and he graduated from here and played in the East-West All-Star game, playing against the Giants. And he was the most valuable player in that All-Star game. I remember a Rutgers, Columbia game. We were down twenty-eight to nothing at the half, and we came back and scored twenty-seven points in the second half. And we lost it, but we almost pulled it out. Frank lost fifteen pounds in that game. Then he ends up being a coach here at Rutgers. We just followed him along, and most everybody knew him in the class. You know, he was a class act all the way. I wrestled for Rutgers, and if you wrestle for

your university, you got some bond there. I don't come back for the wrestling meets, once in a while, maybe, but I come back for football. I come back to basketball, if I can, and I contribute, though, to the wrestling team. It is just a bond you get.

KP: Did you wrestle before you went to the war or was it something you did after the war?

GE: After the war. A good friend from Roselle Park, Bob Johnson, was on the wrestling team at Roselle Park. He came out for the team at Rutgers, and he said, "We need some lightweights, so why don't you come out?" I said, "I never wrestled. I don't know anything about it." He said, "Come out, we will show you because we need lightweights." So I went out, took our physicals, and he did not pass the physicals because he had high blood pressure. [laughter] I passed, and I stayed on, and he did not go through with it. And so I was on the team for three years, JV [for] two years, and I finally made the varsity my senior year. The only reason I made it was that the number one man had left the team, and so I got it. But I got enough to earn my letter. We went around and wrestled Princeton, Columbia and Haverford, and Army and Lehigh. And I'm telling you, that was an experience. Dick Voliva was our coach. As a result of that, I had Dick Voliva come to Hancock to speak to the Rotary Club. He was a wrestling coach I had. I had Frank Burns come up once to speak at our spring banquet. I had Dick Lloyd come up and speak to the Rotary Club. I had Bill Foster come up, and he brought Harry Litwack with him. He was a coach at Temple at the time. I got all these guys to come to Hancock, and, you know, I am always promoting the university. You know, everyone up there is going to Syracuse, or Cornell, or Colgate, or SUNY Binghamton.

KP: It sounds like you are glad that you did not go to Colgate?

GE: Oh, yeah. I'm glad I didn't. Everybody up there, they talk to you from Hancock. If they don't know me, and they talk about a Syracuse game, I say, "Boy, I am not rooting for Syracuse." [laughter] I am Rutgers all the way. It was so nice that I ended up on the *New Jersey*, you know, coming to Rutgers and ending up on the *New Jersey*. I wrote to somebody or someone wrote to me, you know, when we were in service. People, civilians, back home would write us. I wish I kept the name of the family that I was corresponding with at the time. You know, I am a New Yorker. I'm loyal to all my organizations. Loyal to everything, I am loyal to New York State. I prefer New York State to New Jersey, but I prefer Rutgers to any institution of higher learning. [laughter]

KP: You mentioned that you went through college and law school, but how did you meet your wife?

GE: Okay, she was from Walton, I was from Hancock. She was in the operating room in Walton, and the chief surgeon was having a party at his house. And he asked one of the doctors in Hancock if they had anybody that they could set up with a blind date for this nurse. So the doctor from Hancock asked me if I liked to go, so I said, "Fine, I'll go." I went to this dinner party and met her and found out that her uncle lived on Bartlett Street, New Brunswick. She had come down to New Brunswick. She had gone to the military ball with somebody. She knew Rutgers. Back in 1954, people did not know Rutgers. In 1954, up in our area, and to hear

somebody that knows about Rutgers. And her sister married Ken Osinsky, Class of '49, who was a guard on the football team, Theta Chi, who I knew, but not well. I thought, "Wow." I met her in January of '54, and we married December 18th, of '54. She is a Rutgers fan, too. It worked out fine.

KP: Well, you mentioned the Military Ball twice, and one of the things that my students have to do is go through the *Targum*. One of the things they were struck by, especially in '46, '47, '48, '49, is really how much there was of a social life. There were these balls with these tops bands. It sounds like you enjoyed some of this.

GE: Oh, yeah. Not only did we have the big university functions, our fraternity had functions. We had the Hobo Hop every February. And we had little functions, and the girls would come, and they would stay in the fraternity house. We had a housemother. We moved out. We had to find somebody, who had a dormitory, who was going home for the weekend or his roommate was. And we moved out, and the girls moved in and stayed there for the weekend. We ate all our meals there. We had a cook. We had a chef. We were lucky. We had a husband and wife. The husband was the chef, the wife was the housemother. The parties were kept under order. We had the booze there. That is when we broke out the hard stuff, when we had the girls in for the big weekends. You know, we had mostly veterans back, but they still observed the rules and the etiquette of the day.

KP: You went to Fordham, why Fordham Law School as opposed to New York or ...

GE: My dad went to New York Law School as opposed to NYU. New York Law School is a separate law school, not an affiliation, with any undergraduate school. I wanted to go to Cornell or Fordham, and Cornell was in my backyard. I had some friends up there, and it had a beautiful plant, beautiful facility at Cornell. And that's really where I wanted to go. I applied very early, and I went up there for an interview, like on Thanksgiving. And I thought I had a pretty good interview with the dean. I kept waiting and waiting and I was not hearing anything. So I decided, well, you can't put all your eggs in one basket, so I applied to Fordham because I liked New York City. You know, I would come in from Rutgers a few times when I was down here, and I liked the idea. And my dad went to New York, and he thought it would be all right. He said, "Make sure you go to a New York State law school. Don't go to Rutgers because you are going to have to take the Bar exam and you will get a course on New York practice, and you won't get one in New Jersey." He says, "Or you better find out if they give one." I think I did inquire, and they did not have one at the time. I said, "So I will apply to Fordham then." I was accepted to Fordham almost right off the bat. My dad sent the money and after we sent the money in and I was all set to go, I got accepted at Cornell. [laughter] I thought, "Well, I could probably still go there," but I was psyched to go to Fordham. I said, "Well, my father's got money invested, and so I will go to New York." I am so glad that I went to Fordham. That was the best school, the best law school. And it was at 302 Broadway, at the time. And now it is up at Lincoln Center, and they have a beautiful facility now, much better than we had. Did we have the professors, I'm telling you. I roomed with this one guy for three years by chance. He was from Yale. He played baseball with George Bush. He was on the baseball team, and he played with Bush on the team. When Bush was running for president, I called him up and said, "Well,

how does it seem to have your teammate running for president of the United States?” He said, “It is exciting as hell.” He and I roomed together for three years. We lived in Brooklyn, and we took the subway to lower Manhattan. It took us fifteen, twenty minutes to get there. And we lived in a house with other law students, a good friend of ours, who went to Fordham. He was a year ahead of us and was a good friend of ours. [We lived with] a guy from St. Francis, a guy that went to St. John’s. ... [The] neighborhood we lived in, we had Bill Carlin’s Bar at the end of the block, and we’d go down there on Sunday nights and watch the Ed Sullivan Show. We met a doctor that had his office around the corner. And we got to know him, and when we get our flu, we’d go see him and he would treat us. It was like a little neighborhood. We got to know the people. Moriarty’s Bar, we got to know the brothers, Steve and Ted, who ran it and Pauline their sister, who was a waitress. They’d go through Hancock, and they would stop in and see me when they were going through. It was a neighborhood group, and all the guys I met in law school were great guys. One guy is an associate dean at Seton Hall Law School now. We have reunions every five years. And Fordham, I can’t say enough about that school.

KP: It sounds like, in some sense, you were originally destined for Princeton and Cornell, and you ended up at Rutgers and Fordham.

GE: That’s right. And I don’t feel I have lost a beat. I don’t think I have lost a step. Maybe if I wanted to go to a Wall Street law firm I lost a step. But for what I wanted to do, to come back to Hancock, New York ...

KP: So you knew when you were going to law school that, as much as you enjoyed the city, you knew you wanted to go back?

GE: I wanted to go back. I knew I would not fit in. I knew I was not the top guy in the law school. My roommate, Bob Rosensweit, was the top guy in the law school. He hardly studied and he knocked it off. I would take his notes, and his notes were better than going to class. [laughter] I mean, I went to class most all of the time. I only missed a couple of classes now and then. This guy had a knack. He got hired by a big firm in New York City, but he did not like it. He left and went back to Hartford. And he was from New Britain, but got a job with a big firm up there. He just retired, but he is now of counsel to the firm. He didn’t want to stay here, either. But some of my friends, they were New York guys. And then we did not even have a dormitory to live in. Today, you have a dormitory you could live in if you were a law student. We all lived in a rooming house. A lot of the guys just commuted from their homes to law school. It was mostly a New York City group. My roommate and I were the outsiders, he was from Connecticut, and I was from Hancock, New York. And we had Walter Lynch’s son in our class. Lynch was running for governor on the Democratic ticket. We walked into class before the election, I came down with a “Dewey for Governor” button, and I did not know that Jack Lynch’s father was Walter, running for governor. We sat alphabetically in law school so Tom Durkin sat next to me, and he said, “Hey, what is the matter with you, wearing that Dewey button?” He says, “Don’t you know that (Lynch’s ?) dad is running for governor?” I said, “Too bad, I voted absentee and I was going to stand up and be counted.” [laughter] I got along with him and it was fine, but it was just a matter of politics, that’s all. His son was a very nice guy, too. I was not the top man in the law school, as I said, my roommate was. [And] there were a lot of good people

there. I mean, I love Rutgers, but Fordham is what gave me the ability to make a buck.
[laughter]

KP: Were you able to pass the Bar the first time?

GE: No, it took me three times. The first time, I didn't pass anything. They had it, in those days, in two separate sections. I just concentrated on this one section. I studied for both, but I really concentrated on one, and I knocked that off. Then the next one, I got ready and I concentrated on that, and I hit it off. Today, I am on the Character and Fitness Committee for the Sixth Judicial District of the Appellate Division of the third department. So we screen all the applicants who have passed the Bar in our district. This is a ten county area, and we screen them for character and fitness. And that's a job that I really like, because you get to delve into their background and see what is going on. I really think Fordham is a top rate law school. Maybe Stanford is better or maybe Columbia is better, and Harvard and Yale and Chicago, but I can't believe it. They just have such outstanding teachers there, and they still do today.

KP: You went back to Hancock and did you think you would join your father's firm?

GE: Oh, yeah, there was no question about it. That was a forgone conclusion. He wanted me back. It was just like if one my children went to law school. I would have had them back there.

KP: Are you disappointed that ...

GE: I am disappointed that they didn't do it, but I am not disappointed with what they have done with their lives because they are doing what they wanted to do. They did not want be an attorney in Hancock, New York.

KP: You would not have minded if one ...

GE: I would have loved it. If one of them had come back, I would have really have liked it, just like I did with my father.

KP: Your father lived quite a long time after you came back. Did he practice law?

GE: Well, you know, he had Parkinson's. And I got back in '54, and he died in '63. And I would say that from about '60 on, he was not doing too much. When I came in, we weren't entitled to share the profits but we did. When we got to, let's say 1960, he really should not have been sharing in the profits, but we did. It was a family relationship, and that is the way it was. He really left me something, to walk into a practice, and at first, people did not want to come to me. If he was there, he tried to get some of the clients to come to me instead of him. It takes a while. I was the little boy that was running around there, and they did not think I was mature enough yet. You know, it just takes time.

KP: You had your father to show you how to become a lawyer. Do you have any memories of that learning experience? What it is really like to be a lawyer?

GE: There is no question that you have to learn the practical aspect of it. I really think it would be good if you put in a year of internship like the doctors do. They put in a little more, but to really learn. And my father really helped me a lot, but he also didn't help me. He let me get my feet wet. You know, he helped a little bit. I had a lot of questions, but he just let me learn the hard way, which is probably good.

KP: You really had to make it on your own.

GE: That's right. And just because I was in there didn't mean that, you know, I had anything served to me on a silver platter. But I had an opportunity which I took advantage of it. That is basically what happened.

KP: In a small town, on your own, you would have had a very rough going ...

GE: At that time, yes, right.

KP: You were very active politically in the '50s and you would, in fact, get an appointment from Nelson Rockefeller. How much contact did you have with ...

GE: No, I did not have any contact with the governor. Actually, when I say it was from Nelson, it was New York State tax commissioner, Joe Murphy, who made the appointment. It was during Rockefeller's term, but it was Joe who made the appointment. The reason I got the appointment was because the Republican county chairman recommended me. That is why I got it, and I did not know Joe Murphy, either. It was a political patronage position, but you still had to work, whatever I got, I earned. I will say when Malcolm Wilson became governor, I knew Malcolm because Malcolm was a Fordham law graduate. Malcolm came to Hancock as an assemblyman at a Womens Republican Club, and they had me come to the meeting to introduce him. I met him there and found out that we were both Fordham. Then we would go back to Fordham Law luncheons. He got to meet my wife, Ann, and so every year, we would see him at the luncheons. Then he was Lieutenant Governor, and then when he was going to run for governor, we had a big Delaware County Republican dinner. And I was the toastmaster, and I had Malcolm up there at the head table. We have known him, and since then, he has called me to handle some things for some of his clients up in this area. There is an another gentleman, smart, intellectual and intelligent man. Of course, now, he is getting up there in years, and he does not come to the law school luncheons anymore. He still, I think, goes to the office. And I did know him very well and I still do.

KP: It seems you have a very high regard for him.

GE: Oh, yes, extremely high. He is a man of principle. I told him he had a little problem. He is from White Plains area, and upstate, they are always saying that there is a difference between the Upstaters and downstarters. I told Malcolm that, you know, we are not different. We are all the same. You might have people from New York City and people from Delaware County, but basically, we are all the same.

KP: I have read that there is this real downstate/upstate split, which is very historic. You have bridged this gap. I get the impression that very few people do bridge the gap.

GE: I think the only reason that I kind of bridged the gap is because I went to Fordham and I lived there for three years. My wife was there. She was there for five years, three years of nursing school and two years of working at Bellevue. You know, we don't see the need for this big separation.

KP: I mean, you contribute to it partly because of New York's size, but in Jersey there is a similar North versus South split. Why do you think these splits exist?

GE: Well, the people in New York, they think that New York [City] is getting everything when it comes to state aid for schools. They think that New York gets too much. They think that all our money is going to New York City, which is really not the case. That is what they think. They come down to New York. We have a ... trip to Yankee Stadium, and they look at the surroundings when they come in. [They say], "Well, who can live here, and how do these people live?" They just don't take the time to try and sit down and figure out what is going on. There is just this big separation of upstate and downstate. But as far as the practice of law goes, there is a separation, too. You close a deal in Delaware County and it is a lot different then closing a deal in Kings County, as in what happens. The tradition is different in each area. This goes for Buffalo. As far as the practice of law, they talk about "you got to have the Philadelphia lawyer if you are in Philadelphia." Usually, if you are going into some other area you're going to want local counsel on the scene to know what all the little irregularities are. [laughter]

KP: What are some of the major differences between, let's say, New York and Delaware County?

GE: Well, for instance, I closed a deal in New York City. I had an estate down there. We were selling the real property. And we had heirs, and we had to get deeds from eight or nine people, and they all were not going to be at the closing. I went to the closing to collect the money and distribute it. The fellows there [were] representing the title company, insuring the property for the buyer. I had cleared this with the title company before we got there. I said, "Look, I cannot have all my clients there, I know you, the closer is going to worry whether they are alive, today, or not." You know, all this, so I cleared it with the office in New York City, [so] that we did not have to have eight people phone in that day and say they were alive. So we get down there, well, this guy falls apart, and we had to call everybody and do this and that. Just whereas in Hancock you know everybody and you would not have this problem.

KP: You know they would be alive ...

GE: Yeah, you would just get the deed from them, but they are just so much more cautious. But I understand why they are. Everyone has an angle down here, and you have got to be afraid of fraud and everything else. They are just super cautious compared to us, but we get along fine. They don't trust anybody down here.

KP: It sounds like among lawyers that it's much more collegial.

GE: Oh, much more, although not like it used to be. It's getting hard nose, hard ball. There are too many lawyers out there now, and everybody is trying to get an edge on everybody else. That is one of the other reasons I thought I would fade out of here. I was not enjoying it like I did. At one point, I thought I would never retire, but it got to the point where it wasn't as much fun as it used to be. Also, my wife said, "Come on, let's do some things we want to do. There is no need to just go in to the office everyday." But there were a lot of little factors.

KP: You actually enjoyed law.

GE: Oh, yeah. I loved it. I said I would never retire, and I am still working. I am of counsel to this firm. If I want to go in the morning, I can. I still have an office there. I can go down and do my income tax. I help them out with things, so I am still practicing.

KP: What were your favorite types of cases?

GE: I liked working on estates, because it's not a pressure to get it done yesterday. There are certain time limits built in. First, you have to pay ninety percent of the tax within six months from the date of death. You got to have the return in by nine months, and if you've got to work with the federal government, you know it is going to take a year because they've got to audit the return. There are built-in time limits, and you don't have to pressure yourself to get something out in a hurry and make a mistake. I like the pace of it better.

KP: Is there any part of law you did not like?

GE: I did not care for bankruptcy because I don't like the principle of bankruptcy. I also represented a bank, and we were always having debtors file bankruptcy and we had trouble collecting. I just did not like the idea of bankruptcy, the principle of it. I didn't care for workers' compensation cases, because they just didn't seem to be revenue generating for all the time you put in. Although I liked trial work for a while, for a one-man office it is too time consuming. You really have to make sure you have a case you're going to succeed in or you don't get anything. It just takes up so much time. As I got along, I was doing municipal work. I was representing three villages at one time. They were putting in sewer systems and my wife called me Art Carney because I was always working on the sewer systems. [laughter] It was a lot of night work, which I got tired of doing of that, too, you know, going to night meetings. And they put you on the end of the agenda, and by the time they got to you, everybody is tired and wanted to go home. What I thought was the real important stuff was the stuff I thought they should talk to me about. I tried to get them to put it on first, but they didn't do it. I did that stuff up until 1992. I was representing municipalities. I did like the work. I did like municipal work, and I liked the estate work, and I liked real estate. As I said, I was the chairman of the real property section of the New York State Bar Association, which I thought was pretty good.

KP: You also did some criminal cases?

GE: Yes, when I first started out, right.

KP: What did you think of that?

GE: Well, you know, there was no revenue there. You are putting in a lot of time, and that was back in the day where you did not question everything. If the guy gave a statement, you figured he gave a statement, and that he was not under duress to make a statement, that the police didn't try to defraud him. I did not do a lot of it, but when you start out you will do anything. I really was not keen on it. I did some drunken driving cases, and they were jury cases. I got a kick out of doing them, but I did not like the results. I didn't always win. You win some and lose some.

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

KP: Had you ever thought of taking on an associate or a partner?

GE: Yes, I did. I really gave it a lot of thought. I'd seen partnerships come and partnerships go. I decided that if you are going to get a partner in, it is like getting married. I never found that guy that had it. We had other guys in town, I mean, I'm a guy who gets up in the morning and I get down there. I return phone calls. You know, I have my routine. Other guys don't get in until ten in the morning, and you can never get him to call back. Their style would never fit in with my style, but I tried. When I decided I was going to try and retire, I went to Fordham Law School, and I said, "Have you got anybody there that would like to come up? I will get them into my practice." I probably had two guys come up, real, real nice guys, but they figured they could not handle it because I wanted to get out and I was going to give them everything. I was not going to be around much to guide them too much. I said, "I will help you, but you got to understand, I might be gone for two months in the winter or something." They were scared to try it. And then, finally, a good friend of mine that I had known for years heard that I was trying to get somebody in, or do something. They had three guys in the firm, and they said, "We will send someone down there if you want to do it." That was great, we struck a deal. It worked out for them and it worked out for me. I would have taken a partner in, if I thought I had the right one, but I never felt I had. I never found the right one.

KP: That is interesting because I have a friend who is a lawyer and he is at the point where he has to start thinking what he is going to do, whether he is going to get an associate or get a partner.

GE: If you do, he's with you for five years, and then he goes and takes half your clients with him, maybe. You train him and you set him up, and then he decides to go out on his own. That can happen. But you got to have somebody compatible. It is a tough thing to do, to find somebody. But today you got partnerships, you know, Hinman, Howard and Katell in Binghamton, they probably have two hundred lawyers today. When I first started practicing, they might have had fifteen. It was big law firm. Now in New York City, they've got five or six floors in a building down there. I can't imagine practicing in something like that. I like the independence of a sole practitioner. What I do like about a partnership is you got another head,

you can talk things over. That is invaluable to be able to do that. You can get away a little more often because there is someone else there to cover for you and you cover for him when he goes. So there's tremendous benefits to a partnerships and I would really have loved to do that. That is why I was hoping I would have a son or a daughter that would come in. That would be ideal. Now I have as good of a deal as I can. I am working of counsel for this firm and I am doing things for them. I've got a sounding board. They have a sounding board in me. I can take off. [laughter] It is like getting married, you have to be careful who you take in.

KP: None of your children served in the military, although one had served in the Peace Corps.

GE: Right, that was the daughter.

KP: Did you wish any of your kids had your military experience?

GE: No, because they grew up during the Vietnam War, and I was worried about them going into war. You know, I was not anxious to see them go to Vietnam.

KP: You really preferred that they didn't?

GE: Yes, I really preferred that they did not. But if they got called, I was prepared to have them go. I had one son who said, "I will be in Canada when they get around to calling me." He said, "I won't be here." I have two sons, and I think one of them would have served, but I know the other one would have gone to Canada.

KP: What did you think of the Vietnam War when it was going on?

GE: When it first started, I could not figure it out. I was trying to figure out, "What's going on here. [I would say], "What's going on? What are we doing?" But I had this feeling that I had to support the President. I could not get a handle on it. I went to an American Bar Association meeting, and I heard Clark Clifford speak. He said, "When I found out that we did not have any plan for victory in Vietnam," he said, "Then we have to get out of there." This was after the fact, but I said, "I guess that is about right." To me, I could not figure the war out at that time. Of course, I was a big Republican and I was for Nixon. And Nixon said, "I will end that war," and he did. I just had very mixed feelings about the whole thing. I would not have been happy to see my sons have to go and serve.

KP: In some ways, it strikes me that you were delighted that they were not old enough ...

GE: They just missed it. They did not even have to register for the draft. They just missed it and I was overjoyed until today.

KP: It sounds like you gave your kids a lot of autonomy. They were pretty independent thinkers.

GE: Oh, yeah, one went to Fordham, one went to the University of New Hampshire, and my daughter, Barbara, she started out at Salisbury State. I went to a Rutgers versus Tulane football

game, and I met one of my fraternity brothers down there. He was the president of Salisbury State. My daughter, she was going to go to Fordham because her brother went there. And they did not accept her. Her high school principal wrote a scathing letter to the admissions office, and they wrote back and accepted her. But then she said that she was not going, "If they would not take me the first time." This fraternity brother said, "You should come down and look over the college." She went down, and it was this small college in Salisbury, Maryland. So she liked it. She went there for a year. She lived with the president the first year because there was no room in the dorms, I mean, the first semester. The second semester, she arranged to move out and move in the dorm. And people would ask where she lived, and she said, "I'm with the president." [laughter] She got to know the president's daughters. They were living there and got to know him and his wife. She joined the ROTC down there, and she wanted to go to Fort Benning to jump school. She was more into the military than my sons were. She was going out on bivouacs and wanted to go skydiving. But she said that it was a suitcase college. She came back and went to Cortland, New York, which is a SUNY, this is just in the backyard. My sons are interested in sports and things. She liked to participate, but it did not mean anything to her. She loved Cortland, she really liked it there. When she got out she wanted to go into the Peace Corps, and, by golly, she did for two years. She came back and went to Springfield College and got her Master's, and then she taught on the faculty at Cortland. Then I told her, "If you want to stay here any longer you got to get a Ph.D."

KP: What did she get her doctorate in?

GE: Physical education, health and recreation, and she went to U of I. She just got her doctorate in May of this last year. They let me hood her, because ... I have a juris doctorate from Fordham, so I could hood her. This was on a Sunday, and she had her son on Thursday. She went down there and graduated with her Ph.D. Her son was in the audience. Her husband, who went to Illinois and got his MBA, he graduated Saturday. So we went out there, she had a baby on Thursday, her husband graduated on Saturday and she graduated on Sunday. Of the children, she was not the student. She did not apply herself in high school. The boys were in the honor society, and number two son was right up there, number three in the class, I guess. My other son was up there also. Barbara either took the course and passed, or she didn't. She was not worried, but, you know, she applied herself enough. But we never thought she would end up with the Ph.D. Charlie went from Fordham to Biscayne and got a Master's in sports administration, and then he went to DePaul and was working there. He got a Master's in business from DePaul and then he was working there. Then he went to William and Mary, and now he is just transferring to St. John's. And he is going to be the associate athletic director at St. John's. He is leaving William and Mary next month to come up here. My son, Tom, went to New Hampshire, and he is at the Mayflower in Washington. He is with the Stouffer Renaissance Hotel chain. He has had his picture taken with Clinton, and with Hillary. "Of course," I said, "That is not going to change your vote, is it?" and he said, "No." [laughter] They each got their own niche, and they are each doing what they want to do, and they seem to be happy doing it. That is all I care about. All I'm saying, it would have been great if somebody wanted to be a lawyer and come back to Hancock. They each got their own niche doing what they wanted to do, so we can't complain about that.

KP: Is there anything else that I forgot to ask about?

GE: No, I guess not, I saw Mt. Fujiyama while I was in Tokyo.

KP: I guess the one question I did want to ask you, and you said before we had started taping, you had Professor Charanis. And I hear he was quite a character.

GE: Yes, he was. But he was an excellent professor. And Ellis, I think his first name was William, he was excellent, but I liked all the professors down here. Houston Peterson, was Philosophy and Professor Corlett, I took Spanish, I took French ...

KP: Did you have anything with Mason Gross?

GE: I never did have anything with him. And he was here when I was here, and he came to the Roger Smith for our fraternity banquet and he was going to be the speaker. At the time, he was on the Herb Shriner Show. And one of our fraternity brothers was quite a character, and he made a big fuss about Dr. Gross when he got to our banquet because he was on the Herb Shriner Show. Gross handled it very nicely. We were impressed with him. He was a good man. How I think I hit on everything, nothing else standing. I'm glad that I did serve. I'm glad I served on the *New Jersey*. I was glad I was on a battleship, and when we were underway, it was a greatest feeling to be out at sea.

KP: It sounds like you enjoyed being at sea.

GE: Yes, I enjoyed it very much.

KP: One question that also came to mind, you were in a typhoon in sick bay. How scared were you?

GE: Scared, but I was so sick. It did not mean a heck of a lot to me.

KP: People have said that a typhoon is often worse than battle. Battle did not compare with a typhoon.

GE: Yeah, that is right, but I was sick. So I did not get the full impact of it.

KP: Do you know where you contracted dysentery?

GE: I don't know ...

KP: You never figured it was in the Philippines?

GE: I wondering if it wasn't. I really don't know, I never found that out. Boy, that was something.

KP: Well, thank you very much.

GE: Glad to do it.

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

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