

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH BERNARD A. ESKIN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SANDRA STEWART HOLYOAK

and

JENNA MARESCO

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TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins an interview with Dr. Bernard Eskin on November 12, 2008, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Sandra Stewart Holyoak ...

Jenna Maresco: ... Jenna Maresco ...

Lynn Eskin: ... Lynn Eskin ...

Bernard Eskin: ... Bernie Eskin.

SH: Thank you again, both of you, for coming in. I know you have had a busy two days. It was a pleasure to see you at the dedication of the New Jersey World War II Monument yesterday. We left off discussing your ship's goodwill tour to Turkey. If you would, tell us more about becoming Admiral Ryan's aide.

BE: Yes. ... What had happened is, due to academic exposure at a President's dinner, the Admiral ordered the young officers who had been at a table with the daughter of the President [of Turkey] to come see him, for punishment actually, because we had, apparently, not been officers and gentlemen. We sang and we drank ... and so forth, whatever it was, the usual drink in Turkey. ... So, each one of the junior officers, young officers, were ordered to his cabin. They were given extra duty assignments, that were common among the officer group--essentially, taking troops for sightseeing to some of the cities. You would be responsible for them if they'd break a glass window, display cases, or rules of etiquette or some things like that. You're responsible, in languages that you have no idea how to handle. But, when I came to him, suddenly, a light seemed to show in his eyes. ... He turned to me and said, "You know my assistant--actually, the person who is my aide in most of the work that I do--is being called back, since he has completed his overseas time." These are usually officers from the [US Naval] Academy, and he said, "He was six-foot-six, and, as you can see, I'm about five-foot-five, or six. I'm getting sick and tired of having my aide look down on me and say, 'And this is Admiral Ryan.'" You know, he seemed a little embarrassed. ... He says, "So, briefly, until the next aide comes, ... would you like to be my interim aide?" I was glad to have the assignment which seemed very special. ... "I'm happy to have you take care of it," and then, he told me some of my duties. I was to travel and take special documents to different parts of the various areas of the European Secret Naval District. You know, the naval group is not only on sea, they're on land, and they have offices in various cities--Germany, at that time, Italy, France, Poland, *et cetera* as part of NavEU. There were a number of them, and I would carry a "SECRET" bag with me which was handcuffed to my hand. ... He probably had a note in it, saying, "When are you and I going to get together and have a beer?" or something like that--very important stuff, I'm sure. [laughter] The war was over, so that really, there was no problem at that time. ... One of the incidents, maybe, thoughtful ones that I can bring up is when I went to Munich, Germany. ... I brought a brief case, or whatever, and gave the contents to the aide. ... I had just flown in and ... he took the document. ... I'm always very, very glad to have the handcuff taken off of my wrist. I just think about an enemy, you know, "What would they do to my hand?" and I still played the clarinet and sax, so, I didn't exactly want to become a one armed saxophonist. [laughter] At this point in time, they were emptying out the concentration camps. ... It was rather surprising that, to a lot of the staff there, there was nothing unpleasant about this. But there were horrors in ... [these] concentration camps prior to their evacuations. They asked me,

"Do you want to go see them? We're opening up a work camp site," and I said, [out of] curiosity, if nothing else, I said, "Sure, you know, whatever's going on." ... Of course, I went there and, as the admiral's aide of the entire European sector and the local group, and it was horrible. It was absolutely horrible. A thing that remained especially with me, rather grossly when one of the individuals there immediately, I think it was a rabbi, turned to me and said, "Are you Jewish?" and I said, "Yes." He said, "Get out of here. You're not supposed to be here." It's against the rules of the government at this time to bring in any Jews, except the rabbis and other chaplains. They were trying to help some of the people who were inmates. ... So, I was kicked out. ...

SH: The chaplain was the one who told you that you needed to step out?

BE: Yes. I've got to get out. As soon as the Army officer heard it, he immediately turned to me and said, "You're going out on the next flight." I found myself on a plane to Paris, and I had planned to stay over in Munich, obviously. I got there and I would have taken some other official reports somewhere, I suppose. It's stayed with me a lot since, that--in fact, when we went to Israel, ... there's a place, ... Yad Vashem. ...

LE: Yad Vashem.

BE: Where they have mourning for these victims. I cannot, I couldn't, go in, couldn't do it. More recently, this has become less of an immediate situation, but, remember, Zoar, really bad things that people can do to each other. ... [Editor's Note: Established in 1953 in Jerusalem, Yad Vashem serves as the national Israeli monument, memorial and museum for the Holocaust, or *Shoah*.]

SH: Why do you think they would not allow anyone who was Jewish to see or go in?

BE: I have no idea. I would think that, there, the emotions might be too much for the individual. If he's a member of the Armed Services, they would prefer not to have him, perhaps, lose some control. Well, I lost some interest in anything that would be involved in that. I couldn't even think about it and, obviously, I had no attachment to it any more throughout the time that I remained in the service. That was one incident that I thought was rather intriguing. ...

SH: Was that because they feared that you would be apt to seek revenge?

BE: No, I'd be emotionally upset.

SH: It was more for your personal state of mind.

BE: Personal thinking. I think they were on my side. You know, they were not thinking of anything beside the fact [that] this is a terrible thing and I might, in some way, not like the way they were handling it. Who knows what could come from it? It's an interesting fact, something which I might not have told you about, maybe, a few years ago.

SH: Did you talk to anyone about that, what you saw or how you felt?

BE: Just a few friends, you know, that were on the ship at the time. ... Now that I was being cut loose from the ship, to be the Admiral's aide, I didn't have that many friends around. [laughter] They were all new friends and, in the hierarchy of the groups that I was with, a lot of those, the admirals had all known about these things. They were obviously well-informed and the rules also were well-known. Obviously, the individual that I brought the note to, obviously, chose to break the rules, in a way. I didn't want to put any problem to anybody else, anyhow. So, it would be best to leave it, although you know you have a lot of mental guilt about it. I'd read about these disastrous events, at least we're starting to actually see some of the tyranny. ...

SH: Had you begun to see information on this?

BE: Yes, more rumor than there was information, but it was not as real as being there and, to tell you the truth, I don't think those that were entering into them and actually helping there knew how bad they were, the indifference of the population to the nature of the Final Solution. They were turned over to the camp down from other countries, even some of the partially neutral friendly countries such as Sweden and Norway, particularly. ... I think Denmark was hit, also. So, there were people being brought into these places as "workers," but most were death camps in which people were actually murdered. [Editor's Note: Germany invaded and conquered Norway and Denmark in 1940. Sweden, however, remained neutral during the war and became a safe-haven for thousands of Jews during the war.]

SH: This was not a labor camp. This was actually a death camp.

BE: Well, no, it was both. They all had their combination of things, from what I gathered from the short time I was there. I was there, I would say, no longer than about an hour before they threw me out, and, probably, I'm lucky that I didn't stay any longer.

SH: In that hour, did you talk to anyone or were you just walking in stunned silence?

BE: ... There were about three of us who were in there. ... A couple of them were Army. There's one that was a civilian that [was] American who had been sent over. I got the feeling he was a psychologist or a psychiatrist. I think he was a psychologist and he was being sent in. ... He knew what he was coming for. ...

SH: He had been basically prepared for what he was there for.

BE: Yes, yes. Apparently, he had been to a few camps. I said, "Gee, this is terrible," and so forth, and he'd say, "You should have seen," ... and then, that would start.

SH: Do you know the name of the camp that you visited?

BE: I've been figuring it out. There are a couple of them in that area. ... I couldn't be sure. I wouldn't want to say that I knew the exact grouping. See, each one was run physically by another group from the US Army maintenance in Germany and the names of the camps that have been used, that you hear all the time, are not those that they actually, officially, were, the

numbers and icons of the Nazi camps. I do know that information. I think it was Dachau. I'm not sure. [Editor's Note: Dachau, Nazi Germany's first concentration camp, was established in March of 1933. At least twenty-eight thousand prisoners died there between 1940 and 1945.]

SH: When you flew to Paris, what did you do there and what were you thinking about?

BE: I felt bad about the sights I'd seen; but then, I got to know Paris a little better. I mean, Paris was great. [laughter]

SH: They basically sent you there for R&R.

BE: Right. ... It was very odd, because, in Paris, I had played some jazz on a prior visit in Pigalle and some of the areas, and so, I went back to one of the clubs and enjoyed a little jazz for a while. You can bet that there was a lot of "blues" in my mixture after seeing the horrors that were done outside of Munich. ... Parisians were hungry for American jazz at that point and it was kind of the right thing to play there. I had played also in Greece, in a jazz bar. That's the overwhelming experience and they had me on as a guest. They played all on Greek instruments and I'm playing jazz on the sax, alto or tenor--I brought both mouthpieces. ... They played a fine background and I had a chance to adlib and modulate to anything I wanted. It's a great thrill to "star" in another country. They probably imagined I was Woody Herman. ...

SH: Was this in a club in Greece?

BE: Well, it was a club before the Lebanon episode, yes about two months before while we were "para-Mediterranean" on our goodwill tour. They had a stage and they had a lineup of musicians on instruments, and then my saxophone. ... I had my alto saxophone on the ship, and a clarinet, and so, I brought it to play at the club this one night. ... I thought I'd play three numbers; I found myself playing all night. Getting back to Quartier Pigalle, in Paris, I had a wonderful time. At an earlier time, I had an officer friend with me, who was also from the ship, and he loved it, because they kept giving him drinks while I kept playing. I didn't want to get boozed up. I was high enough playing the instruments, and he was having a great time. So, they finally asked him, "Do you play?" and he said, "I put the music stand up and down." It was really a remarkable challenge to play in foreign ports. ... So, this was my opportunity for playing my music, my jazz, in Europe. I actually have some pictures of this, but very few, playing to the crowd. ... It was funny, because recently I gave a medical lecture in Berlin. ... I was in an East Berlin jazz club, one of the really hip jazz stages there. ... I was with the leader of one of the bands, actually. I guess he was the top sax man--Detroit Williams. ... After I told him, I had played with [American jazz pianist and composer] Stan Kenton's band before I went to Princeton, he was rather intrigued, and the fact of the matter is that, when I started to play there, I learned the pianist was from Poland, bass from Russia, and drummer from Italy. We found we couldn't speak to each other except in musical notes. [laughter] They had five people and they were all different, and here we were, playing jazz together on the stage in Berlin. It was magnificent. ... As a local touch, I also played here at Rutgers. In fact, when I came back to college, I joined the band and orchestra of the University, and that was kind of formal. But at Rutgers, I also had a band called [the] Scarlet Knights--get the reference--real smart stuff. ... We played a lot in the fraternities and several of the college dances. ...

SH: Who else was in your band? Were there any other Rutgers men?

BE: Oh, yes, yes. ... I have a picture of that. I'd have to look at how many Rutgers musicians there were. ... The big joke that everybody hit always on me is the fact that wherever I went I always had a band. ... On the ship, in colleges, in foreign night clubs, anywhere I went, I formed a jazz band. I just love playing, and it was mostly for pleasure. The guys on the ship, of course, loved the jazz and swing plus whatever else we could musically supply them with. I had a big band on the ship. I think you saw that picture and it's in my collection.

SH: Yes, you showed me that picture. That was a big band.

BE: Yes.

SH: When you became the Admiral's aide, did you have to change quarters or did you stay right on the ship?

BE: I was already in a stateroom as a gunnery officer, while on the ship. Ashore, in Naples, we had an officers quarters and I did get my flag officer room. It was immediate--well, as soon as it became official. I had to get orders from the States. All I know is that I got my orders and this was still in Italy, in Naples. ... The Admiral had his one main administrative office in Naples. He had very nice offices and living quarters there. ... So, I was sent ashore to [Naples] and I, reported to the station, and so, I stayed in Naples, ... pretty much as a jumping off place, at least at that point and during the interim, because, you know, they were sending a permanent aide from the United States. "That six-foot-five guy's going to come sooner or later, and I'm just about at that point where I'm ready to go home." ... The fact is that, at this stage of the game, well, there wasn't much that went on. It's a very day-to-day thing, but I would know where the Admiral was, maybe. ... You've got to remember, we were moving from real tight security and everything else, to a loosening-up in the service, because there was no more war. Thus, you weren't in danger going out of the building and roaming around. So, meanwhile it was a very nice time to be there, you were able to go to parties, clubs and formal affairs for your own enjoyment--safely.

SH: Where were you housed at that time?

BE: Well, they had a bachelor officer quarters in a very chic place up on a hill in Naples, right near where their officers' club was. They had a lovely place. I have some stuff from that, little trinkets and things.

SH: I assume that every time the Admiral went somewhere, you went as well. What were your duties as aide to the Admiral?

BE: An aide to an admiral is a person who knows where he is. The Aide is a secretary in a way, he's a provider in another way. The Admiral says, you know, "I want to go up to see Charlie Jones." You know, he would visit an admiral here or somewhere, and he would intimate that, "There's going to be a meeting of the admirals." ... They had their ways of getting fun trips, too.

He would say, "Would you make the arrangements and see to it?" and then, I would be told whether I was going or not. You know, it depended, if he's going to go hunting up in the forest or something like that, obviously, first of all, I don't like to hunt, and then, second of all, he wants to be with his old hunting friends. It's a whole different story, but, if it was something formal, and that would often be on a ship--sometimes, he would come as the honored guest on a ship--that would be when I'd wear my formal whites and look, "Oh, wow." You know, you've got to look really good and you have all your gold braid *et cetera*. That makes the story--I think I might have told you before. I was dressed up as the Admiral's aide, after I got out of the service. Well, it was a real "gal catcher" and good to impress women walking along with the gold braid. So, I was taking my date to a theater in New York City. We obviously had bought it at the level of the money that I had, and so, we were up in the balcony somewhere and we sat down. ... She said, "We did not get our programs." I said, "Oh, wait, I'll go over and get them." So, I walked over to look for the usher, when a little old lady comes up to me, notes my uniform, and says, "Hey, son, can I have a program and would you walk me to my seat?" and I felt so big. [laughter] So, it's come to that. Anyhow, it was a wonderful experience for someone my age at the time, to meet these men of distinction, and most of them had been real leaders during the war, they were good people. ... A lot of those men were opting out of the service, to retire, or they had great jobs, CEOs, political leaders, university presidents, *et cetera*. Many were taking their last sabbaticals.

SH: There were a lot of retirement parties at that point.

BE: They didn't have formal retirement parties, but, you know, they'd have a big blowout. They would have events that happened on the ships as strictly business, government business, but the parties could be in the clubs. They could easily be there, nobody stiffs anybody around, you know. It's was a very nice situation. So, I would say that I must have gone to at least twenty parties where I was to formally introduce my admiral, "And this is Admiral Ryan," and we looked at each other in the eye. ... He was happy and I was happy, and that was about where it stood.

SH: Did you leave before he left?

BE: Yes, I did. As soon as the word got to us that the new admiral's aide was coming from the Academy, they cut my orders. I was to ride on--a carrier, those great, big carriers. Well, there are small ones, too. The small one is called an AV, and the AV-12 [the USS *Pine Island*] was coming in, from of all places, India. It was coming around, and then, eventually, through all the canals and slits, and so forth, and then, it's going to be coming to Italy and would pick me up and take me home. ... At this point, I could communicate with my folks and all and tell them what I was going to do, and when, and finally how. I said that I would be joining a carrier and the ship had to make a little trip, I believe. I have a map of the full journey of this carrier. We went so much south that I participated in a remarkable initiation.

SH: A shellback?

BE: Yes, a shellback. That was an exciting event. It's a real fun thing. [Editor's Note: A shellback is a sailor who has crossed the Equator for the first time.]

SH: Some of those pictures detail the events and are the full humor of the Regular Navy.

BE: Oh, it's an oddball thing, but it's part of Naval lore. I learned of many things that made these experiences a learning moment of the history of the sea.

SH: You are a member of the Shellback Society.

BE: There it is. I have my original certified card and the shellback certificate.

SH: Yes.

LE: That's the plaque.

BE: That's the plaque, okay. I'll tell you, I used to always have these on my wall, but, now, I have musical and medical research events all over my study. ... Also if you'd like to look at it, see, here's the officers' club of Naples, in Villanova.

SH: That is a wonderful scrapbook you have there.

BE: Yes, yes, these are pretty interesting and I'm making some copies of these available.

LE: I think your shellback society certificate is in there also.

BE: Is it in here? ... Oh, here is exactly what I was looking for. The *Pine Island*, that was the name of the AV that I returned to the States on. ... [Editor's Note: The USS *Pine Island* (AV-12), commissioned on April 26, 1945, was a *Currituck*-class seaplane tender.]

SH: It appears to have taken quite a circuitous route.

BE: Well, I know what the ship did before reaching Naples, from the map we followed. I'll try to include it and a good deal of these photos.

SH: It shows that they came out of Japan to Hong Kong, Singapore, and Korea.

BE: Isn't it beautiful, the trip they took? I didn't take all that, I was picked up in Naples. They came to us. Oh, these photos are all the different bands that I had, along the way. There is much we can't include because I lack good photos or mementos.

SH: Look at this poetry. [laughter]

BE: When I became a shellback for crossing the equator on that ship--and I have some photographs somewhere. I thought I had them with me. They were really clever and funny. ... They make a fool of you but you become a person who has gone over the sea past the Equator, down to the South Atlantic in this case. There's another celebration you have when you go past the time line, the International Date Line. ... In the Pacific when you go past that theoretical

point it's kind of a fun thing, too. Those who have traveled to Japan, reach this point beyond Okinawa, because it comes somewhere before you get to Tokyo. ... I actually did it as a professor when I got a government award, about '97. This was a sabbatical to study on Women's health problems in the East. During my research studies, after the war, it was another interesting new experience.

LE: Fogarty Award from the NIH.

BE: Fogarty, thank you, Fogarty Award from the National Institutes of Health to spend time in ... Nagoya Medical School, working with the public health physicians there. Actually, there were a lot of things, rather intriguing, on that study but, now, let's get back to us. [Editor's Note: The Fogarty International Research Collaboration Award grants funds to National Institutes of Health-supported scientists to conduct research in needy countries. Dr. Eskin received a Fogarty Award in 1997.]

SH: When you came back to the States, you knew exactly what you wanted to do and where you were going.

BE: I hadn't the slightest idea what I was doing. [laughter] I came back and, really, it was rather confusing. When I reached the States I came back at a near miss for the start of the colleges. I had the choice in my thinking, of either going to Princeton or Rutgers. ... At Princeton, I had held the Borden Scholarship, the cow, Elsie the Cow. [laughter]

SH: Yes, the Borden Corporation.

BE: At Rutgers, I had an offer for a New Jersey [State] Scholarship. ... What I wanted to do was to work for an advanced degree after my undergraduate degree, i.e. get a PhD and/or MD.

SH: You already knew you wanted to go to medical school. You just did not know when or where.

BE: I didn't know whether I wanted medical school for my basic research hopes or clinical medical research and care. I had originally started to be a biochemist but, as I continued, I gained a strong basic endocrine-biological interest. I started doing a good deal of bench work in that. ... So, I was thinking of declaring to be a biochemist. That was the next career choice, because biochemistry especially majoring in endocrinology, believe it or not, was new at that moment in time.

SH: When did you reenter Rutgers for degree?

BE: Well, after the war, in 1945. I went to Princeton and found out that my scholarship had to be used continually or after a year it was transferred to an entering student. Additionally, the semester had begun and I was no longer eligible for it. Fortunately, Rutgers semester started later. By a rather tumultuous series of events I was able to set up a program to obtain my BS and take an MS with Dr. James Leatham in Biochemistry-Endocrinology. This has been the

backbone of my professional research and medical work. Frankly, my entire career was based on it.

SH: Your previous semesters were at Princeton?

BE: More than half of my credits come from Princeton. When WWII began, many chose to join a desired service or program rather than leave it to the chance of the draft and the questionable results of the distribution they used. I joined the Navy voluntarily. I was immediately transferred back to college as a V-12 student to Princeton and stayed there. Because my major had been Chemistry, I was on the track to be prepared to become a deck officer.

SH: At Princeton?

BE: Right. My college credits are from Princeton, but my actual officer training was at Cornell.

SH: Did you do the V-12 Program at Princeton?

BE: Yes, I did that, and then, at the time that I entered I was considered as a chemistry major student. ... When I was in high school, I had scholarships offered to me, some musical, others academic. ... I went to my high school bandmaster for further advice, and he told me, "Take academic college." So, I did.

SH: This was coming out of high school.

BE: This was the beginning time of the service/college programs. The purpose was to prepare those too young for immediate officer-ships and some professions--medicine, engineering, law, math, physics, *et cetera*--as needed. Since I was in chemistry I was in line for general line officer at that time. ... As it was, then, I took all the necessary courses to be able to go to midshipmen's school to become a line officer, but was able to also take some elective biochemistry courses.

SH: When did you leave Princeton to go to midshipmen's school?

BE: In late 1944 I believe.

LE: July the 1st, 1944.

BE: Okay, so, you can see my middie graduation diploma...

SH: That was for active duty in the military.

BE: I was able to get about three semesters more. Of course, I got credit for all the active duty courses. I became a gunnery officer at gunnery school in DC and got credit for that, because it entailed engineering and chemistry courses, really. I learned how to shoot the big canon, "Boom." [laughter] ... So, when I returned to the regular active Navy, I came while the war was at full blast.

SH: What time?

BE: I came back in July 1944.

SH: How long was that?

BE: I had, essentially, a total of three years of service. I had nineteen months overseas.

BE: As soon as I completed my service I returned to the US to try to continue my college education. I knew I was late for the terms initially started earlier. As I said before I had lost my Princeton opportunity but was able to be considered at Rutgers. Rutgers offered a State Scholarship to help me preserve my GI Bill for graduate training. I was very fortunate--I met the person who was running [admissions], who was quite understanding. ... He said, "We'd be happy to have you," and so, I said, "Now, I'd like to be able to establish some of the credits I had from the service to my Rutgers' profile," and get to graduate school. ... So, he said, "You'd have to talk to the administration in biology," and I again was fortunate. I met Dr. James Leatham, a very kind and knowledgeable professor. He was the head of the Bureau of Biological Research and Graduate School in Endocrinology. ...

LE: Sciences.

BE: Biology, and he became ... actually, I would say, my idol. I liked working with him and spent time learning a good deal about this new specialty--Endocrinology. He and his wife, Ann, took an interest in a lot of graduate students in the biological fields. ... He said he could fashion something for me and I could graduate with a bachelor's degree and a master's degree together from Rutgers. He felt I could contact Princeton and they'll probably give me officially an associate's degree, and that's what they did. In 1947, I got both an associate and a bachelor degree. In 1949, I got the master's. I spent some time at the Marine Biological [Laboratory] in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, as part of my Brown University Graduate School connection, and I spent time at Brown University as a grad student-teaching fellow of Brown University and at the Wilson Biological Research Center. ... [Editor's Note: Dr. James H. Leatham was the Director of the Bureau of Biological Research at Rutgers from 1965 to 1976. In 1946, he was an Associate Professor at Rutgers in the Department of Zoology.]

SH: Did you go to Brown for graduate work after your master's work?

BE: Yes. ... What happened was, Jim wanted me to get my PhD there, and I would have loved to have done so.

SH: This is Dr. Leatham.

BE: Yes. Dr. Leatham wanted me to get the PhD at Brown, and then, if I wanted to go to medical school or whatever I wanted to do for clinical training, for clinical research work. When I got there, this is a very sorry thing in education, which I didn't like, the chairman Dr. J. Walter Wilson of the biology department wanted me as a graduate student. This was flattering, but I

was more interested in working with Dr. William Montagna's area. I had applied in Biology but favored Dr. Montagna. By the way, both of these professors became well-known in their fields internationally.

SH: This is at Brown.

BE: Brown University Graduate Program, yes.

SH: Okay, I am just making sure it was not Woods Hole.

BE: Woods Hole, you spent time there. ... In fact, I recently heard from Woods Hole and last summer I was there as a participant in their aging teaching program. I've been thinking about my teaching a little in Woods Hole this summer. ... So, Lynn and I thought [of] how wonderful it would be to be in Cape Cod [laughter] and lecturing a little. I'll have to get permission from my department, but it seems like a good thing. [Editor's Note: Woods Hole, home of the Marine Biological Laboratory, in Massachusetts, is also associated with a number of academic programs at Brown University.]

SH: In 1950, you went to Brown for your PhD.

BE: Correct, but then, following that, after this mix-up with Montagna and Wilson, ... I lost enthusiasm and interest, and decided to go directly to an MD.

SH: What was the problem?

BE: I think it was frustration, of the fact that here were two really good people and I couldn't say no to either. ... I asked Leatham what to do and he said, "I'll go up and tell them what to do." I didn't need that, [laughter] and hence, I went to med school.

SH: From Brown.

BE: From Brown. ... Yale just started a PhD/MD program after I was accepted at Albany.

SH: Where did you go to medical school?

BE: I went to Albany. [laughter]

SH: Was that your first choice? What did you think you were going to major in?

BE: I wanted to go to Yale, because Yale had been the first to start a PhD/MD and it would have been perfect. [laughter] I got accepted to Rochester, Vermont and Albany. At Albany, there was one person I desired to do research with--Dr. Jack Wolf--who was using a new endocrine dye for studying related pathologies. That was my choice.

LE: Wolf at Anatomy.

BE: Yes. ... He was professor and chair of anatomy, but, he had started some endocrine techniques for cellular studies and I was getting really into this, new ideas of genes and hormone relations of that nature, and I wanted to take part in it. I was very interested in endocrine study, and so, it looked good and they accepted me at my interview. By the way, Dr. Montagna helped me get my choices as well.

SH: This is after just three semesters at Brown.

BE: Well, two and a summer at Woods Hole.

SH: You went to Albany in the fall of 1951.

BE: I graduated in '55. I had spent a little more time there than that. I spent some of the summers in picking out student slides and all, as part of my anatomy duties. I received a scholarship with a subsidy there, as well as my government cancer research grants coming in. ... Scholarship grants were not a problem then. I was used to doing extracurricular laboratory studies.

SH: Did you have a fellowship with a stipend?

BE: I was in pretty good shape financially. I never paid a cent for education, anywhere, any time. [laughter] I never spent a cent. In fact, I got paid. I ended up with money, but, in any event, the nicest thing is, that Rutgers was a dream. I even played in a professional jazz orchestra when I was here at Rutgers, I really enjoyed it. ...

SH: Where were you housed?

BE: I started off at Ford Hall and I had roommates, one is a lawyer, and his name is George Harbaugh. ... He came in on the first day--there were three of us in a room, George and John?

LE: Oh, John Gentile.

BE: Gentile. His wife worked for years in the department of admissions of Rutgers. ... We were here roommates and suddenly, in comes George Harbaugh. He's dressed as if he were in parachute Army combat, and he announces, "Geronimo, I'm here." He was a parachutist, and so, George became a symbol, of some sort, and the three of us made a new club, a cult perhaps. We called it the "Lay Back and Whack It Club," [laughter] and this particular group became so popular in Ford Hall that it increased its membership to about twenty by the end of the year and formed a quasi-fraternity called the Georgian Society. ... At the end of the year, I was a director, or whatever it is you are in fraternities like this. ... Actually, George was the king and I was chamberlain or whatever. [laughter]

LE: Well, tell her what's unusual about it.

BE: Then, what happened was, they said, "We're going to be a fraternity that accepts everybody! We're going to accept all races, people who are from India or China or wherever. This is going

to be the first international fraternity with all religions--just accept them on the individual themselves." *The New York Times* got a hold of it and, before we knew it, Rutgers was in print and all over throughout the United States, starting with a wonderful article and editorial in *The New York Times*. It was saying, "The new fraternity, the non-partisan fraternity," so it became a fraternity. We hadn't yet thought of being a fraternity and we got a small, little place next to the old gym, which is now a new house. "We should have a fraternity name or something. Bernie, we should have a pin we could wear for identification. You go to New York, to Balfour, and see what you can do." So, I said, "Well, look, we haven't got any treasury. What are we going to get?" They said, "The cheapest thing you can find. Go over and get it." So, I went to the company known for college gear. They said, "You suggest GS? We can give you Girl Scouts of America, GSA, which are available." [laughter] So, finally, they talked me into Gamma Sigma. They suggested Gamma Sigma pins and I said, "But, the price has got to be cheaper." Oh, they said, "Well, the pins cost a lot. Oh, we can give you screw backs," where you screw it into the buttonhole. So, I said, "How much do they cost?" They said, "Half the price." "Oh," I said, "Okay, that's it." So, I brought back a handful of screw backs and thus, I became, at the fraternity, the founder, "Screwbacks" or "Screwback Eskin." [laughter] The fraternity just kept growing and it is still here.

SH: Is Gamma Sigma still here?

BE: Yes, Gamma Sigma just had their sixtieth anniversary.

SH: The original name was the Georgian Society.

BE: Georgian Society.

SH: Where did you get the term Georgian Society?

BE: George.

LE: Harbaugh.

BE: "Geronimo George, what are you doing?"

SH: The Anglo version of Geronimo. I should have known. [laughter]

BE: George, well, his name was George Harbaugh and he graduated Rutgers--the law school, too. ... George was, you have to understand, a very distinguished-looking guy. He had a mustache.

SH: Really?

BE: Well, you remember, those guys were unusual and weird, these ones were jumping out of airplanes.

SH: Paratroopers, yes.

BE: That's right, and they were hilarious. And so, George, that was where it came from. These men took the greatest chances and most difficult means of attacking.

SH: Were most of you veterans?

BE: Oh, yes, the first years, 1947, obviously, and, as the years have gone on, of course, the Georgian Society, or, if you want to call it Gamma Sigma still remained liberal, but with an excellent reputation of a high grade point average. Right now, it is the first on campus, 2007, that has women. It's the first on campus as a mixed fraternity.

SH: Wonderful.

BE: When did it begin, the women? ... Cathy could have joined it, but she graduated in ...

LE: '88.

BE: '88.

LE: She came to Douglass in '84.

BE: Looks like '88 was a big year, remember? That was when our kids graduated law school at Rutgers Camden Law.

SH: That was a great story. We did not get it on tape, by the way, but, as part of that, you actually had a house.

BE: We still have a house.

SH: You still have one. Is it the same house?

BE: Yes ... the one we had when we started near the gym over there, we didn't own. Then, we bought this house. Then, there came a period of time, about three years, when another older frat not on campus, Tau Epsilon Phi, tried to organize on the Rutgers campus. We were constantly being asked to become a fraternity, because we had the *Targum* editor and the grade point average was good. You know, it was a desirable local fraternity. ... Then, it came into hard times, like most of these fraternities did in the '60s and '70s, and those that were national had enough money to proceed without any trouble, but those that were not national, they had trouble. So, the president at that time, I know I spoke with him, he recommended that we affiliate with a national. We were asked by many nationals. What happened was, that one of them said, "All right, we'll go with your rules." Others didn't like the idea of everybody being able to join it.

SH: Really?

BE: Oh, yes. Oh, these fraternities are very tight. Even some Jewish, African, Christian, Muslim, *et cetera* ones are not too happy to accept other denominations, but they're improving,

and so, we accomplished that. They were open for about three years. ... Then, it started to go the way they wanted it to go--the way their national wanted them to go. ... I don't know who had the guts, whether it was the alumni of the fraternity or whom, because they called me and they asked me what to do--after all, I was a founder, ... and, all of a sudden, I heard that they had reorganized and they're back again to being Gamma Sig. We were given an invitation to come back. They were having a founder's dinner, and then, the fiftieth anniversary we had in '01.

LE: Yes.

BE: Fifty years old, and I was there. I have a little plaque. It's the most interesting thing. What does it say? "Fifty Years of Gammas, Thank You," and to me. It's really thoughtful. It's little things like this. It was just rather nice.

SH: Some kid was given the same job you were given, to go out and get the plaque. [laughter]

BE: I'll bet and they are no different, because they probably got the least expensive ... but it hasn't rusted yet. They're not totally the same, but they're successful. ... We were over there after the game. ...

LE: Homecoming.

BE: Yes, homecoming. I went to homecoming and played in the band.

SH: Did you, this year?

BE: Yes, we have a picture. You want it?

SH: Of course. This is great.

BE: I have that picture with one of the guys, this class. ... I don't know what class he was in. ... They didn't have as big a return with the band, but they had about thirty, thirty-five. It's not bad, but I didn't know really how to do this, you know, whether I should do it as classes or whatnot. ... They have too many things. ... Whatever it is, I have a picture that I took with one of the band members. ...

LE: It's still in the camera.

BE: Don't we have that?

LE: It's in the camera.

SH: When you started the Georgian Society on campus, did you talk to the administration? Was there any interaction?

BE: No, we just did it.

SH: It seems like that was the attitude the veterans had, to just take the initiative on a lot of issues.

BE: Yes, but I had other tie-ins that were nice. First of all, nobody can do it that doesn't get good grades. No one can do anything if you don't get good grades and, you know, if you're falling off the clock all the time. So, my grades were fine and it was very comfortable.

SH: What else did you do while you were here at Rutgers?

BE: Oh, the band, president and vice-president of whatever that came with the orchestra.

SH: You played in the orchestra, the regular orchestra, you said.

BE: The regular orchestra and band. Remember, I had the Scarlet Knights [laughter] and I had--let's see, what other crazy things did I do? I did a lot of crazy things, I really did. ... Well, I was in the non-varsity crew, for what I was worth, you know. I'd watch Tony Antin and he was really good. ...

SH: He was the coxswain of the varsity team.

BE: Varsity team, yes. ... Antin has a lot of spunk, too. ... Find out if he was a veteran, because, if he was, there's another guy that really should be interviewed.

SH: We would love to talk to him just about his Rutgers story. Please encourage him to give us a call.

BE: He might be rather interesting, although he's very bitter now, because the President knocked off the Olympic sports. ... [Editor's Note: In 2006, Rutgers eliminated six Olympic sports as varsity sports, including men's crew, relegating them to club status.] It's the way things go, can a school support it or can't it?

SH: Were you involved in any of the societies for students in the sciences?

BE: I was in the German Club and I became the secretary of the department. Oh, Jim Leathem had a science group and I served in that club, while I had the time.

LE: Was that at Rutgers?

BE: Yes, it was Rutgers. ... Yes, I had helped the department while at Princeton, so, I knew I could do it. ... Here, at Rutgers, I met some interesting German language professors. They were good guys, and, you know, the thing is, they were a little bit itchy because they were native German, but the Deutscher Verein seemed to do well and we had some very good people in it ... I was department secretary I was, like, a member in it, officially, and they thought I was a terrible German speaker, but they told me that, "that we'd love to hire you, though. Why don't you come and work with us ... as our secretary?" I said, "I don't need the money." He said, "Well, it's there. Come on anyhow. You appreciate the same music we love," ... because I used

to love, the German classics and opera. ... [laughter] They were a good group, [Albert] Holzmann and, oh, they were music fans, actually. So, I worked there. What else did I do, of interest? Oh, *The Scarlet Letter*, I was on this thing.

SH: You were part of the board for the yearbook.

BE: Yes, yes, I was part of that, and I was Scarlet Key. I was a member of the Key. ... Anything that had to do with marching or anything of that nature, I never would touch. ... They offered me some positions here and there, you know, that I took, but the music department was good. ... I'm trying to think what else I did. I did some other stuff. I don't remember if I even wrote it down, but, I did, have my opportunities. ... I became an officer of my class, but my class--I was not very clear as to what my class had become, because, remember, I was going for both a bachelor's and master's degrees. ... I didn't know what to do about my future, i.e., what I wanted to do, where was I going to live and so forth, but I had the fraternity, if I wanted to stay there. ...

SH: Frank Johnson was the editor of this yearbook.

BE: Frank Johnson was in everything. He became the president of some Florida university, I remember.

SH: Jacksonville University, I think.

BE: He was quite the guy, and Antin was pretty impressive, too. ... He was a cheerleader as well as an editor. I was corresponding with him. Frank recently updated me on his travels. As the Class Correspondent of 1947 I've been having the chance to write to both who are up in the West Coast.

SH: Yes. We need to talk to him, because we have yet to interview a cheerleader. That would be great. [laughter]

BE: There was a cheerleader that started up with the new college band, too.

SH: It says here you played varsity tennis.

BE: Oh, yes.

SH: Debate?

BE: Oh, yes, I did have a spot on the debate team which I enjoyed.

SH: You were an officer in the concert and marching band.

BE: Yes, I did all kinds of things. I loved having debated at both Princeton and Rutgers and that was another great story. ... That was when I was at Princeton, in a debating society, and they took us to Mt. Sinai University in NYC who were told the varsity team from Princeton was

coming. ... We were really nothing more than the freshman. ... A friend of mine whom I'd grown up with in Atlantic City was a student at Yeshiva there and said, "How can you be varsity? You're not even a sophomore yet. You're a freshman." ... We ended up initially heading for a disaster, they were known for their strong debating society. We worked it out. [laughter] ... By the way, we had a good debating team at Rutgers. It has always been competent. I think I had a chance to actually debate about three times that year 1947.

SH: The Class of 1947, I have heard the phrase that they were, "The Catch-All Class."

BE: They were and contained veterans and young freshmen.

SH: There were so many men coming back who had been at Rutgers for a semester or three.

BE: Yes, even if they were only there for short periods of time until they went in the service, which, essentially, is what most people did. They returned generally to Rutgers.

SH: Did they list you as a fraternity in the yearbook?

BE: No.

LE: It wasn't considered a fraternity.

SH: No picture or anything of your fraternity.

BE: Of the fraternity? It would have been a great picture. No, I'll see if they have it in the next book, the '49.

SH: I would have to look at another.

BE: I mean '48, see if '48 has it.

SH: I do not think I have the 1948 yearbook.

BE: Yes, I think it was. I was a member of that one, too. I was actually on the yearbook staff at first, then I became a graduate student as indicated.

SH: You would have graduated again in 1949. Would you have been listed there if you were getting your master's degree? I do not know how they did it.

BE: I don't either. ... That might help, yes. Oh, do they have graduate degrees in them?

SH: I do not see any. That is what I was looking for. I do not see a list in the 1947 yearbook.

BE: Do we have a '49?

LE: No.

BE: That means they didn't have one, because I'd have bought one. So, I came back to Rutgers and I guess I got into everything I could find. ... You know, I think the service really matured me and, when I came back, it was not hard to enjoy school. I think we dreamed of going back to campus and realized what we had left.

SH: Were most of the men in the Class of 1947 veterans?

BE: I'd say yes, I'm guessing. It certainly seemed it. ...

SH: Their ages would have made them prime for the draft.

BE: Yes, more than fifty percent were. In writing a couple of the scripts I did for the '47 correspondent's [column], I went over the book to get the names out of this and I'm not sure it was accurate, but I went through it, and I really think that most of them [were]. ... That yearbook has some information that can be nowhere else. It tells who and how long they were in the services, you're talking about somebody who was away a while, and mine was three years and half of it aboard ship. ... I mean, you're talking time. ... It's a very hard thing to be able to really glue together this thing [the Rutgers Oral History Archives], and then, you have the imagination ... of the people's minds, you know, because they must change. They change just over a year and two years, among my own students, and so, they must come up with some exciting or remarkable things after a much longer period. Often they help shape future for the returnee.

SH: When you came to Rutgers after the war, was ROTC something that you could opt out of, since you had already been in the military?

BE: Yes, yes.

SH: You did not have to do that.

BE: No, no.

SH: Did they have mandatory chapel, convocations, anything like that?

BE: They had it when we first got here. You had to go, I believe, an equivalent of every other time, and you're talking about people in the dormitories. Then, they started to realize it was useless to make it mandatory, because there were people who were either living in housing or they were married with some, also with children.

SH: They lived across the river.

BE: Kilmer, yes, true, some.

SH: There was also Raritan Arsenal. Were they housing men at the Raritan Arsenal when you came here?

BE: Yes, they did, but there was a tremendous drop-out rate. ... I can't think of the word right now, but there was a large loss of students over a period of a year. At the beginning of the year, they would have students hanging out the windows, and then, as time went on, the student either gave up, flunked out or decided to do this or do that, something else. Many GI's dreamed about a life that was more difficult to achieve than just go to college. They needed to know that their lives ahead were to be stable and, of course, better than it had been. It was the way and for many, it worked.

SH: Did they have any kind of remedial aid or psychological help for the returning veterans?

BE: It was limited at college because of the heavy need, but the VA certainly tried. ... That would have been useful to some people, because I knew some that I really felt sorry for, but the responsibilities, they always thought, was the VAs. The VA [Veterans Administration] was much more active than it is today.

SH: Was there a contingent here on campus?

BE: Yes. Well, you see, right now, every case was given a hearing from what I heard. "What happened to me in the war," was very common and a number of problems had to go through an awful series of officialdom and, sometimes, almost, a court case. Well, at that time, we were so glad to win a war--our victory was the main topic--that I think most survivors who would come back and say, "I am this, that and the other thing," finally would get proper care. The numbers were so different. You were talking about millions of men and, here, you're talking about thousands that were involved over the years at college. So, everybody was given help. There was a VA as well as the college center nearby, not far from here.

SH: I know there is Lyons.

BE: Where was it?

SH: Lyons.

BE: Could be.

SH: L-Y-O-N-S.

BE: Yes, that sounds familiar, and I think people who were having trouble, particularly medically, would go there and they would be assigned as a patient.

SH: Were there men here who obviously had been injured in the war, either psychologically or physically?

BE: ...Well, I came back as a disabled veteran because of a bomb that went off ... when we were on the shakedown cruise. I was an ensign and gunnery officer on a five-inch thirty-eight [caliber] gun and it misfired. So, [laughter] the least-ranked gunnery officer in the gun type goes

in and pulls out the shell and takes it to the side of the ship and throws it overboard. I did that and I did it properly. The only thing that happened was that the casing, unexpectedly heated, when I dropped it from the asbestos carry-on, into the water, burned my arm. ... I had to care for that, and treat it, but, I didn't give a darn about it then. Who cares? As long as it heals and all. So, I stayed right in the service and continued my way, but they never forget and they kept it in my records. They even wanted to give me an award, a medal. I said, "No, none of that since I knew some college friends whose life was ruined or lost in this war." ... But I am listed as a disabled veteran somewhere or other, and even on my license plate. I realized how quickly one could be injured or meaningfully disabled by the actions in wartime.

SH: Were they here on campus?

BE: There were a few that returned here, not many that I saw. Now, I met a number who had similar things with me, where maybe they lost a finger or they had some problems, but this did not stop them from being able to be a student. ... They received not only the veterans' ordinary GI Bill, they would be given just a little bit more, which they would need to overcome whatever disablement there was.

SH: Was there drinking on campus?

BE: Well, I'll tell you, yes. [laughter] ... When we first started and moved to our fraternity house, we constructed a bar downstairs, which is still there, by the way, and where our table tennis is and all of the stuff, it's a bar and beer was permitted. ... The way it was described to us, we had a very good assistant, I don't know if he was vice-president or assistant dean, who went to Rutgers and has been here, as long as I can ever remember. He was always here.

SH: Dean of Men?

BE: Yes, he was somebody here officially. He was young when I remember him, but he stayed here and he ran the social aspects and he ran them friendly-like. If some of the fraternity would be over-drinking, a very serious problem happened, ... that fraternity had to leave the campus for a while, ... but, in general, there were very few problems with drinking at Rutgers.

SH: Did you have a housemother?

BE: Yes. We had some long-term elderly women before that stopped. They were good and, to tell you the truth, I think they were the best security they had, and it's too bad they got rid of that type of watchfulness.

SH: Did you also have a cook?

BE: Yes, she hired help.

SH: The housemother.

BE: Yes, but, I mean, we didn't have a gourmet from the city, you know. You can imagine what they could make in that kitchen. [laughter]

SH: Did you have a formal dinner, as some fraternities did?

BE: No one had a really formal dinner, but you had, like, dinner three times a week, ... you had lunch every day and breakfast was on your own. ... There were pots and pans and, after a while, there were stewards that you would compensate. A couple of the guys didn't have much in the way of bucks, and so they could be a steward and, by being a steward, they could get the meals free, and that was about as good as it got here. I imagine some of the other fraternities had more money. I actually had one experience of being a server, and I don't think they ... would ever ask me again. ... It was the Beta House. ... I had good friends and they were just down the street and they turned to me and they said, "This is a big thing. We're getting our sponsors and the fathers of all the guys and all that." ... They said, "You play in the band," ... the dance band, and they said, "We know you have a tux. So, could you do it?" I was telling Lynn how I served the soup. You know, I brought the soup tureen over, and then, I passed the soup bowls. [laughter]

LE: "Pass it down."

BE: So, it was kind of fun, yes. [laughter]

SH: Passing the tureen rather than the ladle. [laughter]

BE: ... Yes, we got to that level, but the levels were--Rutgers was still a student-run, middle-class type of thing. We had some people from very wealthy houses, but most of them were in the middle-class.

SH: What about the women at New Jersey College for Women at this point?

BE: They were improving. [laughter] ... It's really very funny, because when it first started, I was, like, warned not to go to NJC and to go to New York City instead as much as I could. New York was an easy hoof, you know. We all traveled by thumb [hitchhiked] and it was an easy ride. ... There was always a truck, there was always something, going by that would pick you up. ... So, we went to New York and you had Barnard and you had NYU, which particularly had a lot of women, and so, it was quite nice. That was where the women were and, yet, the poor gals from NJC, you know, were locked into their dorms, in and out of their rooms, or whatever they did over there. It was very hard getting out. It was difficult, the on-campus thing, but that improved. ... You know, it wasn't like Douglas is today. When it became Douglas, the whole world changed. It really did. They changed their hours, they changed their ability to go out at night, and so forth.

SH: Did that happen while you were here on campus?

BE: I'm trying to think. I don't remember. I remember it improving just before I left, and the reason I say that is because I played for dances and proms and I knew that the number of NJC

women that were going to dances had increased and that there had to be a relaxing of some things.

SH: Was there any interaction between those of you here on the Rutgers College Campus and those in the College of Agriculture?

BE: That's a hard one. It wasn't Cook yet. It was called, and was the Aggie School, and I had some contacts. There were a few people. I, for example, was in biology, you know. ...

SH: Most of the sciences were taught at the Ag School.

BE: I went there for one course. ... I forget what it was. It was something about growth and development and it was at the Aggie School. I was impressed with it, by the way, and, there I met a number of people. One person I met was a chicken farmer. ... So, it was a bad year for chicken farming and they were having a terrible time. Of all things, they got an infection of their chickens, and so they all had to be injected. So, he asked dear, old Bernie, "Hi, Bernie, can you help me?" "What's the problem?" "Can you get a few people to come down here and inject these chickens?" ...

SH: This is the Rutgers Farm?

BE: ... No, this was not. ... This is a person whose father owned a large chicken farm. I said, "Well, let me see. I'll have to get volunteers, or do you want to pay them or what do you want to do?" "No, I can't pay them, but I'll tell you, after it's done, they'll get a fantastic meal." I said, "Well, it sounds like a good thing. I'll see what I can do." So, in the biology class that day, I got up and I said that, "We need some people to volunteer ... to help," and I ... gave the guy's name. He was popular; a nice guy. Everybody liked him, very presentable person. ... Okay, so, we all went out. There were about eight and there were ten thousand chickens. ... We had to inject these poor creatures with [medicine], actually inject them.

SH: Each one?

BE: You'd hold this chicken and the chicken [Editor's Note: Dr. Eskin imitates a struggling chicken], you know, and then, inject them. ... You had to ... sway the chickens to come towards you, and then, throw them into an apparatus that went away from you. ... By the way, chickens are not clean. ... They told us to bring dungarees or something like that, and so, we still came in clean dungarees--after all, these chickens, we're going to have a dinner--and we were a mess. Oh, we were horrible. ... Then, at the end of the day, we were exhausted. We got through these whole ten thousand chickens ... and, just like his mother said, "Now, you boys get all washed up and changed to your clean clothes." We brought some clean clothes, and you come in. I've got a real good meal for you all ... It'll be wonderful." You know what we had? [laughter]

SH: Chicken.

BE: Chicken. I never wanted to see another chicken, ever.

SH: In any shape or form. [laughter]

BE: So, that was my working on a chicken farm day. I'm afraid it wasn't fun exactly. [laughter] Oh, that was a wonderful story, but it was so good, and the guys, every one of them, you know, never will forget it. "Hi, Bern, you got any chickens for us to inject?" I mean we can say we helped the egg world quite a bit that day. [laughter]

SH: Did the chickens survive?

BE: It worked. ... Actually, I guess Rutgers was very much involved in that, because the men who came in to help the scientists, they were the ones who prescribed and they were the ones who said, "Yes, if you do that, the state will accept it and the chickens can be sold." ... Apparently, without that, they wouldn't have made it. They'd have just killed them and buried the birds.

SH: Did you both work and continue your studies through the summer?

BE: Well, you see, before I went in the service, I could play down in Atlantic City. After I went in the service, two things happened. Atlantic City converted to a rehab center ... like they had become all hospitals. I don't know if you knew that, but all the major hotels became hospitals.

SH: Over in Atlantic City, for the veterans.

BE: For the veterans.

SH: I did not. I knew that one hotel was.

BE: It was an ideal place. ... They had the boardwalk to roll in their little wheels, rolling chairs and it was ideal. ... It didn't start to become Atlantic City again until after I was finished college. ... In fact, after I finished college and went to med school, I became a "doctor on the beach" for the summers. We would be in the tents and handle minor problems.

LE: Tell her the story.

BE: You know what it is--I don't swim, or I swim very badly, let's put it that way. The Navy was very kind. They didn't need me to do anything but just flap.

SH: Just the doggie paddle?

BE: Yes, doggie paddle.

LE: Tread water.

BE: Or tread water, or whatever, but they figured, "If you're in the middle of the ocean, what are you going to do?" ... You're not going to swim two hundred miles to the other side. [laughter] ... I would wear my white bathing suit and we'd have all the young life guards who were the

lifesavers and physical assistants, and so forth, but I would wear my white suit and supervise. ... Of course, what happened the first day was ...

SH: This is when you were doing a residency.

BE: No, no. Remember, I was a freshman medical student. ... I just had anatomy that year, year one, and then, I became a doctor on the beach, "a beach doctor," a white shirt, with this big, "Atlantic City Beach Patrol Doctor," or, no, "Doc," Doc, something like that, on there.

SH: With one class in anatomy.

BE: Yes, one class in anatomy and that was about it, yes. [laughter]

SH: Right, okay.

BE: So, the first day I am on duty, they take me to the beach that I'm going to be on and going to be the one walking up and down on. I walked in, you know, and I said, "Okay, I'm ready to go." There's the intern from Atlantic City Hospital who takes all the neophytes to their different posts, and sitting there are a number of black bags, which they will give to you, one black bag, and we go. I get the inlet, the first time.

SH: You get what?

BE: I get the inlet of Atlantic City, where all the fishing boats come in and has a rough sea behind it. They take me to this stand and they give me my black bag. The couple of the lifeguards are pumping somebody's chest or something. They're having a problem there. So, I thought, "I'm a doc." So, I open up the bag to see what I had to use. Well, I had six towels and one band-aid. That was what was in the black bag. [laughter] So, I put my first waterside manner on here and I said, "You know, there must be at least a stethoscope or something." "Use your ear." ... Yes, it was really a moment of truth. I had nothing, and so, I suddenly realized the guards knew I only had an anatomy class, too. Fortunately it all came out okay. [laughter]

SH: They were not giving you anything that you could hurt yourself with. [laughter]

BE: Well, they didn't want me to touch it, because the lifeguards knew all the emergency stuff. They were pretty good, yes. Well, anyhow, I did that. Then, the second year, of course, I had a stethoscope, because you start your first clinical year, carrying around that, and so, I did that in med school, but, in Rutgers, I'm trying to think, ... I spent a lot of time here. Now, remember, I was going for two degrees at once when I was at Rutgers.

SH: That was what I was wondering, since you finished with the Navy at the end of 1945 and graduated with a BA in 1947.

BE: BS, yes.

SH: A BS in 1947 and a master's in 1949. I suspected that you had gone in the summer.

BE: Well, the BS was given around November. ... You have to see the date, but I think it was around November. So, that means that, in '47, I must have had three more semesters. So, if you add that to what I've had already, I'd be about ready to graduate.

SH: All right.

LE: But, you had to be here for two years. ...

BE: Yes. So, they would give that, but, you see, some of the courses that I took were also useful in MS. The MS takes one year of courses and a dissertation. ... They didn't call it a dissertation at Rutgers Graduate School at that time, but it had to be publishable.

SH: A thesis?

BE: Yes. ... I started my basic research right away.

SH: Did you?

BE: Oh, yes. Well, it was endocrinology, that was what I wanted. ... So, Dr. Leathem got me started on something he was working on and, of course, you develop from the one nugget that they give you. ... If you find something, good; if not, he has to dig one up for you. I know this because I do this now. [laughter] The mentor has that responsibility.

SH: Do you think that the help you got from Leathem, and just the whole experience, helped you to become a good mentor and professor?

BE: Yes, I think that it did, yes. ... He generated a direction for me to what I do. If I hadn't met him, I probably would have gone into medicine strictly as a clinician practice or gone into another field. I might have backed away from my research and teaching, and gone strictly into medicine. ... That's essentially what happened to many of the people whom I knew. I like what I do.

SH: When you finished at Albany, where did you go next?

BE: ... That year, I went directly to my internship. They were still having separate internships from residencies that year. ... There were two choices. ... Well, I was not going to stay at Albany and I didn't want to go to New York. I felt New York had probably the best medicine, because it was big and it had everything, but the other places I liked a lot were Boston, and Philadelphia. I got married, by the way, as soon as I graduated from medical college.

SH: Yes, tell me how you met Mrs. Eskin.

BE: It's a marvelous [story]. She can tell you, essentially.

LE: I was working in a private blood lab, where we drew blood.

SH: You were also at Albany.

LE: Well, I'm from the Albany region.

SH: Okay, you were working as a civilian, not as a student.

LE: Yes, as a student. ...

BE: ... You were from the college.

LE: I was from Bard College, on a student program from there and I had gone out on a date with this fellow who had graduated high school with my brother. I was sick. I had a fever and I was sitting there, dying, and we met up with another couple we knew. One boy was a medical student and the other was a girl we both knew. ... I don't know what Dave said to him, but he said, "I've got a date for you and she works at Bender Blood Bank. Why don't you go over with me?" So, he came over. It was after work and I'm sitting on the desk, waiting. That's how I met him.

SH: He must have made an impression.

LE: Yes. Oh, I don't know what it was. [laughter]

BE: No, I think the nice thing was that she was working as a college student in her program. ... There were two fellows that I was very close friends with, Dave and Joe. ... Both were in my class in medical school and I had promised one of them that I was going to go over to Troy and go out with somebody there at Russell Sage College. ... Then, David came in and told me there was a very nice young woman and she's from Bard College. So, I knew she would be different. So, it was, [laughter] and ... that was really good and she was working during her field period. So, I decided to go there. ... After I met her, I didn't go to Joe's affair and he got very mad at me. I think he still is, frankly, but that was it. It was good. We recently saw his wife and him and after at least fifty years we're still friends. Joseph Belsky practices and teaches at Yale Medical. ...

SH: When did you marry, just as you finished school?

LE: Two weeks after he finished.

BE: Yes. We would have gotten married, actually, by the end of the junior year, I was hoping so, but Lynn's sister was getting married at the time.

LE: That wouldn't have worked out. [laughter]

BE: Yes, you never can predict what happens, but it was her sister [who] surprised us. We were leaving at one time and ... we were going to tell them. ... When we phoned to tell them that we were coming over, we found out that her sister had decided to marry a guy she'd been going out

with for a long time. ... So, we felt that we didn't want to exactly mix it up and it didn't matter at that point. So, I would say that is how a lot of people do meet. It's a moment of revelation, I think so. [laughter]

SH: "Love at first sight" is the term some folks might use, no? [laughter]

BE: I think revelation's honest-er. [laughter]

SH: Did you go to Boston for your internship?

BE: I went to Boston to be interviewed. ... When I got there, I found out that Boston had what they called the "City Program," that the only way I could go to any of the Boston hospitals was to put an application in and they would decide where you would go. They would either accept it or not, or reject it, and then send you to someplace in Boston area. So, you had no specific choice. If I could have known that I was going to Mass General or if I knew that I was going to get one of the really other acceptable places, I would have probably gone to Boston. Remember, I lived, and my folks still lived, in Atlantic City and my brother lived in Philly, so that you always worry, when you get married, that you're going to have interference. ... You forget that there are advantages, too, but the interference is always the thing that's a problem when you've just got married. ... So, I had thought of Philadelphia as being second. New York was out. I just didn't want to go there, and I obviously wasn't going to move out to Ohio, or some place like that. [laughter] So, that was it and one of the nice things also was that I went down to Philadelphia and I found the internship that I preferred. I had in mind, and was hoping to go to Philadelphia General afterwards and take whatever residency specialty I liked. I had been remarkably surprised at obstetrics and gynecology in med school. I knew I was going to be an endocrinologist. That, I knew. Whether I was going to do it through medicine or something else, I didn't know. ... I had an experience in my junior year--I may have told you this. In my junior year, I was a junior student on the floor and a woman came in and began to deliver spontaneously. The nurses said, "Bernie, why don't you go over and see what her problem is? She needs help." I said, "Where's the resident?" and, you know, "Where's the intern?" "Well, the intern's wife had toxemia of pregnancy and he's sitting with her elsewhere and the resident is drunk. He's over in Papa's," which is the nearby bar, "and he's drunk as a skunk." ... I said, "Oh, my God, you know, what can I do?" and then, she says, "I'm calling all the senior attendings, but somebody's got to take care of her." So, I went into the delivery room and she says, "I'll back you. I'm right behind you." ... If I drop the baby, she'll catch it, but what was happening, I go in and the baby just came right out before she was prepared by a big push. I delivered the baby and the mother starts to bleed, but horribly, and so--whatever put me towards it or made me think about it, I don't know, but I put my hand deeply into the uterus and squeezed it and started to hold it until the bleeding was under control, I don't know. Then, I told them to give her a shot of some of the medication that maintains status quo. Eventually, her uterus went around my hand [laughter] and the bleeding completely stopped, fortunately, really fortunately. By the time we'd gotten to that and things looked a little bit better--and I was trying to figure out how to get my hand out of there--the Professor arrived, who was the head of the department, and he says, "What's going on?" I told him, the nurse was there and told him, while I was still figuring out how to get my hand out. ... The thing that ended up [happening] was, the head of the department was absolutely grateful for what this third year med student had done to save this

woman. And the drunk came back and he told him, "Go to the dressing room, and sit there and wait for me." I hate to tell you what went on when he got to him, but ... the fact of the matter is, the Professor came in and he helped me. He told me what to do, and so forth, at that point.

SH: The head of the department.

BE: Yes. By that time, everybody was in. There were three or four faculty in. It was most interesting. Here I was, a student, and the department voted to give me bonus money for having handled the situation and having the courage of my convictions to do it. I felt sorry for the woman and, fortunately, there were no complications. I also received an award from the department.

SH: Wonderful. This happened in Philly.

BE: No. This was in Albany, my third year of school.

LE: He was in medical school.

SH: Okay.

BE: Yes. So, that was the reason I was starting to lean towards OB/GYN, and how could I not, you know? ... I got an exceptional award, with an "A" as a grade.

SH: I bet you did.

BE: And the funniest part of it is, a couple days later--by the way, they fired the resident, of course--a couple days later, one of my own fellow students in my class, his wife went into labor. ... She came in and she was in labor and she was having problems. So, I said, "Here." [laughter] ... So, her husband turned to me, he says, "Hey, you didn't get your boards yet." ... So, they had called their doctor, you know, and, when the doctor got there, he said, [he] turned to me and he says, "Oh, I understand you're the new head of the department here." [laughter] He said, "Would you give her anesthesia?" So, I gave her anesthesia for the thing. It was very interesting. So, I might say that OB/GYN just flashed as a possibility. ... Then, I started to learn that they were just thinking about endocrinology in my specialty, and I learned that there was surgery as well as medicine in OB/GYN, I liked it and it struck me well. So, I came to Philadelphia as an intern. I interned for a year at Einstein. It was a very good internship, by the way, and the rest of it. Some of those people in our group were just the geniuses of the city. They were first in class rank and all kinds of things, particularly, the psychiatrists and people like that. They were really good students. ... So, I was exposed to very good students in the internship. It showed in my third part of the boards, that I really did beautifully.

SH: Did you do your residency there as well?

BE: This is the funniest. This is really funny. I went to the residency. ... They offered me a residency and they also said I could have one of them in New York, and so on, but I went to ... Philadelphia General Hospital. Philly General is fantastic, you know; it was. It was the biggest

hospital in the United States and it was undoubtedly in the crowning glory. It really was fantastic. So, I went down there to get my residency, and who do I meet? One of the doctors from the Albany Medical College, and she had been there in the provenance of the time when I was the king of the OB/GYN. ... She, of course, turned to me and said, "Now, what I would like you to do is to spend half your time at Philly General and half your time at the Woman's Medical College [now part of Drexel University College of Medicine]." ... This was my introduction to women as doctors. ... We had a wonderful time there. I took the residency and spent time at PGH and the time at [Woman's Medical College]. It was really fun. ... My daughter, Cathy, of course, enjoyed it immensely, and you know that the Woman's Medical College [was] all women and I was the first male resident in OB/GYN that they ever had.

SH: Really?

LE: Yes. He had to be interviewed by the head of obstetrics, because they were divided, and, if she approved, he would be accepted, and she approved.

BE: Oh, it was very interesting. ... So, they told me, "You're going to suffer what we suffer ... at all the other hospitals." It's amazing, because, if I had to change my clothes, I had to go to the men's room, which was somewhere or other, and, if I had to, what was it? Oh, yes, I used to lie on one of the gurneys, and just sleep there. You know, I'm not going to go in and sleep in these women's rooms. It would have been unfair, [laughter] and, oh, it was really [different], but it was a wonderful experience. They were very, very nice to me. ... If anyone even dared to say they didn't want a man, you know, when I would come in to do the exam or something like that, they'd kill them. [laughter] The women would absolutely kill them. They were really something, and my experience there was a lot of fun. I was the MC at the parties, all the dances, and I played music, obviously, at some of the dances. I think they pretty much took good care of me.

SH: The transition for you, Mrs. Eskin, from Albany to Philly was no problem.

LE: It was strange. ... You know, I'd never really been away, but I weathered the storm. [laughter]

BE: Well, I think the funniest was when her father--I'm not too sure that he wanted me to marry his daughter. ... One of the things he says to her is, "All right, you'll go down to Philadelphia and you'll be in a..."

LE: "In a second-story walkup with a bare bulb in the ceiling." [laughter]

BE: ... It never happened, never happened. [laughter] ... I think he became quite satisfied as time went on. ...

LE: Yes. My mother even came to like him. [laughter]

SH: He really did pass all the exams. [laughter]

LE: Yes, he did.

BE: It was fun. It was okay. It really wasn't a problem.

SH: Were you working?

LE: Yes, I worked at Einstein, in the nurses' office, and then, there was a new hospital being built, Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute, right across from Women's Med. So, Bernie said, "If it's the state hospital, it might pay better than at Woman's Med. Why don't you go interview?" ... I worked there and they kidded me that I could keep a job longer than he did, because I worked a couple years longer, after he finished his residency. [laughter]

SH: Did you stay in Philly after your residency? Where does your career path take you?

BE: ... The first thing was, I had no idea what I was going to do. [laughter] I was offered a lot of jobs here and there. I also was doing research in Woman's Med, as well as my residency. I had published a bit and I got to know an endocrinologist and, in fact, a number of endocrinologists, and we all became a pack. That was very nice, and, as time went on, I became an integral part of the department at Woman's Med, I guess. So, the time when I finished my residency [came] and I had all these offers for private places, and at money that I had never dreamed of. You know, it really was [good]--that was high money. ... So, I told Dr. Pettit, who was the head of the division, that I was being offered all this and she says, "Oh, oh, you were? okay. What hospitals would you like to be in?" and I told her. ... I got into most of them, but it was most interesting. There were a couple of hospitals that even she, as [being] probably from one of the top families in Philadelphia, and I mean top families--her name was Mary De Witt Pettit and it's a real Philadelphia name. ... Oh, she was a marvelous surgeon, too. ... There were some of them, like Bryn Mawr, which I wanted to get into, "No Jews," and Lankenau was worse. Lankenau, absolutely not, and so, she found one that was in the Main Line, and then, as time went on. You know, things have changed a lot, but not as much as it could, but it has changed. ...

SH: Was this an overt code?

LE: No.

BE: Overt, overt.

LE: Was it overt?

BE: Oh, yes, I think it was overt. I mean, there was no question.

LE: Well, there was an understanding.

BE: Why would they not choose an academic person ... for a department, you know? ... At that time, getting a young academic into their department was a desire, a high desire. ... She was also, at the same time, knocking me off of getting the big jobs, the big money, because she just

didn't want me to go to just practice. She wanted me to be also on the staff and she paid me, as a researcher, and grants came in, money grants, for doing research. ... So, I start building up a research combination. Now, the income came from--the big money, the decent money--came from practice. The money from academics was rather minimal, compared to what you could get. So, Lynn had to make the decision, too, you know, as to whether I would. We could, otherwise, be relatively wealthy, at that time. It isn't true anymore, but it was at that time, and so, I stayed right as I was doing, at a certain percentage of office hours, a certain percentage of academic activity.

SH: You started your own private practice as well as staying on the staff and faculty at Woman's Medical College.

BE: When we started off, we used to carry the sign from one office to another, [laughter] and Lynn gave me a hand on those. I had one office where probably one of the first cosmetic surgeons, of women surgeons in the world had an office, and she loved having me there, "You're going to be in my office. How much do you want to pay?" you know, and I told her and she says, "I'm sure you'll make money." I said, "Yes, okay." [laughter] ... So, I started with her and I did very well. She even lent me her secretary-assistant, or attending, whatever, and so, it was very nice, and then, Lynn and I used to carry a sign out to. ...

LE: Bryn Mawr.

BE: Bryn Mawr, and it was fun. ... Then, I moved to a very plush apartment house and had an office there. It was very pleasant. Little by little, I took over an office and Lynn stayed with me until we had our children and we had a good time. I did, but I don't know if she did. [laughter]

LE: Yes.

SH: She is still here, so, I assume that she did. [laughter]

LE: Either that or I'm a slow learner.

BE: Now, a very interesting part of this is that, as time has gone on, we reached a point where the children had to go to college. ... We still laugh about how we connived money here and there, because, even then, you know, it was the same amount of money, only it was [less profound]. You know, it doesn't sound the same, but it's the same amount.

SH: You have three children.

BE: Yes, three children, and we had a great [family]. Every one of them had at least eight years of college. So, you know, we've got PhDs, we've got lawyers, we've got a musician who plays and is the head of the program at school and he's very good. He's still very interesting. We have a good time with him, and they all married. Well, the lawyers married each other. I don't know where we went wrong, but, there, we had a problem. [laughter] Yes, no, they actually are cute. They're wonderful.

SH: These were the graduates from Rutgers-Camden.

BE: Yes.

SH: Do you want to tell the story for the tape?

BE: Oh, isn't it on here? Oh, no, okay, well, it was really rather cute. One day, my daughter turned to me and said, "There's another law student and he's handsome and he's six-foot-five." My daughter was five feet, and she said, "What do you think, Dad?" I said, "Well, where did you meet him?" and she said, "Well, we were in an exercise room at the gym," and, "A-ha," I said, "go back to the gym and exercise. What's he doing in the exercising?" She said, "He likes to lift weights." So, I said, "Well, it's about time you lifted 150 pounds," you know. ... So, she went back and she lifted 150, and then, he started to help her and this all continued over the years. They became very good friends for a couple years, and then came graduation and, of course, things were getting [serious]. You know, something had to happen. They were back [and] forth and he was indecisive in many ways. ... Then, he used to come to our house and use our computer to do all his work. ... Lynn would help him, by the way, on the computer, and then, one day, he comes and he says, "No, you can't help me with this one." So, she said, "Why not?" Steve says, "No, you just can't help." All right, it was past--we forgot about it, didn't think about it again. Graduation day came and we all were sitting around in Rutgers-Camden and [were] at the graduation. It was outside, always a lovely thing. ... He was the valedictorian and had to give the speech and my daughter, who was, I think, second or third in the class, but she won the Governor Hughes Award, which had to do with her court work, ... she was sitting on the platform. We gave her some flowers, roses. ... He gave his speech and ... she had her award and, of course, we clapped, but, then, he started his speech and he gave all the usual nonsense. ... Then, he got to the very end, and then he says, "And I would like to ask my girlfriend to marry me," turning to JoAnne, and he says--you know, [they] look at each other--and I said my daughter ... essentially was about the same color as the red roses we had given her. ... The crowd roared. It was absolutely [wild]. I looked over, as I said before, to the in-laws and we just looked at each other. We had never expected it that way. ... We started to realize what he was doing on the computer anyhow.

SH: He had been writing his speech. [laughter]

LE: Yes.

BE: So, ... it was really beautiful and all the lawyers that were standing [there], going to be, 450 of them, standing there and swearing in as a lawyer, ... they said, "Hmm, you've got a contract," and we knew it was a good moment. It was really a cute thing. So, it was fine. The other kids, Gregg is a musician, as I told you, and Cathy got her PhD in--what did she get it in? She had it in English lit, but ...

LE: Yes, sixteenth century English.

BE: Sixteenth century English, which we thought was, like, maybe she knew something about Beowulf or somebody, but the thing is, she is now associate professor at a very nice liberal arts college in Florida. Her husband is, well, I guess you would call him ...

LE: He's a sculptor.

BE: A sculptor. He does modern sculpting, ... and very nice and they've done well. ... My son married a glass artist, by the way, [who] graduated from Syracuse, got it in glass. ... She makes all these big things in religious areas and in religious places. She's smart. She's a very smart young woman, they have a couple of kids, too, so she has slowed down a little bit. ... JoAnne, the lawyer, is just now starting a little bit more of her practice. She originally had a marvelous position, going for a partner, but she had three children and preferred that. ...

SH: Do they live close by?

LE: Yes.

BE: Those two do, but Cathy's in Florida.

SH: You have stayed involved with Rutgers. You said that you are the class correspondent now.

BE: Oh, yes, yes. I always had a good feel for Rutgers and, you know, [if] you really look at it, I've won the, what is it? ...

SH: Loyal Sons?

BE: Loyal Sons, and I have also the--let's see, what is the other one? I forget, ... the medal for ...

LE: Meritorious work.

BE: Yes, meritorious, or, no, what is it?

LE: Prestigious?

BE: No, it's not prestigious.

SH: Is it the Rutgers Medal?

BE: Yes, I won that about four years ago, three years ago, I guess. It was the ...

LE: Meritorious Service.

BE: Meritorious Service.

SH: Meritorious Service.

BE: ... I also have been the president of the Philadelphia [Rutgers] Club, and then, they made me the overall chairman of all the clubs in the world. Let's see, what else have I done? Oh, yes, the band, the band alumni, of course, which I love. It's a very nice group. ... Oh, the graduate school, now, they have asked me now to be on the Dean's Board, which I accepted. ... I guess we're getting to the end of the list. I don't know what the rest is.

SH: That is wonderful, though.

LE: It keeps him off the streets at night.

SH: It keeps him off the street. [laughter]

BE: No, but ... I enjoyed being at Rutgers and it's been good. I learned a lot from the correspondence, because I learned a little bit about what happened to the other people and where it's going. One of the big problems, of course, [when] you get into the older people, is that you lose them and it's always a tie in my mind as to whether you tell people that they've died or not, you know. It's a shame they died, but ... it isn't a newflash, you know. ...

SH: "Now, the following..."

BE: You know, yes, I don't like that. It feels--so, this "In Memoriam" and have a page of that is good, but to write it, "For those of you who knew" that doesn't sound too good. ... So, it's just a question of giving their story and, if you can give their story on another page, I think that would be very nice. At least that's what I'm going to be suggesting in about an hour, or sooner.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Okay. One of the things that Dr. Eskin brought in today, which Mrs. Eskin found, is a tie.

BE: Oh, the tie. Well, we're talking about a silk, actually, it was a silk scarf, a large silk scarf, and on it is a map of the area around, actually, Japan, primarily in the area of Tokyo. ... It's absolutely detailed like you'd never expect, and these were given out to all the major officers on the ship, with the idea that we were going to be invading the country. ... We, of course, would need the map in order to be able to know where we were. First of all, it had all the waterways and things that we would have to have for the ships, but, in addition, it had a lot of land information as well. So, I would imagine it might have been given also to the Army. I don't know. So, I had this and it seemed like an awfully nice thing. It's so pretty and ... it was done so well that I got one of the people that ... make ties and, since I wear a lot of bowties, that we made it into a bowtie, and that's what you have. [laughter] So, it's a little piece of history, but I don't know if it's good as a bowtie or not. ...

SH: I think that is wonderful, such a unique artifact. It is also a special way that you utilized it. I bet no one else, or very few, have it as you do.

BE: I don't think that too many would have it as a bowtie.

SH: I think the Smithsonian would love to see this bowtie.

BE: ... That's rather an intriguing thing. It probably indicates to all of us that they were really serious about hitting Japan and, therefore, what Truman said, "I'd rather save the lives of our Americans than be bothered and I might as well go ahead and utilize what I have, [which] is a radioactive bomb." So, I guess I have to be generously grateful that that was done, because I'm sure I was next up in line, you know, our ship, yes. ... So, it's a memento.

SH: Is there anything that we have not asked or have not covered that we should before you go?

BE: I was just looking through this. ... Can you think of anything, Lynn?

LE: I can't really. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

BE: Lynn and I have essentially gone to the reunions of the last ship, the USS *Providence*. ... There's a certain finality to that, that probably you can feel or understand. The ship itself, ... [the] USS *Providence*, was John Paul Jones' sloop and that was the first ship of the Navy, of the US Navy. ... As years have gone by, there's been a *Providence*, but, you know, there hadn't been a major ship. The USS *Providence* that I was involved with in 1945, I think it was, that I have a piece of the boat, [and] so forth, was destroyed in and about 1997 or '98, something like that, quite late, and then, they sent us little pieces of the ship. I suppose it is the ship--could be little pieces of somebody's house or something. [laughter] ... Whatever it is, it's nicely marked and it's very pretty, but, at the same time that we went to the last, well, the one before the last reunion, another ship of the line now--what happened to the *Providence*, it also became a CLG [a guided missile light cruiser], which was a ship that had a different type of armor, and so forth. ... So, the final ship that was scrapped was the same base, but it had a different armor. The interesting thing that we have is the new ship. The new *Providence* is a submarine and the submarine is a nuclear submarine. ... It fought in the Vietnam War, well, at the end of the Vietnam War, and in the war that we're presently having in the Mideast, because, I think it was in Afghanistan that it had something to do. ... [Editor's Note: The USS *Providence* has been the title of five US Navy vessels. The first was John Paul Jones' command in 1776 and the next two were also used during the American Revolution. The fourth was a Cleveland-class light cruiser that was commissioned in May 1945. It was then converted in 1957 to a guided missile light-cruiser and scrapped in 1980. The fifth USS *Providence* is a nuclear submarine that was commissioned in 1984 and remains in service today.]

SH: Launch missiles from it.

BE: Yes, yes, I think. So, it was essentially [reborn]. It's fighting--it's a still fighting ship. I don't know what's happened. You know, we went out West for the last meeting of the USS *Providence* and a friend of ours, who is in San Diego, showed us on the wall ... near the sea, near the naval base that they have there, they have a catalog of the people and some of the activities of the ship, *Providence*. ... It's a generous dedication and it's a beautiful thing. ... So, it still has a little bit there, and he said he was presently getting some of the parts from the

Providence and he'll probably put it in the memorial. So, the USS *Providence* ... probably [will] live on, and from the days of John Paul Jones, and perhaps be meaningful to the Navy [in the future]. I don't know.

SH: Thank you.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Did you stay in the Reserves?

BE: Oh, yes, I did. ... I moved up a little bit, to a lieutenant, as time went on, but, because I was a doctor, I could not stay in the line. I was an officer of the line, obviously, as a gunnery [officer], and, frankly, that's the thing that was appealing to me, actually. I liked that, and so, I chose not to [stay in]. Now, it's jeopardized on the fact that they could have brought me in as a doctor, if they so desired. ...

SH: You said your discharge from the Reserves was in the late or mid-1950s.

BE: That was in the late '50s, yes.

SH: When were you discharged?

BE: June of 1956. That was an honorable discharge.

SH: Was there a chance that you would be called back for Korea or were you exempt because you went to medical school?

BE: Well, they might have wanted doctors.

SH: That is what I am thinking.

BE: Yes. I think they were thinking of doctors, more than they were of me as a line officer, because one of the things that I had thought about, I became an MSC, which meant Medical Service Corps, so that if they wanted to, they could have me as the captain of a hospital ship. ... That didn't turn me on, either, you know, to be the head of a hospital. I mean, I could do that [as a] civilian. ... Oh, there's one thing. There is a story--there always is a story--and I can't answer this one. I can only give you the facts. About my senior--was it my senior year or junior year?

LE: Junior year.

BE: Junior year. About my junior year at medical school, third year, I received a notice from the United States Navy telling me to come to the post office in Albany. They didn't say it was hush-hush, they didn't say anything about it, but they said just come in, but they gave me no other details. So, I went there and they were waiting for me. ... There were members of the Navy there and there were also people who looked like civilians, or I don't know. ... They offered me an opportunity to join the Secret Service of the US Navy, which they have their own

programs. ... I said, "No," and they said, "Do you want to think it over?" and I said, "No," that I was not interested in that kind of work. ... So, to this day, Lynn and I keep thinking, "Why?"

SH: Why you?

BE: Yes. Now, the only thing we can figure is that there's somebody that they may want nearby and I was in medical school. They may want to have somebody in the medical service that has a knowledge of Secret Service and could help them in case of problems in there, or something. I don't know. ...

SH: Just out of the blue, they showed up.

BE: Out of the blue.

SH: You were still in the Reserves.

BE: Yes, I was, wasn't I? Yes, junior year, I was.

SH: It is interesting that they would not just call you up.

BE: No, I don't think they would pull me out of civilian [life], or, if they would, it would have been a different way, I think, that they would have probably got in touch with me. ... I will never know what it could be. None of us will, and I guess we'll just leave it at that, but it's rather an intriguing thing, that my services. ...

SH: Yes, it is. [laughter]

BE: Yes. What did I know or what didn't I know or what could I do? Remember, my training was [as] a doctor and I'm not a spy, you know.

LE: Who did you know? Was it something, someone at the medical college, they were interested in finding more about? Was it somewhere?

BE: It seems so vague.

LE: Some of the friends that he had made.

SH: Research, perhaps.

LE: Yes.

BE: Yes, that's another point. Maybe there was something that they thought I could handle in research or something. It was very interesting.

LE: But, they didn't tell him and they didn't say, "It's all right. You know, if you don't want to, that's fine, but you're not going to know what it is."

BE: No, they didn't really bother me. ... They were in no way negative or did they act upon me, to, you know, try to warn me or this, that--nothing, nothing bad. It was really just a question and my answer was definite, and they knew I wasn't going to change.

SH: Thank you both for coming and bringing in all the pictures.

BE: Oh, good. I hope we haven't held you. Have we held you up?

SH: No. Thank you.

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

Reviewed by Jesse Braddell 3/17/2011

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Reviewed by Bernard A. Eskin 8/18/2012

Reviewed by Nicholas Molnar 9/24/2012