

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH MARVIN I. GERSHENFELD

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Sandra Stewart Holyoak (SSH): This begins an interview with Marvin I. Gershenfeld at Rutgers University on March 25, 1999 with Sandra Stewart Holyoak and ...

Dana Cohen (DC): Dana Cohen

SSH: Mr. Gershenfeld, we thank you so much for coming today to be interviewed, and to begin the interview, I'd like to ask you a few questions beginning with your parents. Could you tell us a little about your father? I understand he was born in the Ukraine, and about his emigration here to this country.

Marvin Gershenfeld (MG): Well, I don't know much about my father, although I've tried to get some information. But my father was born in Ukraine, as well as my mother. They didn't meet until they got here. But they were born in towns that were not very far apart in Ukraine. In Ukraine. My father came here ... as a small child. Probably, I'm guessing, at about two-and-a-half years of age. And I don't know whether his father came here or not, but his mother, of course, did. My grandmother. As a young boy he grew up in Philadelphia. Initially, he and his mother were extremely poor, so much so that she was selling pencils on the street, and he had to go to work before he finished grammar school. He went back to grammar school afterward. He was much older than the other students, but he finished it and he finished it well. So much so that he was asked, selected, to go to Central High School in Philadelphia, which was picking only the very, very best students in the city. And he did so well there that he even got his BA degree in high school at that time. And because he was such a good student he was able to get a scholarship to the medical school in Philadelphia, which was medico-surgical, and is now ... Pennsylvania University's medical school. And I have a medal, a gold medal of his, that he was the top student in his freshman class. And, do you want more than this?

SSH: Of course. Please.

MG: Okay, I'll continue. And this was all in Philadelphia. And he graduated, I think about 1914, and it was time for him to find a hospital to go and work in. And he found, his first job was at Saint Michael's Hospital in Newark. And so he moved to New Jersey because of that. He and his mother moved to New Jersey. He had a younger brother who evidently died as a young man, probably about seventeen years of age. And my father went to work at Saint Michael's Hospital in Newark. He started the first clinical lab that any hospital had at the time. And he became, in later years, a very prominent obstetrician and gynecologist in Newark, and he was associated with, mainly with the Beth Israel Hospital in Newark, also with Saint Barnabas in Newark, and a few other hospitals. And he was a very, very conscientious doctor and very compassionate. Many people, in later years, told me about his compassion. And we got along very well.

SSH: Can you tell me about your mother?

MG: Mother also was born in Ukraine, and as I understand it, she told me in very, very simple terms, that her family was smuggled out of Russia. And ... they came to this country, and that

she lived in, I think, New York initially and eventually wound up in Elizabeth. Her family moved to Elizabeth, New Jersey, and that's where my father met her. And they were married, I think, in ... about 1918. My mother wanted to be a pharmacist, but she never did get to go to a pharmacy school, but she became a blouse designer in New York City. So much so, so great, so talented was she, that in those days when twenty-five dollars a week was a very good salary, she was making ninety dollars a week. And so after she was married though, ... she didn't work. And for the rest of her life she was just ... a housewife, so to speak, evidently. But she was very, very active ... in charities and so forth. And she was an excellent, once again, having been a blouse designer, she still could make clothing ... like nobody else. She would make clothing for her nieces and for the dolls that her nieces used. And she was a lovely lady.

SSH: Did she have any siblings? Did they come?

MG: Yes. She had a sibling. In fact, she had a sibling who died only very, very recently. Who was, you know, very well up in the nineties. She had two brothers. One became a doctor and was a general practitioner in Elizabeth, New Jersey. The other one became a dentist and ... he was a dental surgeon in Elizabeth. He became very well known there. And she had a sister. And the sister, who was one of my favorite aunts, she married into the family called Meyers?. ... The Meyers family owned a parking lot business in New York. In fact, it's still going. The Meyers' brothers system. It was purchased by ... RCA and by Hertz. But, that was the family: the two brothers and the sister.

SSH: Were they born here in this country?

MG: The sister was born here. Probably her brothers were born here. I'm guessing. I think so. I think all those siblings were born in this country.

SSH: Did she tell you, or did your father tell you, how they met in Elizabeth?

MG: No, I don't know specifically how they met. However, I do happen to have in my possession here a letter that he wrote to her before they were married. And she evidently wasn't feeling well and he wrote to her and he was speaking to her in her letter about how he just hoped that she was feeling better and he would just come and do anything that he had [to]. He would leave work and go to her. And it was a very lovely, lovely letter. Very unusual. And I treasure that.

SSH: Did they speak Ukrainian at home? Did you learn?

MG: No. They spoke Yiddish. And they spoke Yiddish ... only when they wanted the children not to understand what was going on. I myself did not learn Yiddish. Although the parents, I mean my grandparents, ... spoke Yiddish, and my parents did when they didn't want the kids to know what was going on. But we never learned it. They were both proficient in English. There was no problem with English.

SSH: Tell us a little bit about your siblings. What chronological order?

MG: ... I had one brother who died only three years ago. He was a very good student in school. He made it easily through high school. Graduated Lafayette college. He didn't want to really be a doctor, but my father convinced him that having a medical degree was a very smart thing to have, to fall back on if he had to. So my brother finally went ... to Penn med, Pennsylvania Medical School, for about two and a half years, and two and a half years into it he decided that was not for him. And World War II was on at the time. He dropped out, went into service, and went into ... the medical department of the Army. And he served in New Guinea under Dr. Charles Mayo, who was the commander of his particular unit. This is the Dr. Charles Mayo of the Mayo Clinic. So ... afterwards, ... when he came out of service, he went to Syracuse University and got a PhD in Chemistry. And then he went to work for hospitals, but what happened was, he eventually wound up in Saint Michael's in Newark, where my father had been forty years before, doing exactly the same job that my father was doing. The only thing was, without the medical degree, he could not be the titular head. So he was always second-in-command there. However, he was running the place, just like my father started. So that's very unusual.

SSH: That is. Were you able to, we'll go forward a bit and then come back, when you were in the service together were you able to contact your brother at all?

MG: Well, there's a very, very unusual story. It's one of the major stories ... for myself during the war. He was in the service about six months before me, and he went overseas a good while before me, as I say, serving in New Guinea. After I was in the service a couple of years, I was transferred from the air force into the infantry, because they were looking for more infantry men as replacements for all the poor souls who were getting shot up in the Battle of the Bulge. However, eventually I wound up in the Philippine Islands. One day I got a letter from my brother. And it said in the letter ... exactly where he was going. He was moving from New Guinea to Southern Luzon in the Philippines. Very unusual. Usually you would think that those things would be censored. But I guess the war was going on well and they didn't feel they had to censor this. He told me specifically where he was going in the Philippines. The letter was received on a Saturday evening, just as I was getting ready to go off into town and have a good time. The very next morning, on a Sunday morning, I grabbed a buddy of mine who also came from Newark, and I said, "Come, we're gonna go look for my brother." And he and I got onto the road, and we were thumbing rides. We were hitchhiking. We had to go about seventy miles. We rode in thirteen different vehicles on the way down there. It took us about maybe six hours to get there. So we got to the place where my brother was located, and we eventually located where he was We walked into his tent. He was playing cards with a ... series of fellas. And when he turned around and he saw me, we hadn't seen each other in over two years, he was so surprised that the table went flying, the cards went flying, everything went flying as he got up to say hello to us. To me and my friend. Later on he came to see me. He came north in Manila. I was located in the Manila area. And we did some sightseeing. At one point we went to look for a cousin of ours who my mother had told us was located in Manila. And she had told us that he was a lieutenant of some sort. And we went searching for this lieutenant, and we went all over

Manila looking for a lieutenant. We found him, but he wasn't a lieutenant, he was a corporal.
[Laughter]

SSH: Well, that's a great story, but I think we'll go back ... to the war. Chronologically, maybe we'll travel back and talk about your schooling as a young man, where you grew up.

MG: Well, I was born and raised in Newark. In elementary school I was a very good student. My problem started when I got to the eighth grade and they skipped me the first half. And from that time on my education went down hill. ... I just couldn't hack it after that. I had a lot of trouble. And I had trouble in high school as well. But ... I managed to get through high school anyhow. But it was that skipping of the eighth grade, of the first half of the eighth grade, that really, really gave me a problem. Well, ... after the war was over, and I came out of service, and I matriculated at Rutgers in Newark. Of course, I was older then and smarter then. So I wasn't having nearly as much a problem as I had in high school. And the one thing that I remember so well is that I had never been a good student with math. But when I took differential calculus with Professor Henry, down in Newark, I got As all the way through and that was ... really the professor's doing. He was such a good instructor that my marks were high. Who would ever think? [Laughter] I didn't get much into activities. I did organize a photo contest while I was at Newark. And otherwise, 'cause, midway through school I got married. And that kept me on an even keel of course. [Laughter] But it was a good experience. But you know, Rutgers was a commuters' school. So I didn't bond with many people simply because we just weren't together often enough

SSH: In high school had you been involved in any activities?

MG: In high school, yes. In high school I was a cheerleader for three years. In high school, at that time, the particular faculty member who was in charge of it did not want girls. No girls ... on the squad. All boys. But for three years, and that was not an easy... Physically it wasn't. ... We had to practice, and we had to work hard, and after a practice and after a game we were tired. But we worked in the cold, and we worked in the heat. ... But it was a lot of fun. We enjoyed that.

SSH: Which high school did you go to in Newark?

MG: Well, Southside High School in Newark, which is now called Malcolm X Shabazz High School. It was a very, very nice school. Could hardly recognize it today because they built onto it. But I had a number of teachers, and some of them I remember very, very well. A lot of them I don't remember. But it was a nice experience.

SSH: What was it like living in Newark?

MG: Well, of course, in those days, Newark was a lovely, lovely city. Transportation was easy. You could get on a bus or a trolley and go just almost any place in Newark. Even walking from my home, which was in the Clinton Hill district, down to the business section of Newark,

downtown Newark, was not a problem at all. And of course, you know, the business of ... muggers, and what have you, hardly existed. Of course, no city was ever without a little bit of crime, but that was not a problem, and we walked all over the city. ... It was a lovely city. ... My across the street neighbor was Dr. Kessler, who was the Dr. Kessler of the Kessler Institute. And I grew up with his children. In fact, I still see one of his sons periodically. And I used to spend a lot of time in the Kessler house. And we had some great times. As little kids we had a gang, if you know what I mean. We were always playing this and playing that. The only other thing was that, on the particular short street that I lived on, which was Hillside Avenue in Newark, there were twelve medical men located. Most of them were doctors of one sort, there were a couple of dentists, ... but all up and down the street there were just doctors, and doctors, and doctors. But today doctors locate specifically to be in a medical area. In those days it was just, they just liked the houses, and they moved in. Turned out that there was all these doctors there.

SSH: You had said that your mother was involved in different philanthropies.

MG: Charities.

SSH: Charities. Yes.

MG: The Deborah yes. Which is down in Brown's, Mills New Jersey, and I think Hadassah, and I think the YMHA in Newark. I really can't recall the other ones, but she was always busy. She, once again, living across the street from Dr. Kessler. Dr. Kessler's wife ... also was a very, very involved woman. And she and my mother were always going to the various meetings and parties and what have you, all for charities. So she was very, very busy.

SSH: Were you involved actively with your Temple in services?

MG: No, we were not. Our family was not. Strangely my father was not a religious man. He absorbed as much education as he could by going to lectures, and classes, in the various temples. He was a very large contributor, financially, to Jewish philanthropies and all things, the temples and so forth. But, he himself was not a religious man. I did not go to Hebrew school. At one time my father had an instructor, a Rabbi, come and give myself and my brother personal instruction in Hebrew, but we never went to Hebrew school. And you're the first one who has it on record. [Laughter]

SSH: Did your family siblings, ... as a family did you interact with your mother and father's brothers and sisters and their cousins ... ? Were they close enough?

MG: Oh, yes. We had ... Yes. Yes. My father had a very small family. My father ... really didn't have any family, except for ... he had an aunt in this area. There was nobody else around in his family. His mother and his aunt and that was it. On my mother's side there were ... cousins and there were aunts and uncles and so forth, and we got along very, very well. We used to get together a lot.

SSH: Was your grandmother still living or grandfathers?

MG: I remember my grandmothers. My mother's mother lived with us for a while in Newark, and I remember at that time she used to go to night school to learn English. And, of course, her English was very broken. But I used to sit with her many a night going over her books and helping her to learn English, and to speak English, and to write. My other grandmother I used to see, or I used to visit, when my father took me over there. She lived in Newark, not terribly far from the Beth Israel Hospital, where my father was associated. The only the thing I remember, so well, about her ... is that almost every time we got there, she had a big, big chest of some sort and it was loaded with toys. Every time the grandchildren visited, my brother and myself, a toy would come out of the chest for us. And that was a very pleasant experience.

SSH: Did they maintain any of the Ukraine traditions?

MG: None that I know of. None that I can recall. My father was a hundred percent American as far as I know, you know. My mother too. There was nothing from the old country, really, that I can remember, that they ... made. My mother remembered a few words of Russian, but she really couldn't speak Russian. My father? Never an indication that he had ... anything left over from the old country. Well, he was very small when he came.

SSH: Were there any discussions, political discussions, discussions as to the events in Europe that were taking place around World War II?

MG: Well, in the family, no. Outside the family, yes. I remember very, very well myself in ... school ... when I was in, probably around the ... seventh/ eighth grade, I remember teachers keeping us apprised of what was going on by showing us the *New York Times* every time we went to class. What Hitler was doing was being reported there on the front page. I remember her telling us that one of the things that we should know about is the, ... let me see if I can remember the name. The Foreign ... There was an association ... out of New York that had to do with foreign relations. I think it was called the Foreign Policy Association. It was a private organization, but they were keeping up with what was going on around the world. And this particular teacher made me aware of what was going on. After that, you know, everybody was concerned with it. ... It wasn't something that you talked about because you were in one group or another, it was something that everybody talked about at all times. What was going on, what was going to happen, who was going to do what. We never knew.

SSH: How much time elapsed from the time you graduated high school until you enlisted? Or were you drafted?

MG: Well, once again, I was such a bad student in high school that my father said, "Look, let's get you some more education." And what he did is he booked me into a private school for some post-high-school education. And while I was working on that, I was drafted. So ... I didn't, you know, I didn't get a chance to go to any higher education until ... I got out of the service.

SSH: What was the name of the school?

MG: Newark Academy. [Laughter]

DC: You didn't want to say that did you? That you had gone there, or ...

MG: Well, it was, you know, it was an elite school. I never considered myself as elite. And of course there were a number of people there. All right, there was one anecdote that comes out of that. One of the boys ... that I knew in the academy. I knew him and I remembered him very well. Years later, and let me see how many years. We're talking about in the 1950s or maybe, I don't know, maybe the early 1960s. There was a radio program with Dorothy Kilgallen and her husband. Used to be on every morning for a half-hour or so. And one morning Dorothy Kilgallen reported that the newspapers ... were talking about some naval ships that had pulled into New York Harbor. And there was going to be a celebration ... because [of] the naming of a particular ship. I think it was a destroyer, or something of that nature. And she gave the name of the destroyer, and it happened to be the name of this young man that I knew in school. He had been killed in the war. And it was being named for him. Not only that, but it turned out that ... the naval officer who recommend that happened to be a relative in my mother's family. It's just one of those strange coincidences, and I hated her guts because she was talking down. She was saying, "Who cares about what the name of the vessel is?" And "Who cares about ... " I was down on her. I should have written a nasty letter, but I never did. So ...

DC: Do you remember, like at night now, if there were family activities? What kind of things would you do at the end of the day?

MG: Well, of course in those days there was no television, so the radio was the big thing. And we used to sit around and listen to it, especially on Sunday nights, with Jack Benny, and Charlie McCarthy, and Edgar Bergen. Yes. We used to do that a lot on Sundays. No family discussions that I can recall of anything significant. But, yes, there was a lot of togetherness. I remember my brother and I used to play here and there. At that time, when we were kids, the packages of gum came with cards. Now they weren't baseball cards as we know them today, but they were cards of some nature I don't remember. Well, we used to play games with that. You know, you flick them across and have them hit the wall. How close to the wall could you get them to sit? You know, that you would earn points that way. And all various games. My brother and I both learned, somewhat, how to play the piano. We used to put models together. We used to make them out of balsa wood 'cause we didn't have plastic in those days. So we were always occupied. We were stamp collectors at one time. We had a small area on the side of our house where my brother and I made a small miniature golf course out of that by shaping the ground and digging holes for the balls to fall in, and little hills for it to go up and over. We always found things to do.

DC: Did you ever go on family trips? Did you travel any?

MG: No, not family trips, but we often were out riding in the car on Sundays. My father would take the family and off we would go. One of the trips that we took, now this ... was not a Sunday trip. In 1929 my father decided he was going to specialize in medicine. He was going to specialize in obstetrics and gynecology. And ... he decided he was going to go to Europe to do that. And he took us, the whole family, to Europe. We were in Europe for seven months. We lived in Vienna for three months. I went to school in Vienna: German school in Vienna. So much so that when we came home, I could read and write a little bit of German, I couldn't read or write any English. But, we spent most of our time in Vienna, and another large segment of time in Budapest. But we visited all other places in Europe. We were in England and France, Belgium, Holland, Vienna, Austria, Italy. I think we were in Berlin too. I really don't remember it, but I think we were in Berlin. So we saw a lot of the country. We saw a lot of what was going on over there. To give you just a small anecdote, when we were in [Europe] one of the first places we got to was London. You know, there were no airplanes in that day, so we were travelling on boats. We went across on the *SS George Washington*, which was a very nice liner in those days. And we got off in Plymouth, England, and we went off to London. And one night the family was out for a walk, and we were walking either in Piccadilli Circus or in Trafalgar Square. I don't remember which one. But anyhow, I'm six years old at that time, and as we're strolling, suddenly there was a tap on my shoulder. And I turn around, and there's a great big policeman, a Bobby, standing behind me. And he said, "Gentlemen do not walk with their hands in their pockets." So I had to take my hands out of my pockets. [Laughter] I remember that very well. Like it was yesterday. And so, as I say, we went through Europe. I remember now today. You want to know my age?

SSH: If you want to tell it.

MG: Okay. I'm seventy-five. I'll be seventy-six in a couple of months. I can remember today some things that happened on that trip just like it was yesterday. Other things I don't remember at all.

SSH: You were about six years old then?

MG: I was six years old. And it's amazing what I do remember. Because, you know, you have a tendency to forget over the years, but gee whiz, that stays with you.

SSH: Do you want to tell us some of those memories?

MG: I've got a lot of them. You got time? My goodness. All right, I'll tell you a few things that happened. Specifically, at the same time that we were in Europe my father had a dear friend of his, who I think he went to school with, and this gentleman now, at this time now, was an artist. My father now was a doctor. This gentleman was an artist. This gentleman had a gallery and studio down in Newark where the American Insurance building is right now which is right down between the Newark Library and the Newark Museum. He had this downstairs in a row of brownstone houses that were located there. And when the American Insurance Company wanted to build its building, they had to get rid of the people who were there. They offered him \$50,000

to get out of there. That was a tremendous amount of money in those days. In 1929. And he took it, and he went to Europe, and had a lovely time as an artist in Europe, studying art. Of course, he spent all his money there. He had two children born while he was over there. And so one day my mother and the whole family, went to visit ... I thought we went to Versailles. I learned later on, by reading some of my mother's mail that she wrote to her sister, that it was not Versailles. It was evidently the Cathedral at Chartres. Now, I don't remember, but evidently there were some very large grounds, gardens and so forth, in that area. Well, at one point my mother and father decided they wanted to go some particular place there, to go visit, and see, and sightsee, and they left myself and my brother with these two friends. Man and wife. During the time that my mother and father were gone, and these two people were watching over me, I managed to escape. Went off by myself, wandered off, and eventually wound up at this great, big pond. A very lovely pond with a concrete wall all around it, a low concrete wall, and there were even some boats in there. People were riding in boats. It was a large pond. It was almost like a small lake. And as I looked there, I noticed that there was a boat tied up very close. The boat was tied up, and it was tied up right near where there were some steps going down into the water. Well, I managed to get down the steps and get into the boat. And as I got into the boat, the boat started to float away from the ... wall. 'Course it was tied up at the front, so it wasn't gonna go far, but I didn't know this. And suddenly this boat was starting to move, and I reached out to grab the concrete wall. I never made it and into the water I went. The water was so thick with mud and muck that I couldn't have sunk if I wanted to. And I finally got out of there, and I finally made my way back to where I should've been. And when they saw me they almost fainted, because I had a little white suit on, and it was not white any longer. [Laughter] And they had to wrap me in newspaper in order to take me back to Paris, where we were living at the time. Because not only was I dirty, but evidently I stunk a little bit. [Laughter] And now, the funny thing is that many, many years later Bing Crosby was in a ... picture, and suddenly he's standing right in front of the same pond. You know, like twenty or thirty years later, I'm looking at this movie, and of course the incident came back. Just snapped right back into mind, because it was a ... Well, we always remember that. What else? Well, I remember being on the top of Mount Vesuvius in Italy. I remember the Blue Grotto in Italy, which is a neat site. I imagine today it's as good as it was. How many years ago? Sixty-five/ seventy years ago. And visiting in Holland, and seeing the people wearing their wooden shoes. And, of course, in Holland they are immaculate. The streets and the front of their houses were immaculate And the housewives were always cleaning the fronts, and brushing and washing, and so forth. What else? A million little things, but those things that I've told you were the things that stand out.

SSH: Have you had the opportunity to go back?

MG: I went back once, but I didn't visit any of those places ... I have a niece, and her husband, who spent about ten years in Europe, in Heidleburg. He was working as a civilian. He was working for the American Army, whose headquarters were in Heidleburg, and we went to visit them. At the same time we also went to visit a lady in Vienna, or she lived near Vienna, who had worked for me for ten or twelve years or so forth, and then she and her husband retired. She was Hungarian ... She was a movie star as a young lady, in Hungary, and then she and her husband went back to Europe after she retired, but she didn't go back to Hungary. She went to Vienna, so

we visited her there. And we went ... to Strausburg, over the border in France. We went to Interlaken, in Switzerland, which is a lovely, lovely place. A great place to visit. And we visited around places in Germany. We went to Diltzburg, which has, as I understand it, the only monument to Nazi soldiers. And, where else? We visit the synagogue in Worms, which is the oldest synagogue, I guess, in Germany. And, you know, we went all kinds of places. It was very pleasant.

SSH: When you were studying, ... when you came back out of the service and you decided to choose, did you choose Newark Rutgers?

MG: Well, yes. I chose Rutgers simply because it was close.

SSH: Right.

MG: ... Even though I wasn't married at the time. But, as a commuter school it was going to work for me, let's put it that way. And ...

SSH: Were you living with your parents at that time?

MG: Yes. ... We were living in Millburn. ... My father had moved to Millburn, and I was living in Millburn. And only after I got married did I move back to Newark. 'Til such time as I then moved out, and moved to Westfield. I have been living in Westfield in the same house for forty-six years. No, forty-seven. Forty-six years. [Laughs]

SSH: Do you remember getting your draft notice.

MG: Very much do I remember getting the draft notice. Because every draft notice started off with, "Greetings!" And, yes, it said, "You have to report to a particular place at a particular time to get your induction examination," and so forth. And the induction was at the armory in Newark. On Sussex Avenue in Newark. How much more do you want to know of that?

SSH: You can tell the whole story.

MG: Well, the whole story can go from there. [Laughter] Yes, well, that was the beginning of course. And from Newark we were bused down to, I guess, down to the Penn Station in Newark, and then we took the railroad down to Fort Dix, and we all got off at Fort Dix, and we were processed there, you know? Clothing is issued and ...

SSH: Did you know anyone that came with you from Newark?

MG: No. Not a one. Not a one. There's another story about that. I'll tell you later, as we go on. In Fort Dix, of course, and it was winter time. This was January, and it was cold, and we were living in tents. And when you live in a tent, and you've got a little coal stove in the middle, it is not warm in that tent. Believe me. Part of the processing is to get a bunch of shots. Tetanus

shot and what have you. Well, the tetanus shot is one that hurts. After you got that one, you know you got a shot. It hurts. So, with the pain from the shots, and the cold ... I mean, we tried to go to bed at night. We took every bit of clothing, every blanket, everything we had and piled it on top of ourselves just to try to keep warm. That I'll remember. That I'll remember very, very well. And the other thing I remember is, that in those days we were living in tents, and the tents were canvas, as they had been made for many, many, many, years. When it rains on a canvas tent you don't wanna touch that tent, because wherever you touch it the water will come through. And we managed to touch it in some places, and so we had a wet tent. [Laughs] ... Incidentally, I have ... written, in here, a lot of this stuff I have written down just so I can always refer to it. I'll give you a copy if you want it.

SSH: I would.

MG: Yes. I don't remember how many days. I have a schedule right there. What is it? After some time, a short time in Fort Dix, we wound up in Atlantic City. Not a bad ... camp if you're gonna go camping. And I was living in the Marlboro-Blenheim Hotel, which is now, I'm trying to remember which casino has that. I think it's Resorts. Resorts was built upon the old Marlboro-Blenheim Hotel. And the only thing was that they had taken all the good furniture out, and they had taken up all the carpeting, so you were walking on concrete floors and, you know, basic, up and down cots. So every time you cleaned that room you had a lot of concrete to sweep up every time. And because of the sweeping up and the concrete powder, everything could get coated with it. And you were expected to clean that room as if it was a hospital. So when the officer came through to inspect your room one of the things he did was he ran his finger across the top of the door. And of course, there was always something that was going to come off on his hand. The strange thing is that after I got out of the service I was with my wife visiting one of the ladies who had worked with her down in Newark, and without thinking, as I walked through the doorway in this lady's house, I put my hand across the top of the ... It was very embarrassing. It was very embarrassing. But it was done without, you know, ... you just do these things automatically. So Atlantic City, there were three months of training. Well, one of the major things that happened to me in service happened at that time, and I think I wrote it in the letter. We had thousands and thousands, maybe a hundred thousand soldiers between all the hotels that were there, and we would be marching up and down the boardwalk every day, because marching was part of the training. That teaches you to follow orders, and do things right. And one day hundreds of us are marching, and I'm in the outer rank, and as we march I realized that there was somebody walking very, very close to me. And I glanced down, and there's a little lady, a little lady in white hair walking alongside of me, and then I realized it was my mother. [Laughter] She had come down to visit me in Atlantic City, and she spotted me marching on the boardwalk. And I had my mother walking with me in the service. It was lovely. [Laughter] So we had, well we had all that training. The other thing that I remember very quite well, we used to go out to the beaches for rifle training. And ... there were no targets. You fired out, across the beach, over the water. And they were just trying to teach us how to use the guns. They weren't trying to teach us how to aim them, just how to physically handle the guns and what they were made of. And so we worked. Well, of course, these were thirty caliber. The old Springfield rifles. And they had quite a kick to them. And we were instructed, "You take the rifle, then you push it into your

armpit, and you hold it there very, very tightly. And then, when the gun goes off you will not get much of a jolt." And so we were doing that. And sitting right next to me, or standing at times, or kneeling at times, or even prone at times, there was a young gentleman who was from the hills of, I believe, West Virginia. And he wasn't holding that gun near his shoulder at all, and he was doing very, very well because he was so used to shooting squirrels through the eyes, up in the hills, that ... it just didn't matter. He handled that, you know? We looked at him and we wondered, "How come he can do it?" And he did it. Well, when our training was over in ... Atlantic City, after three months of training, they piled us all on a train one evening. And off the train went. Now the war is on, so the shades are down on the train, so we can't see where we're going, so no light would get out. And so the question was, "Where in the heck were we going?" One of the fellas decided he was going to see if he could get some information. So he walked up and down the various cars, and when he came back he says, "You know, most of the guys on this train either have some radio training, some radio background, or they have some photographic background." Photography and Radio were all part of the signal corps of the army. We said, "Fine, we're all going to the signal corps. Okay." That was fine with us. The train arrived in Augusta, Georgia. It was not the signal corps. It was the Air Corps MPs: the Military Police. So we went to train as military police. Well, we had some basic training there, and then I got shipped down to Macon, Georgia, to another military police unit. And at this unit they had to assign me to a particular job within the organization. They looked at my record and they saw that I had taken a photography examination. They said, "Well, what are we gonna do with a guy who's a photographer? Who knows photography?" "Well, I'll tell you what, fingerprinting has to do with recording of some sort, so we are going to make him fingerprint man in the organization." "And where does a organized fingerprint man operate from?" "We'll put him in the office." Well, as it turned out I never actually got to work in the office, or even work as a fingerprint man. However, that went on my record that I was now a fingerprint man. [Laughter] While I was there I contracted ... a case of poison sumac. My arm blew up twice the size that it was. And I was in the hospital. While I was in the hospital my unit moved out. To go overseas ...

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

MG: ... And the name was spelled something like (Guffafeld?). And it became a family joke. [Laughter] We used to refer to each other that way. Because, why not? [Laughter]

SSH: This is side two of tape one with an interview with Marvin Gershenfeld. We were just talking about where you were being stationed.

MG: Yes, so ... while I was in the hospital my unit moved out, and as I said I then understood that the unit was going overseas. And military police, Air Force military police units, usually were in the thick of the battle because as soon as there was an invasion of some sort, or even the takeover of some territory, the military police went in, under fire, to secure airfields so that the Air Force could bring their planes in as soon as possible. So I was lucky. I felt lucky that I had avoided a certain amount of military contact, so to speak. Well, now I finished with the hospital and they shipped me down to Avon Park, Florida, was a bombing range down there, an airfield.

So, I get down to the airfield, and they say, "Now what are we gonna do with this guy?" And they look on the records and they say, "Oh, he was working in an office. We'll put him in the office." Well, you know, I've had no office experience. But okay, they put me in an office and they put me in personnel. Well, I knew nothing, and I had to learn it from scratch. I couldn't type. It was one finger at a time, hunt and peck. And I had to learn how to do payrolls, and I had to learn to do all kinds of stuff. So much so that today I'm a fairly good typist, but it's still basically hunt and peck because I don't know the keyboard unless I'm looking at it. I can type fairly fast, but that came out of that particular office. And we were there for a while. Then the whole unit was moved out to Lakeland, Florida, which is near Tampa. And so, we were there. And the one major thing, well, two things that I recall very, very clearly, there was ... a unit of Chinese soldiers who came to stay with us for a while.

SSH: From the mainland?

MG: Yes. They were from the mainland China. And evidently they, I don't know what the purpose was, but anyhow, they were soldiers, and I don't know what kind of training. I don't recall any kind of training. What I remember was that occasionally these Chinese fellas, who were all small fellas as compared to the American soldiers, used to play volleyball. We never won a game. These little fellas were so agile, they killed us every time we tried to play volleyball. In September of 1944 there was a major hurricane down in Florida. And the hurricane swept up, and they knew it was coming, and so they said, "Okay, we're going to evacuate all the soldiers off the field, gonna take them into the city of Lakeland, and stick them down in the basements of various public buildings." But before they left the officers said, "Look, we'd like a couple of volunteers to hang around and just see what you can do and save." I volunteered. So I sat by myself, in the dark, with the wind howling in a barracks that I thought was gonna get taken right off ... its footings, for something like ten hours, you know. And things on the airfield got blown over. The tower got blown over, and airplanes got blown around and so forth, but I survived. There was one more thing I wanted to tell you about, and I gotta remember what that is. Oh yes, had to do with training. Right you are. At one point we were a training outfit, and we had another military outfit which was ... So ... my unit went away and I ... Wait a minute. Where ...

SSH: You were talking about the Chinese.

MG: Okay. Okay. These Chinese fellas were small in stature, and we were big guys, but we lost every game. We never won a game. They were so agile and so great at what they did. But ...

SSH: And you never found out why they were there.

MG: No. We never found out why they were there. The only thing is I learned how to write "I love you" in Chinese. One of the fellas taught me that and I used to write that on every letter that I sent to my girlfriend. And I wrote her many, many letters. But she didn't know what it meant. You know, after a while she caught on to what it was. But that was the Chinese that I learned.

SSH: After the hurricane how much ... time elapsed before you could really go back on base and be operational again?

MG: Oh, ... it was okay. The airfield, of course, needed ... some time to get back into business because they had to improvise a tower. They had to dig up the tools that they buried. They buried tools in the ground so they wouldn't get blown around. The airplanes that could fly, they flew up into Ohio. Other airplanes that couldn't fly, they turned over on their backs and tied them down to the ground. And so that prevented a lot of damage. So things were not so terrible, except for that tower being blown over. A lot of things survived that normally may not have had they not done the proper maintenance on them and done the proper things to them. But the airfield got into ... operation pretty quickly. One of the things I remember, just to go back a moment, when I was stationed ... at Avon Park, which was a bombing range, the airplanes that were flying there were B-17s, which was the great old bombers of WWII, and B-25s. Well, these planes were flying in and out of there all the time, and what I remember so much was the fact that even though our barracks were located ... maybe a mile from the actual airfield, you could hear the motors of the airplanes going twenty-four hours a day. You went to sleep with the noise of the motors, you woke up with the noise of the motors, and it never left you. You got used to it after a while. You didn't pay attention to it, but that noise was there.

SSH: The base in Lakeland, was it a ... flight training base?

MG: Well, all of the bases were training bases for the fliers, and of course I was in the ground service. I was in what was called the Air Service Command, which had to do with maintenance of airplanes ... and also ordnance. Ordnance being trucks armament. I was in the office of course, because ... that was my destiny, but the other fellas in my outfit were airplane mechanics and other sorts of mechanics that serviced the airplanes. Sadly, one of ... the chief mechanics who used to go on test flights, once they finished with planes, would go up with the pilot. And they also serviced observation planes. Anyhow, these small planes. ... They had finished servicing one, and he went up with the pilot, and unfortunately it crashed and he was killed. And, of course, we had the sad thing that his wife was in town, you know. That's always a ... sad part. But in Lakeland, one thing that I remember quite well. In my distant family that lives in Philadelphia there were two other Marvins. So there were three of us with the same name. And one day I was in Lakeland Airfield. I was walking, I think I was in one of the washrooms, and one of the fellas said, "You know there's somebody around here who has the same name as you." And I guessed that it had to be somebody from the Philadelphia family. Although, I had never met the fella. Well, I went searching for him and I arrived at one place where he had just left. And I never got to see him. I think I met him about, within the last ten years at a family reunion in Philadelphia, but I never saw him then. Let me see what else happened in Lakeland. Yes. The other thing was we were training another outfit, and the other outfit had exactly the same constituents as we had. The same, what we called the TO, the table of organization. The same men doing the same job as ours was. And now, at the time when the Battle of the Bulge came, and they were looking for as many men to take out of the various services to put into the infantry, I was considered. So I was scheduled, very possibly, to go to the infantry. In this other outfit, this other Air Corps outfit, was a gentleman who was doing exactly the same job I was, he had

exactly the same rank as I had. His outfit was scheduled ... to go overseas. I'm scheduled to go to the infantry. He's got a wife in town who's pregnant and ready to deliver very shortly. He says to me, "Would you like to switch?" I said, "I'd love to switch. I'd much rather go with an Air Corps outfit than stay and be in the infantry." So we tried to get the switch and it never happened. The army could not see it that way. They could not. There was no heart there. This poor guy went off, left his wife in town pregnant, and he left me to go to the infantry. And so I went to the infantry. Infantry training was down in Camp Livingston in Alexandria, Louisiana. And I remember the training. ... It was not easy training. It was infantry training. It was marching, and crawling, and firing your rifles, and marching some more, and marching some more. But one of the things that didn't quite set right was the fact that there was a large group of German prisoners of war on the base. They put them to work. However, these guys had it a lot easier than we did. We would see them marching to and fro, from the jobs and back to the barracks. And we'd be sweating and aching in our training and these guys are marching. I mean, we really, really did not appreciate that, seeing these guys. So the time came for me to finish my infantry training and off we went, and I wound up at Fort Meade, Maryland. We were going to go overseas to Germany. And so I was preparing to do all this, and suddenly they said, "Sorry, we're changing the plans." 'Cause what was happening was the war was getting over in Germany and they weren't going to need us there. And now things were getting hot in Japan, and they said, "We're going to use you over in the Pacific." And so we went. We went ... cross-country, by train to California, and we were put on a troopship, *General H.F. Hodges*. It just so happens this troop ship was making its maiden voyage. So it was clean on the inside. And there were 3,000 of us on that ship, and we zigzagged across the Pacific. We were not in a convoy. Of course, the war was still on there so there were still Japanese submarines. So we zigzagged across the ocean by ourselves. And strangely, we touched first in New Guinea, where my brother was stationed. I didn't know he was there at the time. We touched on the northern shore at Hollandia. He was on the southern shore at Finschave. ... And then we went up to the Philippines. So that trip took us a total twenty-six days. That's a long time to be on a troop ship ... where the space that you have to live in, in the hold, is ... maybe as big as a coffin. [Laughter] That's about it. Now, you don't have much. You can't sit up in your cot because there's a guy right above you. Anyhow. We got to Manila, and I was assigned to a camp there. They're called replacement depots. That means you're just there, and they're gonna decide where they're gonna send you from there. A replacement depot. Then I was sent to ... another camp, not far from there, in Quezon City, which is ... a neighboring town to Manila. ... So while I was in Manila I got the word that my brother was there, in the Philippines. And we eventually went to see him, and that was really, really a great time. There was fighting in northern Luzon when I was there, and I got close to the fighting, but never quite in it, which was okay with me. What happened was, suddenly, I was put in a, assigned to another organization, and it turned out that this organization was really a favorite of General MacArthur's. Because it had to do with Filipino soldiers and, of course, General MacArthur was a real friend of the Filipinos. He had been there for some time. And he ... looked after the Filipinos. This organization that I was in was given the assignment of putting the Filipino army back together again. The soldiers from the Filipino army had either been captured and put into prison by the Japanese, or they had fled to the hills and became guerrillas, and, of course, they gave the Japanese plenty of problems over the years while the Japanese occupied the Philippines. So now it was our job to reassemble the Filipino army because plans

for the invasion of Japan were still on. Nobody knew anything about the atom bomb at that time. We were gonna invade Japan, and the Filipino army was gonna be part of that. So our job was to reform the army. Now the only way to reform the army was for the Americans to be in contact with former Filipino army officers who were known to the Americans. And it was the Filipino army officers who would make out affidavits testifying to the fact that particular men were in their organizations before the Japanese got there. And by reason of that we were put into creating new records for the various ... Filipino soldiers. And by reason of that, they were now paid three years back pay, ... as well as now being in the army and getting to start training. So we were working on that, and getting all these Filipinos ready. In the middle of all this somebody dropped an atom bomb, which kinda put a crimp in what we were doing, because now, "... Why were we putting an army together when there was no war?" And, of course, the war was over. And our job, we just switched around now to demilitarizing these men, signing them off, and getting them outta there. And in the midst of that my time was up. Now I had been on the island of Panay. P-A-N-A-Y. Near the city of Iloilo, which is the main city on the island. And, to go back just a moment, we were located in this town. My records say that the town was named Dingle. [Laughs] My memory says that the name of the town was Cabatuan. I don't know which is right. Anyhow, we were in this town. Now, every little town ... had a town square, which was usually about a block square, and it usually was a park. A park area with concrete sidewalks, fountain in the middle, a very, very lovely affair. And surrounding this would be the buildings of the town: some adobe, some concrete, some bamboo. All different kinds. And so we were located right in this town square. Now what happens was, ... when we moved in a large engineering outfit had been there before us. They moved out and they left this whole camp ready for us. It was surrounded by a bamboo fence. It had bamboo houses already built and standing ready for us. We moved into this ready-made camp, which was very, very nice. The Filipinos were our allies, were friends, up to a point that is. They were not about to stand by and let things pass them by if they could possibly lay their hand on it. So one night we had a truck-load of equipment, of all kinds of food stuffs, and arms, and what have you. And the truck was parked ... within our encampment, but the back of it was right back up against one of these bamboo fences, which was not terribly high. And, sure enough, by morning half the things in that truck were gone. So we didn't put the trucks near the fence anymore. ... One of the things I recall so much was, in moving around on this island there were some camps with Japanese prisoners, and when we saw these prisoners, these prisoners looked exactly the way the American motion pictures were making them look. Little guys with little round glasses, black rimmed glasses. And that's exactly how these guys looked! You know, we always thought the movies were overdoing it. They were not. They were not. So the other thing I remember was, every Friday night the ... townsfolk and the farmers in the area, and we were living about twenty or twenty-five miles outside of the city of Iloilo, which was a major city, and the sea port for the island. The townsfolk, the farmers, would go into the city for a Saturday farmers market, and these carts, oxen carts, slowly, slowly would be passing through our town with little lanterns hanging, and the families sitting in the carts with all the stuff that they were going to sell at market. And slowly these parades of things would go through every Friday night, they would walk all night to get there by the morning. And that was something that ... we remembered. The other thing is that at times, now we had our own vehicles, you know, we had jeeps, and we had to travel from here to there in the towns, but very often when we would travel, at night it was dark. There were

no lights. The houses had nothing but little candles, or little lanterns in them. It was very, very dark. And the only light was ... the lights from our jeeps and our trucks. And as you traveled down the roads, every now and then there's an animal right in the front of us. I mean a dog just lying in the middle of the road because he wasn't expecting any trucks. Any oxen come by, he wasn't gonna worry about that, but the trucks he had to get outta there. So as you would travel for miles and miles, all of the sudden you'd see these pets lying in the middle of the road.

SSH: Did you have any other interaction with the natives?

MG: Well, the other activity we had, there was some interaction. We used to show movies about once a week. We would get films in from ... the major quarter master outfit down in the city, and we would get a film and the equipment, and we would set it up. We set it up in a large, open area outside the camp. And we would invite all the townspeople to come and see. And I can remember very, very specifically one night. We got the projector, we got the film, we got the screen, but we did not get a take-up reel. And so we showed the film, and everybody enjoyed it. However, the film, as it came out of the projector, was very loosely fed into a cardboard box. So by the time this film was over we had spaghetti, a box of spaghetti film, and we had to rewind it very carefully. I remember that so well because I didn't know how this was ever gonna end. [Laughter] But we did. We did it. Another incident was that the transportation for the Filipino's, for the natives, they were on little cars, little buses, ... little trucks, anything that would move ... would be transportation. And so one day there was a truck transporting people from the city ... out to the small villages. ... Amongst them was a Filipino soldier and a Filipino army officer, and they were having words, and ... they were not getting along very, very well. Later, when the two got off in our town, the soldier came looking for the Filipino officer with a machete and hacked him to death. Well, I looked at the body afterward. It just had so many cuts on it. It was just terrible. The officer still had ... his gun in his belt. He never got a chance to remove it. Another incident happened when we were ... in Manila, in one of the Filipino army camps. One of the men died while he was lying on his cot, there was gonna be an inspection that morning in the tent. The Filipino just dragged the body outside, left it outside, so that inspection would be a clean inspection. And they didn't care about, you know, the guy. It was just another dead body. And that's sad when you see that kind of thing.

SSH: Were you witness to any of the aftermath of the atrocities that were committed?

MG: No. ... No. The only one I just told you about. The atrocity I saw was done by a Filipino to a Filipino, but, no, I did not witness any of that. The closest we got to the fighting was one night, we were in the area where there were Japanese. We were on a detail ... to collect some kind of gravel, and load it into a truck. And we knew that the Japanese were in the area. You never saw us work so fast. [Laughter] We worked fast and we got out of there in a hurry, some of the fellas in the outfit had been in ... the areas north of Manila and ... they had encountered ... some of the Japanese. But they were stragglers, 'cause the Japanese were retreating to the north at that time. Eventually they were gonna give up, and so, fortunately for myself, I didn't see much of that at all.

SSH: Did you have any conversations with the Filipinos?

MG: Well, I had a girlfriend ... in the town in Oabatuan. In fact I carry a picture of her. Do I have that? No, I don't carry it with me. I have it in my album. I have a nice photographic album at home. I may have it here. I don't know. I'll have to look. Yes. This was a girl about sixteen, and her father, in his little bamboo hut, was a "jeweler." Jeweler is in quotation marks because he would make jewelry out of any kind of metal that he could get his hands on. And at one time he did make me a silver ring out of silver coin, and he had my name on it. Well, I sent it home to my girlfriend. I have no idea where it is now. I have no idea whether it still exists. But I remember that very, very well. She was a very nice girl, and I used to go visit her on occasion. Nothing much came of it though.

SSH: Did you try any local foods?

MG: No. Oh, yes. That brings up a point. When we moved into our camp on Panay Island, and it had been occupied by this large engineering organization, when they moved out, the quartermaster, which was the organization that supplied us with everything, including food, the quartermaster had an awful lot of beef on hand intended for this major engineering outfit. But the engineering outfit was no longer there. But what were they gonna do with all that food? I had a steak and eggs every morning for at least a week, maybe for ... more than a week, because they had to get rid of the beef. They served it to us at every meal. [Laughter] Also, when we first got there we were able to secure an old Filipino gentleman who had been a steward in the United States Navy, he had been the steward on board ship, Navy, and he was a cook. And we got him, and he was our cook. He was wonderful 'cause he knew how to cook American food. And then one day they came and they said, "Uh-uh. You can't have him because he has not been medically inspected, health inspected. You can't have him." And they said, "Sorry, you can't work here any more." I mean, that wasn't our decision. It was a higher up decision. So now we needed a cook. Well, there was a young PFC, Private First Class, in our outfit. And our commanding officer, who I think was a captain, said to him, "You are the cook." [Laughter] Fortunately, the Army provides a cookbook, and fortunately he could read, and we did okay. We were very fortunate that he could read. [Laughter]

SSH: Where were most of the people from geographically? Was it a real cross-section of the United States?

MG: Yes. ... It was a major cross-section of people. One of the men in our outfit, he had worked for General Motors, which means he lived out in the Michigan area. He had worked for General Motors and his job had to do with the seat coverings in automobiles. I mean, that was his specialty. And, no, there were guys from all over the place. They all had different jobs. Early on, going back some, when I was ... stationed in Lakeland, Florida, there was a young man in our outfit who was from the hills of Tennessee, I believe. But anyhow, he was a little farm boy. He was a hick, as we would [call him]. And he showed us a picture of his wife. She was the most beautiful girl in the world. ... We don't know where he found her. She was gorgeous. This was his wife. So, there also were a couple of guys from Brooklyn ... in the outfit when we

were in Florida. And one guy was Jewish, a little Jewish guy. ... I can't remember names anymore. My goodness. The other guy was an Irishman. And the Irishman was a very, very nice, pleasant fellow, but he used to like to drink. And every now and then, at one or two or three in the morning, everybody in the barracks would be wakened with this guy walking up and down singing, shouting, waking people up, pulling the covers off of us. And we didn't like that too much, but we put up with it because he was really such a nice guy, when sober. However, after a while it got to be too many times. And so we let him know that that was not the best thing to do to maintain good relations with his fellow soldiers. ... One of the other times we had, we acquired a pet. A dog. And he had a place in the corner. It was not a he, it was a she. Excuse me. And one day she had puppies. Well, this was the greatest thing in the world. She had, I don't know, four or six puppies. And it was a great thing. And these puppies began to grow. At night they used to run around the barracks. And if they got a hold of your socks you were missing socks. If they got a hold of your blanket, your blanket was pulled off of you. We put up with that stuff, but they were so cute, ...we couldn't be mad about that kind of stuff.

SSH: ... What kind of liberty did you take?

MG: I got furloughs. Furloughs usually were fifteen-day furloughs. I even have a record of all of them believe it or not. Fifteen-day furloughs ... back to home, back to Newark. And there was one incident on one of the furloughs that I can talk to you about. I used to ride the Silver Meteor, which was an elite train going between New York ... and Miami, I guess it is. And one day I'm on the way home, and there's a number of other military men in the same car. And the conversation is going on, and this one officer is telling us about a problem that he had. Well, it seems that he was in one of the major air raids in Europe over the Ploesti oil fields in Romania. That was a significant air raid of the whole war. He was in the raid of the Ploesti oil fields, and he said his plane was shot down. And his plane landed in Germany. And he said, "You see the Purple Heart that I'm wearing?" He wasn't wearing the heart. He said, "I have a Purple Heart which I'm not wearing." And we asked him why he doesn't wear the Purple Heart. He says, "Let me tell you how I got that Purple Heart. ... When our plane got shot down and we landed on a German farm, we got out of the plane and we were met by the farmer with a pitchfork, and he proceeded to stick me in the rear with his pitchfork. I got the Purple Heart for that." [Laughter]. So that's some of the things that go on. So anyhow, going back to the Philippines. When our time was over at the Philippines, and we were shipped back from the island of Panay to Manila, a lot of the soldiers now were beginning to get itchy. They wanted to go home. A lot of them had been there a long time. Some of the soldiers there had been shipped over from Europe. They had fought in Europe and they had now been shipped to the Philippines because they thought they were going to fight there too. And now the war was over and the guys were getting itchy. And believe it or not, I did not participate, but there was a protest march by military men, by soldiers, down the main street of Manila. And that usually would have put you in jail immediately. But General MacArthur ... was wise enough to know the feelings of the soldiers. And so, as far as I know, nobody ever got punished for that. But it was really very, very unusual.

SSH: Were you invited to participate in this?

MG: No. We didn't, you know, in our particular outfit we didn't even know it was gonna happen. We read about it just right after it happened. But I don't think it's ever happened anyplace else, ever, but it happened at that time. So we were ready to go home now, and the message, the rumor, got around. "Hey, there's a ship in the harbor. It's the *America*," which was an American passenger liner which had been converted to a troop ship, and it was going right back to New York. Boy, could we want to get on that thing. Well, no, that was not to be. So we got on another troop ship back to California. On the way back ... there was a daily newspaper made, printed onboard ship. It was mimeographed, the old fashioned method of printing things. Mimeographed, and had all kinds of information of what was going on, who was there, and anything, news from home. And one day I picked up the newspaper, and I read, and there's my name. And it says if I will please come down to the office, they have something for me. I went down to the office and they handed me my wallet, which I had dropped and not even known that I had dropped. And everything was in there. Nothing was missing. And here I was, amongst 3,000 men who just loved to play poker, who would ... pick up a dollar or a nickel any place they could get it, yet nothing was touched. So we got home to California. Another incident that I remember so clearly. We got on the train in San Francisco, and the train starts for home. And within an hour or so, the train came to a halt. And it was sitting right across the main street of a town. The railway goes right across the main street. Not only did it go across the main street, but our car was stopped right there, where it crossed the street. And we could look down the street of the town, and we could see all the bars that were there. There was an exodus from the car. [Laughter] Soldiers running for a beer. And while they were having their beer, the train pulled out. I felt sorry for them because, you know, nothing was more valuable than this train that was taking us home. No beer would ever get in my way. So we finally got home. However, on the way back, one of the beautiful things that I saw, we were in the mountains of Wyoming, and we're up in the mountains, and this was February, and there's snow, and we passed a place where we could look down, deep down into this valley. Here's a ranch. Everything green down there. It looked like the most peaceful, most pleasant place in the whole world. And we passed it on and we went home.

SSH: Did you ever go back and look it up?

MG: No, never did. Never did.

SSH: How long did it take you to cross the country by train at that time?

MG: I think it only took, I don't know, maybe four or five days or so. ... They had built, during the war, they had built special troop cars. They weren't just using any old cars. They built special troop cars with bunks in them so the guys could be reasonably comfortable. And I wouldn't dare get off that train on the way back. I would not for anything until ... we got off in Newark.

SSH: Who was waiting for you?

MG: [Laughs] Well, I'll tell you. And the last day when I was discharged from Fort Dix, and went on the train, and got off at Penn Station in Newark. There was my mother and my father waiting for me, and my sweetheart was there. And ... that was a big, big welcome that I got. That was really, really nice.

DC: Did your brother come back?

MG: Yes, my brother came back. And my brother, as I said, he got his PhD in Chemistry.

SSH: Did he come back before you though?

MG: I don't remember. I think so. Probably he did. He probably did. So he stayed in medicine. ... I had no feeling for medicine at all. My father never instilled that in me in any way.

DC: Do you remember when you got your draft notice? Had you been expecting it? I mean, had you heard anything?

MG: You know, I don't recall that. I remember ... yes. Probably. I probably did. Because each town had a draft board. And they probably informed me that it was coming. I don't really recall, but they probably informed me.

DC: Do you remember, the war had been going on for a while by the time you had gone to Fort Dix. Do you remember how you felt? Had you originally thought about volunteering?

MG: No, I had never thought about volunteering. Of course, I was a young fella, and ... initially I was scared. But that went away pretty soon, ... you know, I think like many people. When you're in those circumstances, and you're not near a war, you don't think about it. You don't think about yourself being put in jeopardy. Although when, if you stopped and gave it a thought, you would say, "Look, it could be me as well as anybody else." But generally, because we're in this country, the war is some place far from us, life is next to normal. It isn't normal because we're in the army. We didn't expect to be. But still, you're getting fed properly, there's still transportation, there's still your wives, your loved ones. You really don't think about it. And it's only when they say, "Look, you're going up to the front lines," that you begin to worry about things like that. And only that one time, when I found out that my outfit had gone, had pulled out when I was in the hospital, and they left for evidently dangerous duty, did I think about it. Because I had been told other organizations, other outfits like it, such as it, had gone into the first invasion of North Africa. When the Allies, when the Americans first went back into war, after the war started, and their first ... effort in the European theater was to go into North Africa. And we understood that one of our outfits had been, outfits like us, had gone in very early, and that's when they got shot up. Because they were MPs and they were trying to secure the airfields to make sure that the airplanes could come in, and they were at great risk at that time. But other than that I don't know. Even while I was ... on the ship in the Pacific, and we knew that there were Japanese submarines there. I don't know, we just didn't worry about it.

DC: Did you select the Army Air Force or was that part of your ...

MG: No, they placed us. The draft board put you in the Army, and the Army put you wherever they needed you. You didn't have any choice, the only thing you could do with the Army, you could request to go to officer training school. I mean, that was the only diversion that you could get for yourself, but it brings all the other responsibilities with it. But I just never thought about it, ever.

SSH: At no point in your military career did you think about going to OCS?

MG: No, I didn't really. I just wanted to get out of there. Just wanted to get it over with. In spite of the fact that, as I say, I was not being put at risk, I just wanted to get it over with. That's all. One time, when I was in Florida, and once again working in the office, I was in personnel, there were two other soldiers there who were older men. Now, you couldn't be in the service if you were thirty-eight years or older at that time, but these two guys were approaching thirty-eight. One was from Brooklyn and the other was ... from New York somewhere. And I think they both had been, either lawyers or at least were located in legal outfits of some sort. These two guys suddenly got orders to go back to Newark. They were gonna be relocated at Newark airport. And so, I had a good idea. I wrote a letter ... to my sweetheart, gave it to these guys. I said "You mail it in Newark, so that the postmark will be Newark." In the letter I said to my honey, "Gee, I've just been in Newark, and I just didn't have time to call you or come and see you." Wasn't that a terrible thing?

DC: That's cruel.

MG: Isn't that cruel?

DC: Did she ever laugh about it?

MG: Well, yes, she laughed for a couple of seconds. Yes. [Laughter] Incidentally, we have been married for fifty-one years, my wife and I.

SSH: I was going to say, thank you very much, because I've been wondering if we dare ask if the sweetheart ...

MG: We are married fifty-one years. [Coughs] Pardon me. Last year our children, in celebrating our 50th anniversary said, "Here's a gift." And the gift was a cruise to Alaska.

DC: Wow!

MG: So we went to Alaska ... last August, celebrating our 50th, even though we were already halfway past it. On board ship we sat at a table with a number of other people, all who were senior citizens. And one couple from Iowa were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. The only problem was that the 50th wedding anniversary wasn't coming yet for three years.

"Why were they celebrating now?" "Well," they said, "In our social group was a ...

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

SSH: ... This is tape two, side one of an interview with Marvin Gershenfeld from Westfield, New Jersey here at Rutgers University. Mr. Gershenfeld, you were just telling us about having gotten ... I'll let you finish.

MG: All right. On board ship ... these folks were celebrating their 50th, and they were celebrating it ... three years early, because they said they had other friends who were about to celebrate their 50th anniversary, and one of them passed away. Never got to celebrate. And these folks said, "It is not going to happen to us that way. We're going to celebrate now." And this particular man happened to be a lay-preacher out there in Iowa, but he's also an engineer, former flier, pilot, scientist, what have you. And he had some fabulous stories to tell which we were very interested in.

SSH: We're very interested in how you met your wife, the sweetheart.

MG: Okay. How I met my wife. Well, as I said, I was a neighbor of the family of Dr. Kessler, the one who founded the Kessler Institute. And, in later years, Dr. Kessler and his wife moved down into the business section of Newark. At Lincoln Park in Newark is the site of a series of old mansions, from the early days of the 20th Century. And they bought the mansion that had belonged to the Feigenspan family. Feigenspan family had a brewery in Newark, and it was a major brewery at the time. And they bought this mansion, which was really a lovely house, ... with a major ballroom on the top floor. Well, I was very familiar with their son. I used to hang around with him a lot. Now I'm living in Millburn at the time, and he's living down in Newark in this mansion. And one time he calls me up and he says, "Look," he says, "I'm inviting some people down." His girlfriend lived four doors from where my wife used to live, okay? So he said, "Look, I want you to come down, but will you do me a favor, and stop by and pick up my girlfriend, and bring her down," because it was on the way. She lived in Maplewood. And so I stopped at the house to pick up his girlfriend, and while I'm there waiting for her to get ready, down the stairs comes another girl. And this was when I met my wife. I didn't even know that she was going to be there, and it took off right from there. And it took about six years before we got married though. Because I went into service exactly one year after I met her. And of course we maintained that relationship while I was in service. And afterward ... we had a great big engagement party. My folks threw, no, her folks threw, a big engagement party. And as I understand it, on our wedding day, her mother hung out the American flag. I mean, this was a significant day for her, and she hung out the flag. My interest in photography started when my father took it up as a hobby. My father took it up as a hobby because he found it very interesting, and he needed something to take his attention off his business, he was a gynecologist and an obstetrician, and he was on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. In fact, during World War II, he worked so hard it was just pathetic to see how hard he worked, because other doctors had been called into service. And so ... he had to fill in for all those men who had gone off. So he took up photography, and he built himself a darkroom in our house. Well, of course

his two sons had to get interested in that. And, of course, we were nosing around the darkroom all the time watching him. My father never got to be a good photographer. He took lessons from a professional. He was never a good photographer, but he loved to work in the darkroom simply because it took him away from his daily routine, which was very intense at times. And I got interested. In fact, a friend of mine who lived close by, and myself, we applied to go to class at ... an adult class. At the time it was being held in Weequahic High School in Newark. And at first they didn't want to take us in, because we're kids, teenagers. But they finally decided to, and so we went to class, and we learned about photography in the class. And afterward I got on to the yearbook staff of my high school. And my only equipment that I had was a box camera, which was a very simple camera. But many of the photographs that appeared in the yearbook of that year were taken with my box camera. So that was the beginning ... of my career, and it never left me. I stayed with it right through, in spite of the fact that I didn't do any photography in the service. As soon as I got out, I was interested, and I actually went to photography school in New York before I started earning a living through that.

SSH: Where about did you go to school?

MG: This was the New York Institute of Photography, located right on 33rd street in New York. And ... it was quite a place. Attending there brought to light one particular thing. Many of us were going to that school under the GI bill of rights. So, in other words, the government was paying for that. And a lot of the guys were there only to take up space and to get the government's money ... every month. I'm sure a lot of them couldn't care less about photography once they finished the school. They were just passing the time. However, I was there to learn. And I found out that you couldn't just sit and learn, ... like in any school, like in Rutgers, like in high school. If you don't put yourself out to learn, you're not going to learn. And I put myself out. Because the teachers there, they were good photographers. They were not necessarily good teachers. However, if you pressed them, if you asked the right questions, you learned. And that's what I did. And I always was happy that I did it that way. As I said, I saw these other fellas who were ... taking up space, and they were really nice guys, but they were not photographers when they went in, and they were not photographers when they went out.

SSH: How much time had elapsed from the time you finished college to the time you started photography school?

MG: I went to photography school after I graduated from Rutgers.

SSH: Did you?

MG: Yes. I didn't go in first. I went to Rutgers first, and I got my degree, then I decided, because I had the, even though I was not the greatest student in the sciences while I was in Rutgers, I did take up chemistry and physics. As little as I could possibly absorb, because I knew I wanted to go for photography. And so, whatever optics I could find in the physics class, and whatever chemistry I could absorb. I was never good in chemistry, believe me. But I absorbed enough of it, able to graduate of course, so that when I got out it helped me in my photography

business.

SSH: What did you major in?

MG: Well, actually I was ... in the humanities and I was, supposedly, I was majoring in math and physics, but don't believe it. [Laughter] That was not, in my mind, that was not my major. [Laughs] I was there just to learn ... whatever I could, as I say, I was not a, because of my early schooling I was not a good student. And I should have been, but I wasn't. However, as I said, when I got to Professor Henry's class, I was good.

SSH: Yes, we've heard a lot of stories about how, the banks here at Rutgers, New Brunswick, just grew at such an alarming rate. ...Were you aware, having grown up in Newark, how much greater the population of students was? Did it swell that way in Newark, as well as here?

MG: You mean the population at Rutgers?

SSH: Yes. Right here at Rutgers.

MG: Well, at the time that I went to school I couldn't tell. Afterward, I was very much aware of Rutgers' expansion in Newark. The acquiring of buildings and so forth, and the building of new buildings. In fact, when I was there, Rutgers had taken over the mansion sitting right next to the Newark museum, which was the old (Balantine?) mansion. And we had classes there. I used to have an English class in there. Not many years ago, I think maybe a year ago, a year and a half ago, or so, I was down in the Newark museum again. And of course, part of the museum now is the Balantine mansion. And a group of us went through there. And as we stood in the hallway, and it looks a lot different than when I was there, believe me, because it's been restored. And as we stood in the hallway there, I ... just remarked out loud, I said, "You know, I took English class in this room over there." And, of course, the group leader heard me and said, "Would you mind telling the group that you'd been here before." In later years, in my photography business, my studio, for several years, did the yearbook work for Rutgers in Newark. At one point the Rutgers students used to come to our studio in South Orange, to get their portraits taken. One day, this is in ... the late '60s, when young people were just up in arms, into our studio walks a Rutgers student. This gentleman, short and stocky, had a full beard, rather unruly, moustache, and was wearing a tee shirt, not necessarily the most healthy tee shirt I've ever seen. And it had a great, big, significant emblem on the front, which I believe said, "Honda." And we said to him, "We are not going to take your photograph this way." He says, "You're gonna take my photograph this way, or you're not gonna take my photograph." So we checked with the yearbook staff. The yearbook staff said there was no dress code. So we photographed him that way. [Laughter] It's very difficult to go about your business and have to do that, when you know it's all wrong. You know it's all wrong.

SSH: When did you marry your sweetheart?

MG: I married my sweetheart in December of 1947. ... And we went to the Poconos for our

honeymoon. It was in the wintertime, and they had a small ski slope there. We had never been on skis, but we're there, so we're gonna put on skis. So we put on skis. And I managed to come down that slope without falling the first time. The second time I went right on my everything. My poor wife ... Alongside of the slope they had what you call a rope tow. You grab onto the moving rope and you slide yourself up the hill. Now if you don't do it right you can get yourself in trouble. My poor wife could not do it. She could not do this thing. And she saw one little kid get thrown off of this thing, get all tangled up, and really hurt a little bit. So that was the end of skiing for her. Twenty years later we were on a weekend out in the Catskills, and they had a ski slope. Now with our daughter it was, "C'mon, we're all gonna go skiing." So my wife went and took a class. Now in the class, the next oldest person next to her was a twelve-year-old. But my wife learned enough in that class so that suddenly we were gonna be skiers. Well, now my wife and I were close to fifty at that time. We took up skiing at the age of fifty, and we've been skiing ever since. And we still do. I fact, ... we skied this season. Too bad it's not snowing now, or else, had it been snowing yesterday, I'd have gone skiing. We had a very, very lovely ski ... season this year. In fact, in early February. And we will continue to ski. I remember thinking, "I want to be skiing when I'm seventy years old." And the day arrived. And it was great. And I said, "I want to be skiing when I'm seventy-five." And this year I'm seventy-five, and I skied. Now it's eighty that I want to ski. [Laughter]

SSH: Where's your favorite place to ski?

MG: We skied a lot in Killington, Vermont. Killington, Vermont is a big ski area. My wife loves it up there. And one of the reasons we skied there is, that there's a lodge up there that served us two meals a day. They had a wonderful chef. And the food was excellent. And the ambiance in there was simple. Nothing fancy at all. It was just nice to hang around with people there. So we went back there almost fifteen years in a row. Then, two years ago, we went and we wanted to go to that same place. And the owner said, "I'm sorry, you can't come here," "Why?" "I rented the whole place to an English company for the whole season, so they can bring their people up here." So ... we went to another lodge that the same owner ran, but it was not the same as the one that we like so much. And so, this year, we went to Gore mountain, which is in the Lake George area. And we had some wonderful skiing. And even two weeks ago we were skiing. In fact, we skied in the Poconos two weeks ago when there was snow only on the slopes, no place else, ... but the snow that they made was so good we had just a lovely time. So we enjoyed it. I'm also an ice skater by the way.

SSH: Really?

MG: My wife and I took it up when we, in our early '40s. I'll tell you how that came about. I have a daughter, and when she was around eight years old, or so, my wife decided that my daughter should go to ballet class. 'Cause my wife had taken ballet, only as a recreational thing, when she was a young lady. And she said, "My daughter's gonna go to ballet." And the daughter decided, yes, she'd like to go to ballet. So, I think the week before she was supposed to go to ballet, she was invited to an ice skating party. Uh-oh! Now she likes the ice-skating. So she took up ice-skating. At that time, we're in the '70s now, there was a gentleman who ran two

private rinks in the area. One in Westfield, where I lived, and one in Short Hills. And so my daughter took lessons at this private rink. And my wife said, "You know, why can't we do this?" So we took it up, and we skated for a number of years. And my wife and I got to do some dances together. Now let me tell you about dancing together on ice. If you don't do it right you can be in a lot of trouble. And it was agreed that if my wife and I ever got divorced it would be because of not being able to dance together on the ice. There has been no other reason for us to get a divorce, but that, because she said, "You know, every time you make a turn you're gonna ... knock me off my skates." You know, that type of thing. So, ... and she stopped some years ago, only because she likes skiing better. And ... I have been trying to entice her back onto the ice. She says, "No, babe. I'm too high off the ground, on my skates, now." But up until only recently I've been going skating once and twice a week, skating with other senior citizens. And right now my job doesn't permit me to do that, and I miss that. That's a lot of fun. The activities, kind of, keeps us young.

SSH: That's right. Well, should we back up and talk a little bit about your family? How your family came, and your career as a photographer?

MG: Yes. Well, I liked photography right from the beginning, as I said, and I did whatever I could in high school. And when I came out service, and I went to the photography school in New York, and I decided that's what I wanted to do. When finishing photography school I went to work for a studio in the Clinton Hills section in Newark. And I worked for him for a while. I wasn't very good, but I worked for him. And I learned ... how to photograph weddings. We were working with large cameras in these days. Today, you don't. You know, they're working with relatively small cameras. We were carrying a lot of heavy equipment then. And then I finally got to work for a company down around Newark. A small chain called Gale Studios. I worked first as darkroom man, and then I worked as a wedding photographer, and, also, I used to go to a lot of schools and take photographs. At that time I wasn't taking portraits, but I would go and take the activities: the French Club, and the this club, and that club, and the teams, and so forth. And we did a lot of that. And then ... that company was starting to fold, so what happened was, the fellow who was selling them their supplies, decided he wanted to go into the photography business. So he took over their business in lieu of all the money that they owed him. And so I stayed with him. And finally, we actually went into a partnership. And that lasted for about five years. ... During that time we had a fire in the place. We were located in Elizabeth, New Jersey, at the time. So we had a fire, and then we moved to another place in Elizabeth. And after a couple of years the business was not going well, so I dropped out. I didn't take any money or anything out with me. I just left, because it wasn't gonna go anyplace. And I finally went into business with a fellow in South Orange. And I worked for him for a year, and then he invited me to become a partner, which I did. And so we were in business together, as partners, for almost thirty years. And we were two opposites. Two opposite personalities. He was compulsive. If he had an idea, he had to do it right away. If he had an idea I was always the guy that was gonna say, "What if?" And in that way we got along very, very well. And only at one time did ... our places reverse. We had been in business for, let's see, from 1957 to 1959, and about five years later in 1964, I guess it was, we decided to expand and ... get another studio ... in South Orange. And it was very, much larger, than the place we had. And after looking at

it, and deciding, and planning, and so forth, one Sunday he and I were on the premises of this place that we were contemplating. I could see that he wasn't really ready to jump into this thing, and he said to me, "... Well, what do you think?" I said, "Fine. Let's go." Which was not the way I normally would operate. I would say, "What if?" [Laughter] In this case I said, "Yes. Let's go." And finally he agreed. And we went into this new studio, a lovely, large studio. And, as I say, we were together for almost thirty years. And then he retired. And I stayed with the studio, and I ran it for another six years. And then I sold it. And after I sold it I worked for the new owner who bought it for another four years, and then I retired. And that was the end of my photographic career. So I was retired for about six months. I decided, "No. I don't like this sitting around doing nothing." My wife was now working. And was working 'cause she wanted to work. She didn't have to work, but she wanted to work. So I started to work part-time, here and there. I worked for a major gallery in Plainfield, called Swains. Then one day a photographer called me up. A young man who had taken over his father's studio when his father retired. He said, "I want to open another business not related to photography at all. You wanna ... work for me?" I said, "Yes." He says, "You wanna manage this business for me?" Well, he opened up a store in Millburn that was like a Mailbox, Etc. place. It was a shipping place, and it also was a gift shop. We had gifts, and we had greeting cards, and we made copies and faxes, and we packed and shipped things for people, and I ... managed the store for him for nine months, full-time. At which point, he decided he wasn't getting his return early enough, and he sold it. Sold the business to two fellas who came in to take over the store, and to ... bring another business in with it. The second fella came in with the business of making tags, clothing tags, ... the care tags that go in the collars of your shirts, and blouses, and everything else. And other tags that go on clothing, and on the boxes of clothing. And I worked for them for almost eight years, part-time, which was great for me. Because now I had a place to go a couple of times a week, and plenty of extra time. And that's when I was doing all the skating. And then, only in recently, last October, they decided to move. They decided to move out of that place, into a much smaller place. And it was gonna be no room for me. One of those fellows had a wife who was the personnel manager of a large liquor distributor, over there in the same town. She said, "Would you like to come and work? 'Cause we need somebody." I said, "Sure." That's where I'm working now. [Laughter] So, what I do now is I'm working in the credit department, and I put most of my time in with the cashier, just making large bank deposits every day.

DC: You're back in the office.

MG: I'm back in the office. Actually, you know, strangely, for most of my working life I stood on my feet. When I worked in the store in Millburn for seven or eight years, there's a cellar there that I used to go up and down the stairs. Now these are fourteen steps. That's more than you find in a house normally. I was up and down those stairs ten/twenty times a day. Up and down. And physically, I was fine. Now that I'm sitting down all day long, now some of the muscles hurt that shouldn't be hurting.

SSH: Tell us about your children.

MG: My children. I have three lovely children. Three successful children. I have two boys and a girl. The older one, this is a whole story. Has nothing to do with the war, but this is great. The older one, the oldest boy, went to the University of Virginia. And he got the first Masters in Fine Arts there that they gave in the theater having to do with stage, what do we call it, not stage management but stage equipment, lighting, sound, and so forth. So he has a MFA in that. Eventually, he had a few jobs. He worked for the New York City Opera Company. The New York City Opera Company was going all around the country giving performances. So he hopped in a truck full of equipment, and he drove all over the country with this equipment to set up. Then he worked in Galveston, Texas for a while. There was an outdoor theater, a Texas, western-type theater. ... He worked there for a while. But, ... he eventually got connected with a company called Vari-Lite in Dallas, Texas, which he works for even now. He's been there for ... quite a few years. He was what is known as a roadie. And he was a chief roadie. 'Cause he used to take a group ... all around the country, in fact, all over the world with this company, setting up lighting equipment for theaters. Now, basically, the most popular type of thing was for rock groups. So he got to know all the rock groups, all the famous rock groups of yesteryear. "Duran Duran" and, what's the other one? "Yes," and all this stuff. He knew all those guys, and he used to sit around and talk to them, have supper with them. So, for ten years or so, he was great. He had a great time. As I say, he was all over the country, he was all over the world. Finally, they said to him, "Look, we would like you to come and stay in Dallas. We would like you to come work at headquarters and stay there." He said, "Well, you know, I kind of like this stuff. Let me continue." So he continued. Okay? Meanwhile, while he's continuing and moving here and there, he met a girl. This young lady was working in the theatrical business. And she was a dresser. Costume dresser. ... She had graduated from the University of Arizona State, and she had graduated as a designer. Clothing designer. So they met on one of these ... travelling jobs. And I guess they met again a couple more times. Well, that started a very good thing. Finally, my son went back to Dallas and he said, "I'm ready to come and stay now, because I wanna get married." And they said, "Okay." So, now they're just about to get married, the plans are all set, and the company said, "Wait a minute. There's a group that wants you." The group, is it called "Yes"?

DC: Sure.

MG: Okay? ... He had worked with them before. They wanted him. He said, "Hey, but ... I'm gonna be married. You know, we decided we want to stay here. Now, you don't want to sent me out." They said, "Tell you what we'll do. We'll send you, and we'll send her with you." So they got married, and they went off on a working honeymoon. A week in Hawaii, two weeks in Japan. That wasn't too bad to take. And so they settled in Texas, where they are now. In fact, my wife is visiting at the very, very moment that we're speaking. She is visiting down there, where we have two lovely grandchildren. This young lady that he married is the most talented thing you ever saw, in that she will tackle any job. She has done tile floors as good a professional job as you've ever seen. She has done wallpapering and painting like a pro. She designs clothing. Very, very, very expensive things for people in the theater area, and oil people down in Texas. You know, like \$7,000 and \$10,000 a gown. That type of thing. She's an expert in beading. And she says the type of beading that she knows how to do, very few people around

the country can do. I can't give you any specifics. She is ... always involved. She's involved with the PTA. She's involved with everything. She wanted to get her kid into a private school. She wasn't quite happy with the schools, one of the schools, the kids were going to. And she went to the school, and they said, "Well," they said, "I'm sorry, but we really, really don't have room." "Well," she said, "You know this program that the city put on? This whole big festival? I did it." "Oh? Oh?" They thought it over, because they said, "Uh-oh, we got somebody here who can work for us." So they took the kid in, and she did work for the school. She's involved all the time. She is something great. Let me tell you what she can do. She came to visit us about, how many, four years ago. A vacation. The whole family came up and visited us. While she was with us she recovered our sofa. [Laughter] Okay? All right? Okay. And then later on, she said to my wife, "You're gonna have new drapes." So they went out and picked the material. She made the drapes down in Texas and sent 'em back. The drapes are now hanging. In our house we have a bathroom on the first floor, which was put in about thirty years ago. And I found out that underneath the tile in the bathroom, we have a wood floor deteriorating. My wife sent me an e-mail the other day saying, "When she gets up here, she's ready to do that bathroom floor." You know? This type of thing. It's woodwork? Anything. Gardening? Loves gardening. Next son. He also went to the University of Virginia. Incidentally, both of these guys got in on early decision. And my daughter, who went to Maryland, she also got in on the early decision that they do. Where you sit down, and they accept you right there in front of you? So they all are okay. They're not wizards. They're just good kids. So this young man, ... he finished with University of Virginia. And I've got to tell you about him. As a young [man], while I was in business, at one time, my partner and I, we had ... two studios, two locations, a couple of miles apart. And my partner decided, "You know what would be good? Instead of using a telephone and paying for a telephone, if we put CB radios in our studios, we could talk to each other, it wouldn't cost us anything." So we spent like six-hundred dollars to put these radios in, an antenna on the roof. Reception wasn't that good, and CB radio is a public thing, so you wanna get on while someone else is talking, you can't get on. Well, one month we saved money. After that we decided, "Hey, this is not working out." So then he said, "Look," he's a boater, ... "I'm going to take my set and put it on the boat. You take your set and do whatever you want with it." When my son, who was eight or nine years old, heard that this thing was coming home, he was ecstatic. He was gonna have a radio to play with. And I told him, "No, you can't, because you gotta have a license. You aren't old enough for that." Well, anyhow, he got interested. And sure enough, he got interested enough so that ... he learned radio. He took over this radio in later years, and he became an expert. ... As a youngster, as a teenager in high school, he was so well knowledgeable that people used to call him in to solve problems. My partner had a big boat, a big power boat. Like, thirty-something feet. And he had a generator on there. A generator that generated electricity. It was gasoline driven, and it generated electricity for the boat. And it wasn't working. So my partner took it to a repair man, and the guy said, "I'm not, I just can't repair it." One day, my partner says to my son, "Come down to the boat. I want you to look at something." So he took him down to the boat and said, "You see this generator? Can you do something with it?" So the kid sits down. The kid, I mean he's a teenager, he sits down and he looks at it and the reason the repair man couldn't fix it was the fact that the generator, or anything electric, comes with a schematic. And if you can read the schematic, you can tell where things belong and what needed what. The schematic was burned. You couldn't read it. So the kid sits

down, and he looks, and he looks, and he prods, and he pokes. And after a while, after a long while, my partner was getting a little bit ... anxious. He says, "You know, can I get you some tools or something?" Kid says, "Look, gimme a pencil and paper." Okay, now he gets him a pencil and paper. And then there's another long wait, while ... the kid is doing this, and the kid is doing that. Well, after a long, long time my partner is really getting itchy. Because, as I say, he's compulsive and he can't wait. So finally my son says, "Turn it on." He turns it on, and of course it worked just fine. Another time, we had a unit in the studio, a flash unit, which was a large box like this, which had all the workings in it, and it was the power pack for the flash unit. It wasn't working. We gave it to a professional, and he said, "I don't know. It's too difficult. I don't have time to really, really delve into this thing." We called the kid. A teenager. "See what you can do." He fixed it as if you had taken a burned out light bulb in your house and fixed the light bulb. Now, usually you throw it in the trash. He took out a little resistor, about that big, which was broken, and he fixed it. That's like fixing a light bulb, because you don't fix them, you throw them away. He fixed it, and the darn thing worked for years, and years, and years after that. Now let's go back even further. Now the kid is, he can't be, maybe nine years old. I've got a new car, and don't have a radio. R & S is advertising on the radio. "You can install it yourself in fifteen minutes." [Laughter] So I go and I get the radio, and I install it, and I turned it on. It's not working. So I disassemble the whole thing and I install it again. Turn it on, it's not working. Fine. I'm gonna put it aside. I'm gonna come back next week and install it and it doesn't work. Now, the second time I come back, I'm installing it, again ... and the kid is standing there. And I turn it on, and it doesn't work. And he says, "Yeah, probably the polarity is switched." "Go away kid. I can't bother with you." Now I can't get it to work. I took it back to the place. I said, "Okay, fifteen minutes? You install it." Two and a half hours later, the guy still couldn't get it working. Takes it into the shop, he opens it up. The polarity was switched. Can you believe? Well, this young man now lives out in California, and he's a computer expert, and he's working, as a programmer. He's also good enough to be a hardware engineer. But this ... is his forte. So, then there's the daughter. The daughter, ... as a young girl, was a real jock. I mean, the boys didn't want to play baseball, she played baseball. So she finally wound up at the University of Maryland on this early decision thing, where you sit down and they tell you right there and then whether you're in. And she decides that, okay, early British history is what she's gonna take. And so she graduated as a British history major. Didn't follow that. So, we had a friend who was a personnel manager for a company over in Springfield, New Jersey. In, yes, in Springfield, New Jersey. At the time he was the manager of this, he had my son, my electronics son, work there ... during the summers. And he put this kid on the end of the production line as an inspector, to make sure that everything that was finished being assembled was working properly. Used to come home at night, "I can't imagine how badly people put these things to work." He says, "I'm rejecting stuff left and right." And rightly he was, because people on the line just didn't care what they were doing. So, anyhow. So she's a history major, and finally this same fella, this same friend, is now working in New York, he was working for an organization called FIND. FIND/SVP. S'il Vous Plait. Basically, their headquarters were in France. But, it was one of the very first information gathering services. I mean, you call them up and say, "Tell me how much liquor of a certain kind was sold within fifty miles of Philadelphia in 1987." And her company would go and research this and get back, and give him the information, charge him for it of course. This is what she was introduced to. And she was introduced to the computer

department, she had never seen a computer before. And this was in the days before PCs, so that any information that she needed had to come out of a data bank somewhere in the United States. If she needed medical, it came from a databank in the United States. If she needed historical, political, so forth, you know. If she wanted political it came from the *New York Times*, etceteras.

And she learned how to connect up with all these different data bases, which was not easy. Because you have to have all these passwords to get here and there. But she learned all these, to the point where they used to send her out to give talks to people about this kind of information. Well, she worked in New York for about ... four years. She lived in New Jersey, and she commuted to New York. And she got to the point where she just hated that commute. That was not for her. So she decided, maybe she'll go out to Seattle where her friends are. So she went to ... her boss, a lady boss, and she said, "Look. I'm thinking about going to Seattle." And the boss was very smart. She said, "Go. Don't hang around. Don't think about it. You're gonna go? Go." And she went. And she went out to Seattle. She was over qualified. No one needed what she knew. Did you ever hear of the Whoops Bonds problem out in Washington State, back in the '70s. There was a commission out in Washington State, formed, not by any scientific people ...

By farmers, and lumber people, and business people who didn't know how, really, but they were the commission that was running the construction of five nuclear plants. Okay? And back in the '70s, suddenly, the bonds that had been issued to back all this thing up, they had to pay \$250,000,000 in interest. Well, they didn't have it. And so, they defaulted, and the Chemical Bank in New York, who was the sponsor of the bonds, immediately started a legal suit. Immediately they had eighty-eight defendants in this suit. It turned out to be lots more later on. Chemical Bank hired a major law firm in New York to take care of this. The law firm in New York hired a law firm out in Seattle to work out there. The Seattle firm hired my daughter because they said, "By golly, you got just everything we need for data ... processing, data input and retrieval." So she worked for them for three years, she knew it was a temporary job, but she worked for them for three years. Then she decided, "Well, it looks like this case is going down hill. Maybe it's not gonna be finished, but they're not gonna want me." So she left them, and she now applied for other jobs. She applied to Weyerhaeuser. Big lumber people out there. She applied to Microsoft, and some other people. Microsoft was looking for a librarian for its corporate library. Well, they narrowed it down to two people. Herself and another lady. The other lady had a Masters in Library Science. My daughter did not. Well, the lady got the job. So my daughter said, "Well, I'm gonna take myself back to the university and get my Masters." So, on her own, with her own money, she went to the university. After a year Microsoft called her and said, "Hey, we got a job opening up, and we'd like you to come." So she went to work for Microsoft. She finished her second year with Microsoft paying for the second year. She's manager in the corporate library ...

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

MG: ... pretty good at what she does. When she was working for the New York outfit, FIND, they used to send her to give talks, here and there. And she used to write papers. There is a professor out at the university in California, I think it's UCLA. I'm not exactly sure whether that's it. But anyhow, he put together a volume on ... data entry and retrieval. A rather large volume. And he asked her if he could use one of her papers, and she said, "Yes." And so he included it in his text. I got a look at that text. Hers is the only one, outside paper, that he put in there. All the

rest is his own stuff. Hers was the one that he wanted. So she's ... successful, very, very successful. And she lives in a lovely little house out there in Seattle, practically overlooking Puget Sound, and it's a great environment out there. She's an avid skier at the moment, and she lives with a lady who's an airplane pilot. So they go travelling in airplanes all the time. I had an occasion to go with them about a year and half ago. We did a full circle around Seattle. It was a really great trip. So ...

SSH: Did any of your children go into the military at all?

MG: No. Nobody in the military. My boys were eligible for Selective Service, I think during the Vietnam War, but their numbers didn't come up. ... In fact, there's been no other military people in our family besides my brother and myself, which is just as well with me.

DC: What would your wife do during the war, while you were away?

MG: Well, she was, before we were married, during the war, she worked for an organization down in Newark. An automobile parts distributor, right down there in the heart of Newark. And she worked there for many years. And she was very capable. And they liked to have her all the time. And she only left there because, when we got married, and she got pregnant, and we had our first child.

DC: How about, you said, she's gone back to work?

MG: What happened was, back in the '80s, she took up aerobics. I mean, she went to aerobics classes in order to ... keep her body toned. And she went to work for these two young ladies, who were conducting these classes. And they were ... conducting, on the side, they were conducting classes that had to do with your own inner self, your own well being, having to do with the way you thought, not so much as your physical, but your own thinking. And they needed somebody to work part-time in their office. So they asked her because she had been a bookkeeper. She was a bookkeeper for the ... company in Newark, years ago. So she worked for them as a bookkeeper. And then they said, you know, they could use her part-time as an instructor. So she was an aerobics instructor for some while. Then that quit. They quit. And she had a friend who ... was working for the Dole Company, and had an office in Mountainside. "Dole, the pineapple people." So she went to work part-time for them. She worked part-time for them seven years, as a temp. They wanted her to work full-time, but she didn't want to work full-time. She didn't have to work full-time. But she wanted to work. She needed to do something. I mean, during the time that we were raising our children she didn't have to work. I didn't want her to work. So she raised the children, and she was active in some ... social activities, and she was a member of our synagogue, and she was the president of the sisterhood at one time. And she was an excellent cook. She's an excellent needlework person, and she's a skier.

SSH: Have you been involved politically at all ... ?

MG: No. No. I never had the opportunity. Thank you. [Laughs]

SSH: Dana, do you have any other questions? The one question that I saw on your list, that you didn't ask, was about MacArthur. Did you ever meet MacArthur?

MG: No. I never met MacArthur. I was aware that he was my commander when I was out there in the Philippines. And I think I was rather pleased that, although a lot of people, you know, didn't agree with him, but I was rather pleased that he was the commander. Because when I was a kid I had known somebody who had been in the Philippines. ... The man was a lawyer. And he had been in the Philippines, I think, doing some kind of legal work. Then, during the Depression, during the '30s, for some reason, I don't know, legal work wasn't paying off too well. This man went into business in Philadelphia making furniture. He had a shop that made handmade furniture, excellent furniture. So much so that I got some at home that you cannot duplicate. All handmade stuff. And, because of that, the business of the Philippines stayed in my mind all the way through. So that, here I am, now in the Philippines, and, as I said, I was very happy that MacArthur was there, because, to me, he was a good commander. I didn't know too much of the machinations that were going on underneath, and the differences he was having with Truman, and everybody else there. I was very happy when I understood that, the fact that he was there at the surrender. But I was very happy about the way he was conducting the Japanese occupation, because, ... if you treat people like human beings, like the way he was doing it, you get ... a response. You get a positive response from those people. Because they have not come back warlord like. They have come back industrialized. We fight that, but that's a different story. But ... we haven't felt at all, at least for the most part, we haven't felt them to ... have any war-like ideas. God knows that the economy may chase them back to it someday in the future, but that would do it for almost anybody. I was kind of happy with him. And I was rather sad when he came back, and he was fired. I think he had, I think some of the military plans that he had were good. And I liked him.

SSH: Did you stay involved in any military, like the Legion?

MG: No.

SSH: No.

MG: No. I did not ... get involved in them. Even though I have run across people who did stay in the reserve. At one time, ... when I had my photographic studio in South Orange, I had an Afro-American doctor, who was a prominent doctor in the area, but he was also a member of the Air Force reserve, and he used to go down to Fort Dix, and fly these military planes out of there. I mean this was routine training for him. And he told me he used to fly up and down the whole East Coast. This was a, like a protective cover of the coast, but he was a doctor. This is what he did in his spare time. But I never had any feelings to go further in the military.

DC: When you were stationed down in the South, in Georgia, in Florida, in Louisiana, did you ever run into racism?

MG: Good question. Because I did experience [it], and I am telling you, it has never left me. When I was in Augusta, Georgia I was on a bus when the bus driver told this black lady, "You don't sit there. You go way in the back." And there was no place for her in the back. And I was too young to be mad enough to go out there and give the guy a shot, but I never forgot that. That, to me, was a terrible experience. Even then, I mean, and I was young and, you know, most things didn't matter. But that ... was something that I was very sad to have experienced. A pleasant lady. Why do you tell her that she can't sit there? That's the only experience I had like that though.

DC: ... In general, did you get to get a taste of the rest of the culture in the South?

MG: Yes. Well, only the fact that, you know, things are slower moving down there. ... That's normal. But the only thing that happened to me there, the only effect that I had, that at one point, having spent ... all the time in the South, I was in the South for about nineteen months. When I came back I did not say "water." I said "watta." Now that was the big difference. After that there was nothing else. Nothing else that really effected me. I never did care for the South. And I still don't. I don't go to Florida. I've been to Florida. I mean, Disneyland and all that stuff, forget it. I don't go there. I've been down there for a wedding. My wife has gone down there to visit a friend. She has a dear friend who lives way, way down there. But Florida doesn't appeal to me at all. ... But the South, there's a lot of nice people down there. No big deal.

SSH: What about the riots in Newark?

MG: The riots in Newark. Well, my studio, my photographic studio was located not terribly far from the South Orange/ Newark border, and the African-American community came up fairly close to us. So, it was the ... black people who were getting ... upset there, and causing the problems that we were having. What happened during that time was, we were afraid that the problems would escalate and come up the avenue to our place. 'Cause we were on South Orange Avenue, which ran all the way up from Newark. And we were afraid that it could come up our way. What we used to do, at the end of every day during that time, we would take out of the studio, and put into our cars and station wagons every bit of negative material, wedding proofs, all the work that was being done at the time, that was waiting to be done. Everything that was fresh, and needed, could not be lost because it meant "out of business," pack it up, put it in our cars every night. Take 'em home. Bring 'em back every day and go to work on it. Strangely, here's another story having to do with that, but not during ... the time of the riots. This happened some years later. I had packed a lot of stuff into my station wagon: wedding proofs, and negatives. I mean, things that, if they got lost there was just no going back. All right? The car was just loaded with them. A station wagon, so you could see in. My wife and I had regular season tickets for the symphony down in Newark, and the symphony was playing in Symphony Hall, which was the old Mosque building. We went down, and I parked the car about two short blocks from the Symphony Hall. Locked it up properly. We went to the symphony. During the intermission an usher came down the aisle, pointed directly at me, and said, "Would you come please?" "What do you want?" "... Would mind coming, please?" Took me down to the office

in the building. I walk into the office, and there are two police officers standing there, and all the stuff from my car sitting right there in the office. How did they know? I mean, what happened? Well, somebody had broken into the car, smashed the window, looked at this stuff which had no meaning to them and left it alone, took a tripod, took a box of tools, left the good stuff alone. Now the officers came by, and found that the car had been smashed. They removed all that stuff and took it to the building. Well, how did they know where to take it? I'm guessing, and I'm quite sure I'm right. They looked at my car. They looked up my license plate. Who owns this car? The guy lives in Westfield. What would a guy from Westfield be doing down here? Probably at the symphony. Where else is he gonna go? So they went to the symphony, and they said, "Have you got this guy on your list?" "Yes. There he is." "What seat is he in?" "He's right down there." ... Would you believe that? Strange things.

DC: You were telling us, before we started the tape, about a cousin at MIT?

MG: Yes. Yes. Well, ... he's very well known in the computer research area. ... In the higher echelons of learning. And he has written this fascinating book. He, in his research lab in the, what they call the Media Lab up at MIT, they work on anything that comes to mind. In fact, he doesn't want anybody to tell his students, "Try to accomplish this, or that, or that, so we can use it for that, or that, or that." He wants his students to get any idea and go after it. No matter what it is, as long as it's ... something that's practical. I mean, intelligent. And he tells in his book, of the various things that they have done, that are just out of this world. To the point where, for instance, he says, "They have determined that when you walk, your feet, or your shoes, develop enough electricity, ... as little as it is, is enough electricity to operate some other kind of a system that they could invent, such as a sensor of some sort." They know that they could put sensors in your clothing which would be operated by the electricity that's generated in your shoes, and the clothing will sense various things: are you too hot, are you too cold, are you sweating, are you too dry, and so forth. That's just a general concept. All of this. This is the kind of stuff they're doing. He talks about, in his book, you know Yo-Yo Ma, the classical cellist? He spent time with Yo-Yo Ma. What he wanted to do was, they were trying to invent devices that could reproduce, or could play the music ... electronically, as good, or better, than what was coming out of the cello. So with Yo-Yo Ma's concurrence, they placed sensors on the cello, on the strings, under the bridge, at the bow, all over this place so that they could sense exactly what he was doing while he was playing. And that could be reproduced by an electronic device. To the point where the sensors could tell which of the strings the bow was on, could tell you whether the bow was in this position or that position, etceteras, etceteras, etceteras. And he said ... the device was able to make music better than what was coming out of the cello. He also said, at one point, that ... Arthur C. Clark was working on some future thing. He had a brilliant new idea about what to do in the future.

DC: Arthur C. Clark?

MG: Arthur C. Clark. When Arthur Clark found out my cousin had already done his future thing, he was amazed, and he was so disappointed. He said, "I had this idea that I was going to write in my books for the future." [Laughter] "You go ahead and invented it." So this is the type

of stuff that going on. You know, it's really ... That book, everybody should read. As I say, I read the book. I only understood half of it, because some of the terms are just ... beyond me. But the general concept of what they're working on... You know, for instance, evidently they've done this. They've got sensors ... in that coffee maker now. The sensors can tell whose coffee mug is put in. [Laughter] And it knows what kind of coffee to dispense. It also knows how often this person comes and puts the mug in there, and knows who's coming in at one time. All of this stuff is amazing. Any more questions?

SSH: I'm just going to say, before we end, is there anything that you would like to put on tape for the record, that we haven't asked? Any thoughts?

MG: No, the only thing is, I'm very, very glad to have gone to school, to have gone to Rutgers. I'm of the opinion that anybody who can go to college should go to college. Anybody who has the opportunity. Now, it's been said, only half of what you hear you remember. Or half of what you learn you remember. But the opportunity in college to do research, to go find out what you need to find out, that's where you learn it. Right there. Except that I was disappointed once. In Rutgers, down in Newark, I had a psychology class. ... And I don't remember who the professor was. But he asked us to write theme papers. Just pick a theme. Well, I'm interested in photography, so I went and I researched the origins of photography, which I had never done before. And I researched, and I did a lot of work, and I was very, very proud of myself. And I did not get a good mark. And I finally asked him, I said, "Now why?" I said, "I've done all this work, and I've worked so hard to glean all this information out of this book and that book," and so forth. He said, "I knew about that stuff already." Yes. Your expression tells me, and I felt the same way. So, that was the only disappointment that I had. So ...

SSH: Dana, do you have any other questions to ask?

DC: No ...

SSH: Well, ... what I was going to say is, I think we'll end the tape, and maybe we'll turn it back on in a few moments. Thank you for coming.

[TAPE PAUSED]

MG: Yes. In the city of Iloilo, on the island of Panay in the Philippines, some of the working girls were Spanish, not Filipino, and they were gorgeous. Naturally, we were not going to be able to date them, or anything like that, but it was like being home. Because, you know, they were Caucasian looking, and they were gorgeous.

SSH: How many of the people, the different troops that you say, you've mentioned before, something about the men coming from Europe into the Pacific theater. What were some of the reactions?

MG: Well, the general reactions by the soldiers were, "Hey, we don't wanna do this. We already

did our fighting. Let somebody else do that now.” I didn't blame them for that at all. However, the military saw a need for a certain number of people to be able to do this, and they didn't have enough in the Pacific to do that, so the men, evidently the men who fought the least, for the most part, the men ... who spent the least amount of time in Europe, were shipped over to Japan, to the Philippines. They were lucky they didn't have to fight any more. Let me see what else I've got, if it's of any consequence. You can't use any of these photographs, can you?

SSH: If you don't want them I can put them in your file.

MG: Well, I can't say I don't want them, because it's just part of all the things that I've put together.

SSH: Then you should hang onto them.

MG: I'll tell you what. I'll tell you what. I will look in my files for negatives of this stuff. And if I can reproduce them, I'll give you the reproduction. If not, I'll will these to you, okay? That sounds fair enough. Milt Gross, nice Jewish guy from ... New York. And we got to be friends. And I asked him one day, I said, “How come you got to become a cook? You know, Jewish guys don't get to be cooks.” He said, “Well, when I understood that a cook worked twenty-four hours, but then had twenty-four hours off. That I liked.” So he became a cook. One day, he said, “Come here. I want to show you something.” And he took me into the refrigerator department of the mess hall. And on the shelf he had a jar of chicken fat. Now when we were kids, chicken fat on Jewish rye bread was better than ice cream. And he had rendered this fat so that we could put it on rye bread. [Laughter] Nobody else knew about it. There was another guy here. Where is he, where is he, where is he? There's another guy here. Well, as it turns out, ... I passed him on the street, in New York City, not long after the war. And I didn't realize that that was him. And I looked and I said, “That's, no, yes, no.” And I let him go. And I never went back to say hello to him. Now, that's not normal for me. 'Cause I'll stop the guy normally. And I always regretted not stopping him. Years later, had nothing to do with him, but years later, like, maybe ten years ago my wife and I were in South Hampton, Long Island. And we're walking down the street, on a Sunday, so nobody was in the shops. People were window shopping. And I see a man and a lady in front of me. And, I see him from the back, slightly on the side. I said, “I know that guy.” He had worked for me twenty-five years before. I went up to him and I said, “Are you?” And he was. And I recognized him ... from a slight bit of profile. See? ... I don't dawdle. [Laughter] What else can I tell you about these guys? ... This was the head sergeant. He was the master sergeant. I mean, he wasn't an officer, but he was the guy in charge. He and ...

SSH: First Sergeant Park?

MG: First Sergeant, you're right. And there's another guy here. And I don't remember what he looks like. But anyhow, these two guys had ... friendly differences right along. To the point where, as friendly as it got to be, there's one guy says to him, he says, “Boy, if I ever catch you alone, ... I'm going to murder you.” He almost meant it. But, let me see. ... Mr. Romweber.

Mr. Romweber had a family ... of furniture people out in the Chicago area. I know these guys like yesterday. ... I have to remember him, because he had served in the service. Evidently, he had been in the service for some years, and he served in Puerto Rico. And he had a big picture, right up on the wall, of himself and a young Puerto Rican lady. She had no clothes on from the waist up. I remember that. I remember that. [Laughter] One of these fellas is from Manotowoc, Wisconsin. Do you think I remember who he is? ... This is the Irish guy from New York. This, I think, is, I don't know if he's the Jewish guy, or not. Anyhow, here's the guy with the lovely wife from the Tennessee hills. Yes. Beautiful wife. You don't forget about these things. These guys were mostly mechanics, airplane mechanics, and some of them were auto mechanics. Who else was there that ... Of course, ... he was a great guy. And Captain Hirsch. He was a nice guy. You remember some of these guys. See? I remember things. Yes. His picture is in here. But this guy was the guy who tried, he was my officer in Florida, but he tried to keep me out of the infantry. He tried. It didn't work. ... And when I had the poison sumac?

SSH: Yes.

MG: ... This was ... the nurse.

SSH: Lieutenant Earhart

MG: So, a lot of stuff in here. Here he is. Here's Davis. Here's the guy who tried like heck to keep me out of the infantry. But it just didn't work.

SSH: What did he want you to do? Stay with the ...

MG: Yes. He wanted me to stay. He wanted me to stay because I had learned what I was supposed to do. Oh, boy.

SSH: Did you run into any New Jersey guys?

MG: Not a heck of a lot. Just this one guy from Newark I remember specifically. One day in the Philippines, he was out on a detail, and that's out with a group doing some kind of work. And we're in tents. Tents or barracks. Anyhow, we're on cots. And he comes back from his days work, and what has he got with him? He's got some live, Japanese hand grenades which he's gonna put under his cot right next to me. I said, "Get rid of them." He said, "No." I said, "If you don't get rid of them, I'll get rid of them." And when he went away, I took them out to the ammunition dump, and gave them to the guys out there. I was not going to sleep next to Japanese hand grenades. So, folks, I don't know what else to tell you.

SSH: Well, we thank you very much Mr. Gershenfeld, for hanging with us and interviewing, and we will talk with you soon.

MG: It's been fun. I like coming down here.

DC: Thanks very much.

MG: Yes.

[Mr. Gershenfeld asked that the following material be inserted here:

**Anecdotes from the time of military service experienced by Marvin Gershenfeld.
Graduate Newark College Rutgers University 1950**

Living through a war while in the military service can be anything from boring to exciting to downright deadly and fatal, depending on the circumstances that govern the military lives of individuals over which they have little or no control. And so it was with myself from January, 1943 through February 1946: life in the U.S. Army during a portion of World War II. I was fortunate not to have had to engage in combat, although I faced several opportunities in which I might have faced the enemy, but during my three years in service there were many incidents worth noting, and I am setting them down here.

I was 19 years old when the U.S. Postal Service delivered the famous "Greetings" letter from the President of the United States. I was drafted. By law, and against any better ideas I had, I was going to be a soldier. A bus took me and other lucky "Greetings" receivers from our home town of Millburn, NJ to the Sussex Ave. Armory in Newark where we were sworn in as new soldiers and we then entrained for Fort Dix, NJ, where we would get our first taste of Army life. We were processed. That means we were given physical examinations, where the doctors invaded every private part of us, tested for our skills and IQ, issued soldier clothing and sent to our tents with our arms hurting excruciatingly from the tetanus shots and other shots donated by the Army doctors. In a few days we found ourselves on a train to we-knew-not-where, and to our surprise detrained in Atlantic City, which turned out to be as easy a time as any to be in the Army Air Force, aside from the actual training.

A soldier first learns to march. And so thousands of us marched up and down the boardwalk in this vacation-land-on-hold. And it did make me feel a little macho being with all the other guys in uniform. So, one morning this macho guy is marching with hundreds and thousands of other GIs and I am on an outer rank. Soon I sense that I am no longer on the outer rank because someone is marching on the side of me where there should have been no one. It is a sweet little old lady, and this sweet little old lady turns out to be my mother! She had come to Atlantic City to visit me and spotted me marching. Imagine those odds today in Atlantic City.

Life can get a little dull while one is in service, so the Army peps us up with entertainment at times. One afternoon as hundreds of us filed into the mess hall for lunch, beautiful music wafted from somewhere inside. Lo!, and behold! there was the most popular band leader of the time leading his soldier band for our enjoyment. Glenn Miller and his band playing for us! You couldn't beat that.

After three months we found ourselves one evening on a train again, having completed our basic training. And, again where were we going? In time of war no lights are to be shown in coastal areas, so the train shades were down. Wondering what our destination was, one fellow walked up and down the various cars of the train, inquiring as to what skills were to be found amongst the GIs. He came back with the answer that most men he spoke to had experience in radio and in photography. Our analysis said we were going to the "Signal Corps," which is where men of such talents wound up. Guess again folks. Final destination, Air Corps Military Police in Augusta, Georgia. That's how it's done. One's body is more important than one's skills. I have no idea if there was a Masters Tournament that year in Augusta.

After some basic training in how to be policeman, I was sent to another MP outfit in Warner Robbins, Georgia, and there they decided to make me the fingerprint man based solely on the little background I had in photography as indicated on the test I had taken.

Air Corps MPs did have dangerous jobs in the theaters of war. They often were part of early assault teams during invasions; their jobs were to secure enemy airports so that US planes could fly in as early as possible. And my outfit left to participate in some dangerous operation, leaving me behind; leaving me behind in the hospital with a healthy case of poison sumac in my arm. Having been nursed back to health by a very nice nurse, I was now a man without an outfit. It never fails. They gave me an outfit, or rather placed me in another one. Hello, Avon Park, Florida and the Avon Park Bombing Range where I was now in the Air Service Command of the Air Force, the ground crew for the Air Force.

"What shall we have this man do?" is always the question that arises on the arrival of a new GI. Looking at my record, it was seen that I had been a fingerprint man (I had never as yet done anything having to do with fingerprints) and I had probably worked in an office. So, I was placed in an office in the personnel section where I was to work for many months in spite of my miserable hunt-and-peck talent for typewriting. My most vivid memory of being at Avon Park was the 24-hour-a-day roar of the airplane motors at the airport a mile away. One went to sleep listening to the roar, and one awoke in the morning to the same noise.

Our entire squadron (as we were designated, although we were not flyers) pulled up stakes and moved to Lakeland, Florida not far from Tampa., becoming a training unit at the airfield there. While there, a small contingent of mainland Chinese soldiers were stationed near our unit. We befriended them and began playing volleyball against their team each day. Well, we lost that war. Those small, but very agile Asians beat us every game.

In the Fall of 1944 a severe hurricane swept up the Florida Peninsula, and the men from our airfield were evacuated into the nearest city and placed in the basements of public buildings for their safety. However, a request for volunteers to remain on the airfield base went out and I accepted the challenge. Flyable planes were flown up to Ohio. Planes that could not fly were turned on their backs and tied down to the ground. All equipment that was moveable was buried in the earth. And I spent about ten hours alone, wondering if the temporary barracks I was sitting

in might be blown away. Although the hurricane damaged many things in various places around the airfield, I survived to tell the story.

During the time of the Battle of the Bulge in Europe, a call went out for replacements for the many GIs that had been killed, wounded, or captured. Each of the services in the Army was asked to provide Infantry replacements from its ranks. I was eligible to become a replacement. I would have preferred to remain with my unit, and my superior did his best to keep me, with no positive result. At that time there was on our base a sister outfit that we were training. It was an exact duplicate of our organization and was due to ship out to the war at any time soon. The fellow that occupied the same spot in his unit that I occupied in mine came to me and asked if I would change places with him since his pregnant wife was living in town and was expecting to deliver very shortly. I said "Yes," I would rather go to war with an Air Corps outfit than go with an Infantry regiment. The Big Brass said "no," and I went to the Infantry.

Infantry training was at Camp Livingston in Alexandria, Louisiana. It was rugged, but we all prevailed. What did not sit well with us was the sight of German prisoners of war, working, but having a relative easy life compared to our lives as trainees.

And another train trip - to Fort Meade, Maryland in preparation for going to the European theater of war. But it was now late in the war, and Hitler had stopped thinking that he was going to wake up from his nasty dream of losing the war and find himself still in control of Europe. He quit the scene while I was at Fort Meade, Germany gave in, and I was immediately assigned to go fight in the Pacific since we still had a war there.

A troop train trip to the West coast followed and there I was aboard the USS *General H.F. Hodges* going across the Pacific Ocean, on a ship without an escort which meant that we zigzagged all the way across the sea to avoid any bad guys, namely Japanese submarines. We stopped briefly at Finschaven and then at Hollandia on the island of New Guinea, and finally arrived in Manila, on the island of Luzon in the Philippines where I was placed in a replacement depot, awaiting permanent assignment. One Saturday evening as a group of us were preparing to go into the partially destroyed city of Manila, some late arriving mail was handed out and I was surprised to receive one from my brother who had been stationed in New Guinea for many months in a medical unit headed by Dr. Charles Mayo of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. His letter told me that he, too, was being sent to the Philippines, and that he would be encamped in the town of Batangas in southern Luzon. He had sent the letter to an A.P.O. (Army Post Office) which meant that he did not know where I was located. I determined that he was already there, so the next morning having no assignments, I got a buddy (a Newark resident) to go with me and we started out on a seventy-mile hitch-hiking trip to southern Luzon. It took us six hours, riding on thirteen different vehicles to reach our destination to see my brother whom I had not seen in more than two years, and who least expected to see his own brother. When I walked into his tent and tapped him on the shoulder, and he looked around and in the greatest surprise, the card table he was seated at, and the cards and the other fellows went flying as he jumped up to greet me. It was a great reunion.

Our trip back to Manila that same afternoon and evening was not quite the same as the trip south. We were able to thumb rides for about 20 miles and then the traffic died. We sat by the side of the road and waited, and waited, knowing that the friendly Filipino natives were not so friendly at night. We were armed only with knives. Finally a military truck came by and, praise the lord, he was going all the way to Manila and agreed to let us ride. The reunion was a success. Some days later, my brother, Lester, visited me in Manila and during that time we went searching for our cousin who, according to my mother was an officer located in Manila. We visited office after office and no one seemed to know the lieutenant we were searching for. But we did find him. He was only a two-stripe corporal, but that was another nice reunion.

The office work on my record was now responsible for getting me an assignment that would keep me out of the fighting. I was assigned to the US Army Training Group, AFPAC, whose duty it was to re-assemble the Philippine Army so that it could be part of the planned invasion of Japan. For the three years of Japanese occupation, the Filipino soldiers had been either in Japanese prisons or had fled to the mountains to carry on guerilla warfare. Affidavits by known Filipino Army officers verified that each particular man had been in that officer's unit or in another unit. New records were to be initialed and the men were to be paid three years back pay. And then more training. I was sent to carry out such work to the island of Panay, with a stop on the way at the island of Leyte. From Leyte the trip to Panay was by merchant marine ship whose life aboard was not military and whose food was like manna from heaven. It was a short war-time trip but the next thing to a vacation cruise.

My unit on Panay was a small 12-man outfit (4 officers and 8 men). We took over a camp in the center of a small town, Cabatuan, a camp that had just recently been evacuated by a large engineering unit. The block-square park in the center of the village had cement sidewalks and a lovely fountain and it was now a military installation. Bamboo houses and offices were already waiting for us and we settled in with no problems. The quartermaster unit in the capital port city of Iloilo, 30 miles to the south, which provided food and other needs to the various units on the island, had a large stock of food intended for the hundreds of engineering guys, but, lo! no engineering guys, all that food for just a handful of soldiers now in that camp in Cabatuan. So, for a time we ate very, very well. Steak and eggs every morning for over a week, for example. And we were fortunate to find a local Filipino who could cook American food, his having served as a cook aboard a US naval ship in the past.

We had the opportunity to show a motion picture once a week and we always invited the townspeople to come and be part of the audience. One such time, the projector arrived and the needed 1600 ft. take-up reel was missing. So we let the film run out into a large cardboard carton and when it was time to rewind the film we had a tremendous mass of spaghetti film in the box. Rewinding the film was a long, careful, delicate maneuver, and with sigh of relief we accomplished the impossible.

When tempers flare amongst the Asians, we found, a man's life does not have the same value that Westerners assign to life. An example: aboard a truck that was operating as a local bus, a Filipino soldier and an officer had strong, angry words. Later, in our town we found the body of

the officer, hacked to death with a machete by the soldier. The officer's gun was still in his belt. He never had time to draw it. In another incident, a Filipino soldier was found dead on his cot at a time when an inspection of his tent was about to begin. His fellow comrades dragged his body out of the tent and left it lying on the ground while the inspection went on inside.

One day a Filipino came running into our camp, having run five miles from where several American soldiers were stationed on guard duty. He told us of a gasoline explosion that had engulfed two GIs. We raced in our vehicle to the site, and found two badly burned men. We raced with them to the hospital in Iloilo, assuring them on the way that everything would be all right. Sadly, one of the two fellows did not survive.

Each Friday night we experienced seeing the farmers from the outer regions slowly making their way to Iloilo's Saturday market to sell their produce. All night long the ox carts quietly paraded through our town, the carts loaded with produce and the farmers' families to arrive in the city by sun-up.

The big thrill of my tour of duty in the Philippines was the day we heard about the dropping of the atom bomb. The GIs celebrated by firing off their weapons all over the place. Friendly fire.

With the surrender of the Japanese in August of 1945, our jobs turned 180 degrees so that we were now issuing the Filipino soldiers out of the service. Soon my turn to go home took form and I was shipped back to Manila where the most unusual happening came about. A large group of American soldiers participated in a protest march down the main street of Manila. They wanted to go home and they wanted everybody to know it. Fortunately for them, Gen. MacArthur smiled upon them and none of them was punished for such a major no-no.

For those of us living on the US east coast, the information that the US troop ship *America* was lying in Manila Bay, ready to take troops directly back to New York, got us very excited and wishing to be aboard that vessel. But luck did not shine on us and we ended up troop-shipping back to San Francisco on another boat. From San Francisco we entrained for Fort Dix, where we started from three years before. For a handful of GIs it was not to be so easy as that. Having left San Francisco, the train stopped a few hours later in a small town, straddling the main street so that the guys aboard the train could look down the main street and see the various bars that were open. A group of soldiers jumped down from the train, and scooted into town for cold beers. So far, so good, until the train pulled out and they had not returned. You could not have dragged me off that home-bound train. First priority was to be on that train when it pulled into New Jersey. Some days later when I had been discharged from the service at Fort Dix and arrived at Penn Station in Newark, the first glimpse of my sweetheart and that first kiss from her made all the memories of the previous three years vanish in an instant. At this writing, my sweetheart, Lorraine and I are looking forward to celebrating our 52nd year of wedded bliss.

This account was written for the Rutgers University Dept. of History in 1999 to help fill in the information it was gathering about World War II as told by Rutgers alumni.

Marvin Gershenfeld, Westfield, NJ, Newark Coll. 1950]

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

Reviewed 3/30/00 Sean D. Harvey

4/4/00 SSH

Corrections entered 5/24/00