RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALBERT GOLDSTEIN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Dustin Elias: This begins an interview with Albert Goldstein on March 27, 2002, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Mr. Goldstein, good morning.

Albert Goldstein: Good morning.

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: The interview is being conducted by Dustin Elias and Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

DE: Mr. Goldstein, I will let you begin by discussing your parents. Can you tell us a little bit about them? Where is your father from?

AG: My father was born in Poland, 1896. He came to this country, with his mother and I think it was three siblings, in 1900, I believe it was. It may have been [18]98 or [18]99, I'm not really sure about that one. His father and older brother had preceded them by a couple of years, which was a common practice at that time, with trying to establish roots and find a job and housing, and then, they moved here, came in through Ellis Island, and the name was not changed there. The name, as I understand, was changed in Europe, I think by virtue of trying to avoid the Czar's draft, which makes me from a Cossack draft-dodging heritage of some sort, but this, again, was not uncommon and they immigrated through Hamburg and [took] steerage passage across. Interestingly enough, just by way of commentary, the family left, at night, secretly. If [it] … had been known that they were planning to emigrate, more envious neighbors would have reported them to the police and prevented that. The only one who knew was a very good friend, who was a neighbor. … My grandmother's sewing machine was left with her. That was a prized possession. She was a very good seamstress, apparently, and very good [at] embroidery. There are a couple of pieces [that] are still in the family and still used; among others, we'll use one tonight. [Editor's Note: Mr. Goldstein is referring to the first night of Passover.] It will be a *matzah* cover for the *Seder*. They lived in New York, the Lower Eastside. My grandfather was a mason, primarily a bake oven mason. That was a specialty of his, at any rate, and this constituted the busiest time of the year for him, because this is the only time of the year when bake ovens were allowed to cool. Everybody was eating matzo for the week which had been prepared previously, and so, there was no bread being baked and he was busy at, of course, Passover. The family language was Yiddish. My grandmother never learned English. They lived in an area of New York, which bordered an Italian district, which, in itself, bordered the East River. Hence, it was necessary, if the kids wanted to go swimming, to negotiate the Italian district, which led to more than one running fight. Dad, being hobbled by a knee which had been apparently damaged by a wagon while he was still a youngster in Poland, had to rely on another elder brother, after whom I'm named, to protect him in these running fights. Apparently, my Uncle Al learned how to fight real well; he wound up being a divisional boxing champion during the First World War. [laughter] I know very little about the schooling that my father had, other than the fact that you did … not want the teacher to complain about you and send a note home. The punishment at home was worse than the punishment in school. He did finish, apparently, the eighth grade. He did not finish high school and eventually, got … a job in a beer testing laboratory that tested for the strength of the alcohol strength of the beer. There were a number of breweries in the area, … which led to his working in the dye industry when, during the war, the supply of dyes from Germany was cut off. Many of these breweries … became dye houses, which, in itself, led to his

further study of chemistry at Cooper-Union, from which he did not graduate, either, and he was working for a firm in New York, (AB Dick?), which existed up until fairly recently. Eventually, he got transferred out to Chicago and, from Chicago, back to New York, where he met my mother, who was working as a secretary for the same firm. He then, eventually, … [was] one of four partners who set up a company to make dyes in Newark, Adco Chemical, … which was eventually purchased by Calco Chemical, which, in itself, was purchased by American Cyanamid, etc., down the line. The fact that they were purchased by Calco and the fact that they made, apparently, the best of a particular dye that was going, led directly to his transfer to Bound Brook and the fact that we were not severely impacted by the Depression. His skill in the dye industry led to that.

SH: Can you tell us a little bit about your mother?

AG: My mother, truthfully, background, I … know very little. She was born in New York. There were three children in the family, one brother, she and a sister. I think she was the eldest, but I'm not positive, and standard schooling, whatever that was. She eventually did become a secretary, met Dad and was married fairly late, late twenties, something on that order.

SH: Had her family immigrated to this country?

AG: Oh, … I'm sorry, they came from Germany. Whether or not they [her mother's parents] were married before that, before they came over, I have no idea. I guess I have to go ask my sister what was going on. She seems to know more about that than I do, … but my grandfather on my mother's side was a tailor and, eventually, they eventually wound up in an apartment, part apartment, part shop, on the Grand Concourse in New York, when the Grand Concourse was still reasonably grand. What it's like now, I have no idea, but I think you require a degree in Spanish before you can go near there. I know that she was relatively active in sports, such as they were for women at that time, had an interesting group of women friends and they stayed together, really, until she died or until they all died, or one of the two. They got together a couple of times a year.

SH: Was she from a large family?

AG: No. There were three children.

SH: Did any of your father or mother's relatives serve in World War I?

AG: My Uncle Al served in World War I. I do not know what branch of the service. I assume it was infantry and, whether or not he saw combat, I have no idea. My aunt's husband, Arthur, did serve in World War I. My recollection, and it's amazing how fuzzy things can get, is that he was a photographer and, more than that, I do not really know. We didn't get into that very much. We didn't see them too often, because we were out here; they were all in New York.

SH: When your mother and father married, where did they settle? Where was their home?

AG: They started at, apparently, I believe their first apartment was in Brooklyn. I was born in Brooklyn and it was shortly after that that they set up this company in Newark, in the Ironbound section, and they moved from there to Irvington. … In Irvington, the only recollections there were, there was a huge hill down near the hospital, … with a creek down at the bottom. You can't find it anymore because the hill seems to have gotten a lot smaller [laughter] and half the street has disappeared by virtue of the Garden State Parkway, as has the creek, and there are only a few leftover memories of that, getting hit on the head with a rock that a playmate tossed down to me.

SH: Where did you begin your elementary education?

AG: I think I had about a half a year of kindergarten in Irvington. Then, we moved and I was in either kindergarten or whatever, in intermediate, in Plainfield. We were in the, whatever it was, east end of Plainfield, and I stayed there until I guess … it must have been the third or fourth grade. The only one I have a sharp memory of is the fifth grade, when we were in the west end of Plainfield. We purchased a home there on Sixth Street, and that's the only sharp memory I have.

SH: You spoke a bit about how your family was protected from the extremes of the Depression, but were you aware of it? Do you have any memories of seeing others affected by it?

AG: No, no. I don't recall seeing any of it in Plainfield, per se; maybe I was just simply not aware. Certainly not in New York, because the only times we went to New York were to visit my grandparents, and then, we drove in through the tunnel and straight on up to the Bronx, no notice of it. Let's face it, I think [at] the time of that, in 1941, I was thirteen, so, it would have passed under my radar very easily, as long as we weren't in a severe problem.

SH: Before Pearl Harbor, what were some of the major events happening either here or overseas?

AG: The only ones that I; well, I'm not going to say that. Fireside Chats, without question, we sat and listened to them and this was a family affair. Actually, I guess there was only one decent radio in the house and this was well before portables and … they were definitely major occurrences. There was certainly news and knowledge of the anti-Semitic activities of the Germans, of the treatment of Jews in concentration camps. This showed up on the news. It certainly showed up in *Reader's Digest*. I don't recall any more definitive reading material, other than that. The newspaper that we had routinely was the *Plainfield Courier* and that wasn't a major item for them.

DE: Did your parents agree with FDR's policies? I am assuming, they did, since you all sat down to listen to the Fireside Chats.

AG: Oh, yes, yes, yes. There was no question that the feeling in the household was pro-Roosevelt. I'm not sure that everybody agreed with everything that he did. Certainly, I would expect there was unhappiness with his activity or his decisions with regard to immigration of the

Jews on the SS *St. Louis*, you know, things of that sort, but [in] the overall, yes. … I do recall that there was significant level of concern over the speeches and activities of Father [Charles E.] Coughlin, of Walter Winchell, of the activities of the Klan. All of these were known to me at that point. There's no question and the fact that anti-Semitism was relatively strong was something that was made known. You found out about it real quick.

DE: Were your parents actively involved politically? Were they active locally or were they part of a political organization?

AG: Political organizations, no, they were not. They were both involved with … local chapters, at least, of national, I think, primarily, Jewish organizations. My mother was active in the National Council of Jewish Women and I think that was the major one at that time. The others have become stronger since, and that one, I don't even know if it exists. … Both of them were heavily involved in the temple and continued to be so right up to their deaths. Anti-Semitism, at that time, was a very strong force. It got me beat up on a couple of occasions. Well, [in] fifth grade, it finally came down to the point where there was a concerted decision that, "This Jew-boy had better learn how to use his fists," because I was going no place with that gauntlet, … on either side, of classmates and the toughest of the bunch being up at the far end and they were not going to let me through that line. I think I put up a … good enough fight, so that, after that, there was no argument. Also, that I wound up on the wrong end of that. [laughter] Another one, in the next grade or so, [there were] some remarks from a classmate that I decided, "Hey, [I] don't like those." Somebody else helped me get home.

SH: What about *Bund* activity?

AG: It was common in Plainfield. There's a strong feeling that … our high school … German teacher was a *Bund*-ist. It was known that his sons were … and they held meetings and so forth, but we didn't have any direct effect. Once the war started, … the Germans were on the other side of the conflict, which was the end of that. The *Bund* was disbanded. … I think, I know, some of the people in the area were interned.

SH: They were German.

AG: Or Germanic, of German origin, yes, and had been strong or active *Bund*-ists. I think it was at that point that people like Father Coughlin finally got the word and shut up, and so, that was the status after '41. Up to '41, there really had been no great activity. I don't even recall that there was no great preparation for war. We presumably were staying out of it, though, we did know about the lend-lease program and I know that. I assume it's *ex post facto*, that I know more about it than I did at that time, though I was aware of it. Sunday, December 7th, my recollection is that we were outside working on the car when we heard the news. I was too young to enlist, but some of the kids in high school did enlist almost immediately. It caused a variety of activities. Our grandfather was living with us at that time, my grandmother had passed away and Dad's parents had long since passed away. My sister, being two, three years younger than I, three I think it is, was so young, which limited … some of the activities that I could get directly involved in. The way in which the area was organized was that Dad wound up being an air raid

warden. God knows what air raid wardens were ever supposed to do, but he was an air raid warden and had a nice white helmet. I haven't the vaguest idea what my mother was doing in this regard, but I just don't have any recollection.

SH: Do you remember rationing?

AG: Oh, yes, I'll get there. Thank you for reminding me, though; I can say that I'll get there very easily after you reminded me. In order to provide emergency services, the Boy Scouts, in which I was an active Scout at that time, were organized into Emergency Service Corps and, in the event of an air raid warning, we all had to hustle to get to our assembly point, which, for me, meant cycling halfway across the town, no big deal, and I was happy to do so, eager to do so, except if my parents happened to be out of the house, in which case, because I had a ten-year-old sister and a seventy-odd-year-old grandfather, I was enjoined from participating in that, which troubled me greatly. However, the problem never did come up. Yes, rationing, the only part of it [that] I think really bothered us in any manner was gasoline rationing and I don't quite know what the deal was, except that I think we had a B classification and Dad took the coupons and handed them to the guy down at the gas station at the corner where we always stopped for gas and we never had any problems. How they arranged it, I have no idea, [laughter] no great recollections of any problems. Of course, we had … brownouts and blackouts and whatnot and they tried to keep the glare down, so that tankers wouldn't get torpedoed and we were certainly aware of the fact that there were U-boats out there, trying to stop the [tankers]. The house that we had had originally had a coal furnace. It had been converted to an oil furnace, to an oil burner, and, with the advent of the oil shortages that resulted, I got the assignment to go hike down into Newark one day and go find some grates for the furnace, which is an interesting chore for a fourteen year-old-kid. I had never been in the Ironbound before, but I had no problems. It was very interesting. I found the grates, hauled them home, heavy darned, things and we converted back to coal, which was much more readily available. Converted, built a coal bin in the cellar, and we were in business, which lasted until the end of the war, when oil was available again, and it got converted back to an oil burner, which was a darn sight more convenient. By the end of the war, when I graduated from high school, in '45, and '45 would have made me just seventeen, [I] could have enlisted. The war was coming down to the end. [My] preference was to … go to college, and so, I started here at Rutgers in June or July of '45. Campus was pretty heavily populated by special, you know, military [students].

SH: Returning veterans?

AG: No, no, they weren't veterans. They were, you know, engineering, education.

SH: The ASTP program?

AG: ASTP, thank you. I had completely forgotten that acronym. … The number of … civilians was relatively low and I think … Ford [Hall] was used as a civilian dorm, but I'm not sure. Winants definitely was and … we played reasonably small schools in football and lost to them, too, [laughter] where the scoreboard was just worked by hand, I know, because I did it.

SH: To back up a little bit, you started high school in 1941. Had you always thought that you would go to college?

AG: Oh, yes, yes, yes. That was a given within the family and part of the given was, somehow or other the impression was, number one, we had to get through high school; number two, you did not get bad grades. [They] damn well told you [that] you didn't get bad grades. Number three, we get through college and go as far as you can, as is meaningful to you. In my sister's case, that took her to her Master's. That's as far as she wanted to go. She went into teaching. She was … educated in NJC. … In my case, it meant that once I got through here at Rutgers, I wanted to go on to graduate school and, if I could, get a PhD in chemistry, … not that PhD meant an awful lot and not that I was going to stay in academia, because I couldn't stand academic chemists. [laughter] I wanted something more, to me, more exciting.

DE: Did you go to Rutgers because it was close by or was there some other reason?

AG: Oh, yes. Well, the reason was very simple. I got rejected by three other schools. The SATs at that time, … there was a general SAT test and then there were, I think it was three or four different specialized tests given in the afternoon. Each one of [the] three schools, I'm trying to recall, the University of Pennsylvania, MIT and I forget who the third one was, wanted different specialized tests. The result was, nobody got around to agree. As a fourth, I'd applied to Rutgers. Rutgers accepted me. I'm very happy that they did, because I hope it remains as good a school now as it was then. We've got one damned good core curriculum and we had some very good professors.

SH: When you were in high school, did you have a mentor? Your father was involved in chemistry.

AG: No.

SH: You just knew that you wanted to do this.

AG: Yes. This is interesting to me. Physics was not, particularly, because there was too much math. I just didn't enjoy math. Mathematics was not part of it. Engineering, (*cum se, cum sa*?), didn't like it very much. Chemistry was intriguing, somehow or other.

SH: In high school, were you involved in any extracurricular activities?

AG: Well, let's see, in my freshman year, I tried out for the football team. I managed to get on to the B squad of the junior varsity, got into one game, got kneed in the groin and said, "Enough, this is not for me." I went out for tennis and I don't think they ever had a more inept applicant for the tennis team. So, I really didn't go very far with that. Much more, the activities I remember had more to do with the plays that were put on. I was not on the stage, I was back stage and the props and the sceneries and such. That's all that I can remember.

SH: Did any of your friends come to Rutgers from high school?

AG: Yes. There were three of us [who] were roommates here at Winants. We had a fourth roommate in the suite that we were using and we changed that a couple of times. We all didn't get along with [him], at least that first assignment.

SH: Did you come down to campus for an interview or, when you walked in as a freshman, was that your first time on campus?

AG: I haven't the vaguest. I couldn't tell you at all. … I don't even know what the transport arrangements were at that time. I'm sure I didn't have a car on campus. So, how I got back and forth, I don't know. I do know how my laundry got done, which is by sending it out by mail. This is before laundromats. Most of the meals, I guess, were at the cafeteria, at Winants, the dining hall there, whatever it was, and, if you couldn't take that, then, … what's now the Rutgers Bookstore, directly across Hamilton, was a perfectly awful greasy spoon. There were a couple of others around.

SH: Were there initiations for freshmen at that time?

AG: They had been dropped a year or two before that. We no longer had to wear beanies. We didn't have anything special. The war took care of that pretty quickly.

SH: Did they still have mandatory chapel?

AG: I think so, I think so. I probably slept through that as much … as I could sleep through any service these days. I'm pretty good at sleeping through sermons.

SH: You started out with chemistry as your major.

AG: Correct.

SH: Who was your favorite professor?

AG: My favorite, bar-none, was William Rieman, analytical chemistry. … It was all wet-method chemistry and he was a demanding professor, but fair and pleasant. If you weren't working, you had problems with him, but, if you did work at it and you wanted help, he was always there. He was very, very good.

SH: Did you get involved in any extracurricular activities at Rutgers?

AG: I'm trying to recall. I was not [in a] fraternity. My recollection is no.

SH: Was ROTC still in effect?

AG: ROTC was still in effect, yes. So, we all had some pretty miserable uniforms and we had to show up for drill and [had] to learn how to carry a rifle and all of that. They were stacked over at the squash courts at the gym.

SH: Had your instructors had any experience in the military at that point?

AG: I believe so. Oh, yes, I believe so.

SH: As the veterans began to return to campus, were they integrated into the student body?

AG: That I didn't see until … well after the beginning. It was the end of my freshman year, '45, … V-J Day, which we all celebrated by rushing on into New York and joining the crowd at Times Square.

SH: Tell us about what that was like.

AG: There was a great crowd of people. Everybody was busy yelling. Some of them were busy drinking. We wound up in a Chinese restaurant, and then, came home. … The group I was with was not heavy into drinking; I guess, living on campus, … at that point, made a difference. It meant, among other things, that you were not going to get shot at, which was a perfectly nice concept, because the war in the Pacific was not something that anybody really wanted to get involved in, if you had any choice of the matter. …

DE: Did you finish at Rutgers before you went into the service?

AG: No, no. … It became apparent that, even though the war was over, we were going to maintain a fairly large Army and the draft was going to be continued, which meant that, at some point, in the middle of our education, or, more probably, right after we got a degree, I was Class of '49, at that point, we would be drafted, which, to me, didn't make a hell of a lot of sense. So, I said, "Good," a couple of us at that time said, "Why don't we enlist now? Among other things, the Army had a perfectly nice one- and-a-half year enlistment. Good, that means that we would be out, certainly, in a year-and-a-half. Well, that means two years of school. Do it when we want to; we'll be free of the draft later on. As an added bonus, there was still the GI Bill." So, that is precisely what I did do. I signed up in the Army in September and [was] promptly inducted and wound up down in Fort Dix as a starting point.

DE: This would be September of …

AG: Of '46, yes, what should have been my sophomore year. … They shipped me down to Fort McClellan in Georgia, Alabama, I think it's Alabama, for basic training, … which is a miserable time of the year, which is November, December. So, you started off freezing in the morning and too darn hot by noon. I was assigned to the Sixth Division in Korea. … They were part of the Army of Occupation of Japan, officially, but the actual location was Korea and we were out in the boondocks in Korea, went over, of course, by troopship, and I swore that the damned thing would fall apart in the storm. It didn't.

DE: Did the friends that you came to Rutgers with also enlist at that time?

AG: One did. He wound up over in Yugoslavia. I don't think that the other two did. Whether they ever went into [the] service, I don't know, but this, by enlisting then, … yes, I was able to put it behind me. My service consisted of, primarily, guard duty, a presence in Korea in support of the government. We were there. We were out in the boondocks.

DE: If I can back up for a second, can you tell us a little bit about what basic training was like? [laughter]

AG: Miserable, [laughter] a fair amount of running, lots of push-ups, of which I am, was and am, unable to do properly.

SH: Where did you do your basic?

AG: At Fort McClellan. A lot of close order drill, a lot of waking up early and waiting around and some group marches. I don't think it was as rugged then as it has become. I think it has toughened considerably, a reasonable amount of work …

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

DE: This is the beginning of tape one, side two. Please, continue.

AG: Okay, a reasonable amount of work on the firing range, … using the M-1 rifle, carbine, whatever that was designated as. My best recollection, though, was learning how to use the .45. I couldn't hit the broadside of a barn with the darned thing. I just kept firing very low all the time. I said, "There was a heavy trigger pull." The Captain was trying to correct me and sort of objected when I wound up pointing [it] at his head, because he was behind me. He didn't think that was very nice. [laughter] … Through it all, I also got to lug the tripod end of a heavy machine gun, which, somehow or other, qualified me for the MOS of a machine gunner, never fired the darned thing, and, with that, somehow or other, [it] resulted in my being assigned as an infantryman to the Sixth Division, as I mentioned. … My recollection is that the name of the village in Korea was Ch'ongju, but I'm not positive, and there we were. I don't know what we were supposed to do. Our main work was that of guarding the [area]. There were two camps, one on either side of the river, the battalion, and one of them was in the process of being torn down. So, we were out there guarding that. Well, okay, [if] the Koreans wanted to steal something, they were allowed to. We weren't going to shoot at them. We had nothing against them, and, you know, in the main, I think that most of the stuff that disappeared was in payment for the services of a couple of the prostitutes.

SH: We wanted to ask you about fraternization.

AG: No great fraternization, no, but they were there. They've been there for every war, from time immemorial. …

DE: Before you went to Korea, did you have any idea what occupation duty would be like?

AG: No. We knew nothing. We only knew that we were going to be shipped out to somewhere to do something. My own job was that of being an infantryman, pulling guard duty and KP and the rest of that foolishness, route marches and such, and, after a while, I got tired of that. So, I volunteered to be an MP, which turned out to be duller, more miserable, than being an infantryman. So, I went back to the company, said, "Enough of that," and I stayed there until the First Sergeant came out one day and asked, "Is anybody here a carpenter? The Engineers need one." I stuck up my hand, "I'm a carpenter." My only worry was that I'd meet a real carpenter. I knew how to handle a saw and a hammer and all of that. That was no problem. I wanted something that would keep me stimulated more than what we were doing and, in point of fact, I did meet a real carpenter. I was partnered with him. He really didn't give a hoot who he was partnered with, as long as the Koreans did all the work. We had a couple of them with us and, for all of the things that we did, why, they were hard workers. We were the supervisors. They climbed up on the roof to install things on officers' houses and … we took care of the fire to keep warm. It was fairly simple. This actually worked out very well. We did actually build some things. We built a lubricating rack out of timber for the trucks. Well, I suggested that we test it with a jeep. I think he suggested we test it with a jeep. The guy in the motor pool suggested he test it with a two-and-half-ton-truck. [laughter] It held. We never got shot at. We only threatened, on occasion, to shoot at somebody else, when we're on guard duty and they were playing games. The Officer of the Day would play games, because he was bored, too. So, he'd drive out to the, the one I remember, … rail yard, which is pitch black, and we knew he was coming because the only headlights in town were the jeep of the officer of the day, you know, [at] midnight or two in the morning and [we] knew he was coming and, you see, I ordered … him to stop. He stopped when I pulled back the bolt on the rifle, he stops.

SH: Did you have any interaction with any other Koreans, other than the people who worked with you?

AG: The only other interaction that I can recall was with a fellow who ran a small shop. I think it was a photo shop and I know I wound up trading, I guess it was basically trading a camera that I had brought along for one that he had that I wanted. I think he developed some pictures for me. I know I got some left over from that era ...

SH: How much fighting had gone on there before you?

AG: Very little, very little, … if any.

SH: You saw it as it was before and after the war.

AG: Because the Japanese Army had, to a great extent, been pulled [out] to defend the mainland, so, there was nobody there. Once the Japanese surrendered, the Japanese there in Korea did, too.

SH: Was there any talk of what it was like for the Koreans to live under the Japanese occupation?

AG: You don't know any Koreans? A, I could not speak Korean; they couldn't speak English. I don't know how we managed to converse. We did see, you know, some of the ways in which they lived. We certainly slogged through enough or around enough rice paddies and behind honey buckets, honey wagons and things of that sort to know something about the way [they] lived and it's pretty primitive. In town, it wasn't so primitive. They did have lights. We were able to observe the fact that they did not use pillows, that they used these little, fancy blocks to support their head while they were sleeping. I really have very few recollections. I suppose I should have been far more observant, but I was not.

SH: Did you have good mail service from home?

AG: It certainly wasn't by air. So, you're talking six weeks, which made for an awful lot of mold on a couple of salamis that came through, [laughter] nothing much more than that.

SH: Were the men that you worked with from all over the United States?

AG: They were from all over, all over. We were talking [about] a very, very polyglot group. There were some Jews, enough to form a reasonable sized congregation in the regimental headquarters for major services, but that was the better part of a day's truck trip in order to get there, so, it wasn't very frequent. I would say, let me guess, in terms of [my] recollection is that there were no more than forty to fifty who gathered for such a thing, for such services, and I don't even remember which ones might have been involved. I presume it was the high holydays, but I'm not sure and that's out of the regiment.

SH: Were there any African-American soldiers?

AG: Very few, yes. The … Indians were represented. I think we had one in our company, battalion.

SH: Did you have any interaction with them?

AG: Yes. He and I didn't get along.

SH: What kind of entertainment was provided?

AG: The USO had movies. They had a library. The books weren't particularly good and I know because I spent most of my time when I was with the MPs sitting inside. We were supposed to be outside, but, in the middle of the night, [I was] sitting inside, reading by the light of a forty-watt bulb, which was too far away from me. … There was very little in the way of entertainment. I don't recall much.

SH: Did you play cards? What did people do?

AG: Gone, I can't tell you. I don't know. Obviously, … the time got passed, somehow or other. You wrote letters. I really, really don't know, don't have any recollection.

SH: Did you think of trying to go to OCS or any kind of officer training?

AG: Oh, absolutely not. [laughter] Oh, no, I just wanted out. Yes, there was an effort made, when we were discharged, to have us join the active Reserve and the answer was absolutely not, which was perfectly good, because it wasn't too much longer that the Korean Conflict came along and I was able to say, "Thank you, I don't want to be part of that."

SH: Was your tour of duty shortened at all?

AG: Actually, … I only had a year-and-a-half. It was a year-and-a-half enlistment and it started in September; I think I was out in January.

SH: How did you come back?

AG: From [Korea]? Well, the ship from Seoul, transport to Sacramento or San Francisco or whatever it was, we were discharged at Camp Stoneman and I took the bus back across.

SH: Did you?

AG: … I figured I wanted to see some of the country and I didn't know when I'd get a chance to do so again, so, I took the bus across. We'd taken the train going out to Stoneman from New York to Chicago to Santa Fe. … I guess it was a troop train, I'm not sure. I think that there were designated cars.

SH: Do you remember anything about either trip that stuck out in your mind?

AG: The troop train going down to McClellan had to stop, for whatever reason, right alongside a watermelon field. We all had watermelon. I'm sure that the farmer objected.

SH: When you were in Korea, were there any veterans of either the Pacific Theater or the European Theater stationed there? Was there an exchange of stories?

AG: No, because all of the veterans were NCOs, and so, we did not have more than, you know, official contact with them. If you were a relatively heavy drinker, then, you might very well have, because some of them were fish, but, more than that, no.

SH: Did you have any interaction with any of the other services?

AG: I had no contact with them, no contact. No, no, no, there's nobody else around. In that town, there were three classes of people. There was the Army, there were the Koreans and there were, I think, three women in the USO, period, which we could look at from afar. [laughter]

SH: Did you make any friends during your time in the Army that you maintained the friendship?

AG: Not really, not really. Truthfully, I mean, no; I was headed back to college and none of the people I was with were of that intellectual level.

DE: When you were in the Army of Occupation, did you have any strong anticipation for coming back to Rutgers? Did you want to continue the course you started out in at Rutgers?

AG: Oh, that was a given, yes. Yes, I was going to continue that. There was no change in my direction as a result of [the] service.

SH: Did you keep in contact, with the people at Rutgers?

AG: Possibly. I have no recollection about it. [laughter] Let's face it, I don't even remember … what my kids did ten years ago, much less fifty.

AH: As a freshman, did you have any interaction with the NJC campus?

AG: Yes, without question and that meant walking from here to there, which was not a particularly dangerous occupation, and there were some significantly shorter paths than going up, straight up, Albany Street, … yes. Among other things, at that time, one of the more or less favorite occupations was canoeing on the lake that used to exist over on the other side of Route 1, which has since become a swamp, if anything. It may be a housing development by now.

SH: In the Army, did you witness or were you subjected to any anti-Semitism?

AG: Not particularly, other than, possibly, this Indian fellow I mentioned. As I said, we did not get along well. We tangled only once. I gave as good as I got.

SH: Did you know where he was from?

AG: No. [My] recollection says Oklahoma, but that's as much as I can do. That may be inaccurate.

DE: Did you use the GI Bill when you came back to Rutgers?

AG: Oh, yes, sure, the GI Bill took care of tuition and books and so forth through the three years that I, had left here at Rutgers, and then, it supported me through a goodly course in my graduate work. The GI Bill and the Marshall Plan are two of the more enlightened pieces of legislation that this country has ever put together. Why we can't continue, it to be as enlightened in other things, I have no idea, but they were fabulous.

SH: Since you had the GI Bill, did you think of transferring to another institution?

AG: Rutgers was a very, very good school.

SH: Especially in your field, at that time.

AG: It has remained very good and I had no thought of staying in academics. Therefore, there was no great reason to, in terms of prestige, and, if I were to do so, even from a prestige standpoint, graduate school would be the more important [area], but, no, there was no question of going elsewhere.

SH: Coming back as a sophomore, was your attitude towards your studies different? Had your time in the military changed you?

AG: The attitude towards the studies was, I came back as a sophomore and I came back to a campus which was older than I was, because there were a lot of veterans on campus, in some ways. The sophomores tended to be younger than I was by two years, which made the fraternity scene unacceptable to me. Among other things, I was an idealist of some weird form. I still question why it was that I was, but I was, [laughter] so, I stuck with it, haven't been able to change that.

SH: I suspected it has not changed.

AG: So, I did not want [that]. I basically … was a fish out of water in either side, either they were older or they were younger. So, I lived at home. I commuted from Plainfield. I put a lot of miles on the car, some of them at very high speed at night. [laughter]

DE: Academically, did you find it hard to continue where you left off?

AG: Not that I recall. I think I was able to pick [it] up fairly readily.

DE: What were the classes like, with this wide range of student ages?

SH: And maturity, I would think.

AG: I think that that's the answer, the wide range of maturity. Those who were immature, … they acted like kids, but they didn't interfere too much, because they get slapped down. They just plain didn't interfere too much. … I think they knew better, because the older ones wouldn't put up with them. We were there for an education and the courses we were taking were rather demanding, not that I consider philosophy particularly demanding other than that of being able to stay awake through [the] reading and through the classes.

SH: Who was your professor in philosophy?

AG: In [my] freshman year, it had been somebody who was here for halfway to forever and held huge classes. I don't remember his name. I do remember looking down the line and seeing all

heads bent over asleep, [laughter] and then, I took another one. I think there were all of ten people in a small room about this size, which was always too hot and I was always asleep.

SH: Those were your two electives as a chem major.

AG: I remember trying to read something by a Bishop somebody or other and … I've looked at that book since and it hasn't gotten any more sensible. [laughter]

SH: As a commuter student, did your interest in campus life change at all?

AG: Sure, diminished, if anything.

SH: Did you attend football games or athletic activities?

AG: Yes, I did, but that's about all. Oh, at one point or other, I think I tried out for crew, but I found out very shortly that being five-foot-nine or five-foot-ten is not exactly the height that Chuck Logg was interested in. If you're over six feet now, he'll consider you.

SH: Were you exempt from ROTC?

AG: Yes.

SH: You only got one year of ROTC.

AG: Yes. That was quite enough, thank you. [laughter] Yes, I was exempt from that. … Since I was off campus, I was able to hold a part time job on Saturdays and some nights and whatnot in Plainfield, which is perfectly good. It kept me out of mischief.

SH: You were able to handle the chemistry load and working part-time.

AG: Yes.

SH: Your sister would have come to campus before you graduated. Is that true?

AG: Sure.

SH: Did you see each other at all?

AG: No.

SH: Did she live on campus?

AG: She lived on campus, yes. No, no, she lived on campus. She was over across town.

DE: What did she study?

AG: I don't know. [laughter] I think … she wound up being a teacher, so, what her specialty was, I don't know. I assume that that was [what] she stayed at. She met and married a fellow who was going to Rutgers. He was in the, I think, English Department and I believe he did graduate work here. I don't recall.

SH: When the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, you were still a student. Were you aware of what had happened? What were you told about the bomb?

AG: It was immediately made known that it was an atomic explosion, that it was a fusion reaction, and there was no great secrecy, as I recall, as to … what the energetics of that particular explosive were.

SH: With your scientific background …

AG: Well, I think that was in the *New York Times*. There was no immediate outcry against it. Those things come along long afterwards.

SH: Your family had been great supporters of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his policies. Do you remember their reaction when he died?

AG: A, sadness, B, no great surprise. It was rather obvious that he had been severely ill.

SH: How was your faith in Harry Truman?

AG: When Harry Truman recognized Israel in '48, there was absolutely no question.

SH: Were there Zionists in your family?

AG: Oh, of course, of course. The Jewish community is splintered all the [way] across from severe anti-Zionist to those who had to be there in 1890, but, no, this was seen as a very strong and positive [development].

SH: Before that, were there any doubts about his ability?

AG: Everybody had doubts. This was a man who had been an undistinguished senator, an invisible Vice-President and a failed haberdasher. This is what was known about him. The fact that he grew in office and that he continued to grow in office, [there] was some argument about that.

SH: Had your political or philosophical views changed since you were a young man?

AG: Not significantly. I'm more conservative now than I was, but I was never a firebrand. I was never an activist and I'm more inclined to be skeptical now.

SH: The Vietnam War would not have affected your family. Your children would have been too young.

AG: With the exception of my oldest son.

SH: Really?

AG: … The war ended just prior, really, to him having to make a decision as to what he was going to do. I know that he was significantly exercised about whether or not he would be drafted or would be a conscientious objector or head for Canada, and I know that we talked about it, but I don't recall that I ever came down strongly in any one … of the directions. We knew by that time that we'd been conned in terms of getting into the war and that it was necessary for us to get the hell out of there.

SH: Where did you go for your advanced degrees? Did you make that transition through Rutgers?

AG: Oh, yes, yes, yes, senior year, I applied to a couple or three schools. I don't have any idea which ones they were now, other than Cornell, which did accept me. By the time I started there, I was already engaged. My wife was … going to be working for that year down at Fort Monmouth. … She was trained as a bacteriologist, also at NJC.

SH: I was just going to ask if she is an in NJC alumnae?

AG: Oh, yes. Well, for those final three years, for two-and-a half of those final three years, she was at NJC, I was here at Rutgers. We never met. The occasion for our meeting was very simple. I was doing a Henry Rutgers project. I was in the first Henry Rutgers class. My research project in chemistry was a fairly long synthetic route and the final step in this synthetic route had the good graces to wind up all over the side of the hood, which made it very difficult to isolate anything. So, I said, "Okay, I will join you guys up at the science conference at Yale." That was supposed to have been the weekend in the lab. Almost everyone [went] up to the science conference in Yale and I had the good taste to lean against the chalkboard up there without realizing it and, at some point, in walking to the next venue, somebody said, "Hold still," and she proceeded to slap my rear end. [laughter] We met. When we left there; she had driven up with friends from NJC, I was with guys from here. When we left, I told her that I'd see her in town. Well, I guess our "cell phones" weren't working all that well, because she heard, "I'll see you around." She's rather annoyed at that, I'm happy to say. However, by the time she got back to the dorm, she found that I had already called five times. I was concerned that she hadn't shown up yet when she should have. I didn't know they'd stopped at a friend's house up in North Jersey, enough said.

SH: This would have been in your senior year.

AG: Senior year. It was just in time for both of us to have dates to the upcoming proms and to understand the fact that we did get along pretty well.

SH: Where did you marry?

AG: Newark. There's a hotel, there was a hotel, I forget which one; Barbara remembers, I don't. All I know is that it was the hottest day, hottest June 15th, on record.

[TAPE PAUSED]

DE: You mentioned earlier that you are a Henry Rutgers Honor Scholar, one of the first. Can you tell us a little bit about what that was like? What did that entail? How did you figure out which project would be on?

AG: The project had to be in organic chemistry, because I did not really enjoy physical chemistry or analytical chemistry is, to me, an adjunct sort of thing. Inorganic was not. I probably should have paid more attention to it and organic was what intrigued me and the project was the result of a discussion with my professor at that time, Ulrich Strauss, and he and I talked about it and he told me what he was trying to do, and so, we mapped out an approach to it and I did all of the necessary book work, obviously not all of it, because of the final results, and, now, I know more about those reactions, and then, you know, there was a fair amount of library work required, all of which required a fair number of note cards to be prepared. One prepared note cards at that time and you had to work in the library, because … there was no Internet access or anything else. … The laboratory that we were using was out at the Heights and was one of the Quonset huts. I believe it is still there. It's no longer part of the Chemistry Department, but [we] had a Quonset hut, which was supposed to have been demolished by that time, [but] was still there, as were those over … along the river, where there are now dorms. I had some French classes in there in my senior year. [I] took French in my senior year simply because I knew I'd need it when I got to graduate school. I had to be able to [speak a foreign language]. So, I took one semester of baby French there. Then, I got out of that and took another semester of French at night school, which afforded me the luxury of never having to study French grammar and grammar being one of my less favorite subjects. In fact, it's almost my least favorite subject. I still don't agree with all the grammar that Windows keeps throwing at me. I disabled all of those things; I can't stand them. The project, it grew of itself. … To my recollection, there were no Henry Rutgers colloquiums or any such [thing] at that time, that it has been all feeling their way along. There were a couple of us in chemistry and we really didn't know any of the others who were involved across the campus. … To my recollection at least, it was a very solitary sort of thing.

DE: Do you know how big the group was?

AG: Not really. I have no recollection of that.

SH: Were you given any history on how the program came to?

AG: No. Well, maybe, yes. If one could rely on memory, I guess I would remember something. I don't seem to be able to remember anything of that. I do know that I [was] approached at some

point, I don't even remember by whom, asking whether I would be interested in an honors program and, in point of fact, I was, which was perfectly good. I managed to get a thesis out of it and, despite the thesis, a wife, a degree, Phi Bet, you know, all the rest of the good stuff, and it got me into graduate school and we were married after my first year in graduate school, and then, proceeded to get Barbara a job up there, still in bacteriology. She was working for the Ag School at Cornell. I had an apartment up there, got the apartment, got ourselves moved in and cleaned up the place real quick, because our respective mothers were due. They drove up together. They had to inspect this place. [laughter] It was really great.

SH: When you were on campus and your wife was at NJC, since you were both interested in science, did you see her in any of your classes

AG: No. I didn't meet her until either March or April of our senior year. Furthermore, there was very, very little interaction between the two campuses.

SH: I wondered if the sciences brought any of them together.

AG: No. At that time, there was very little interaction and Rutgers was, at that point, … all-male. So, you know, a few changes have flowed under the bridge since then.

SH: Your mothers approved of the apartment.

AG: Didn't have much choice. [laughter] Fortunately, they got along well and we got along, both got along very, very well with family. We've done pretty well. In fact, we celebrate number fifty in June.

SH: Congratulations.

AG: Which will take us all on a trip up to Alaska, there's a celebration, all fourteen.

SH: Tell us about your family. What are they doing?

AG: What are the families doing? … Barbara and I have four children, the first of whom was born one month after I got out of Cornell. It was sort of a race, "Is the stork going to get there or am I going to get finished first?" In point of fact, I managed to get out of there and we had an apartment down in West Orange by that time and I was working in General Foods in Hoboken. Just to scratch my own back for a moment, I managed that little chore of getting through Cornell and getting my PhD in three years. Well, I'm told, … even for then, it was a little quick and this was with relatively little help from my major professor, who has spent most of his time either ill or worried about his consulting lab. …

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

DE: This is the beginning of tape two, side A. Mr. Goldstein, you were telling us about how you finished your PhD at Cornell quite quickly.

AG: I guess I spent a lot of time in the lab. I wasn't very interested in staying there. I was married, I wanted to get out and get to work and we had [our first] child on the way, and so, I spent a lot of time in the lab and managed to do it reasonably well. I got four papers out of it. It was very nice, and so, let's see, [I] went to work for General Foods, [the] major reason being that this was an opportunity to stay in New Jersey. We wanted to stay near both families. My father-in-law, … I never knew him. He passed away when my wife was still in high school, but she wanted to stay near her mother, which was understandable, and I wanted to stay near the folks, and so, this gave us an opportunity to stay in Jersey. I did. I worked there for a year before I left. I was not happy with the type of work we were doing, not the company. The company was perfectly good, but [it was] the type of work we were doing and the idea of a very, very subjective evaluation of food flavoring. I was involved in the … aromatization of instant coffee.

DE: It was not too exciting.

AG: Oh, it wasn't bad. It wasn't really exciting, but what they were planning to do with the results of some taste tests went against my scientific soul. I just couldn't tolerate this type of approach and it may be common in the flavoring industry and the food industry, but it didn't make any sense to me, so, I left there, joined another small firm in the Fords, which led us to want to move and the question was, "Where do we move to?" and we wound up down in what is now Tinton Falls, right outside Red Bank. Our eldest son was Dan. He was born in '54. Our eldest daughter was born in '56, right after we moved into the house. Rob was born in, I think it was '58, yes, it was just under two years, and then, along about nine years later, we said to ourselves, "Hey, we've run out of babies around here. We need another baby." God knows why, but we did. So, we arranged that and that turned out to be Janet in '66 and Robbie was very happy. As the youngest, he had been put upon to that point and so, now, he had somebody he beat on. They are very, very close friends. Actually, the whole family is. It has taken some time. An interesting point, Janet was born in '66, Dan in '56. By the time she was five, he was well into high school. By the time she was six or seven, he was in college. Sometime after that, … he invited her down for a week. He was living in Florida by that time and, when I drove her to the airport, she said, "I'm scared," and I said, "Why?" "Because I don't really know him." That's the difference in age. That's what living together has done. There was no problem with it, they worked out beautifully and … the family is very close. They do stay in touch with one another.

SH: Are they living in the area?

AG: Dan is still down in Florida. He's a physical therapist, has his own place down there. Audrey is a physician's assistant. She's out in Tucson. Rob, … his wife and son are up in Califon and Janet and Jim and their two kids are in Matawan, or Aberdeen, whatever that is. The result is that we have grandchildren ranging from two-and-a-half to nineteen.

DE: Did any of your children end up going to Rutgers?

AG: Yes, one, Rob did, and we cheered, because this meant that the tuition was only going to be half of what it was for the others. He did go to Rutgers and we are very, very thankful that he

did. He became involved with the band right off the bat. Why? I think he just wanted to be. His only use with the trumpet was to be in the band. He doesn't play very well [laughter] and I don't recall whether it was the end of his freshman or the end of his sophomore year, one of the two, toward the end of it, he got peeled off his motorcycle … by a driver. He crossed over the middle line. They were over on Metlars Lane and the eventuality, after three months, roughly, in the hospital, over here at St. Peter's, was that he lost a leg above the knee, but the fact that he was involved with the band and that he was here close to campus and that there were people on campus all summer was a fabulous boon to him. … Right afterwards, as soon as he could put on any sort of a [prosthetic], he was still on crutches with a prosthetic, he was back with the band, not marching but he was with the band. They were happy to have him back. The following spring or fall, whatever, he went back to band camp and we had worked on a device that would bend the leg, so that he could march with the band with a high step, high knee step, which would cause the prosthetic to bend properly and he practiced by marching up and down the backyard. [laughter] … He commented that there was no experience like the … marching test of having him play and march up and back, knowing that there were a hundred people there cheering for you. It was gorgeous, and he has remained active with the alumni band since then. He's also a big fan of the Rutgers basketball, and so is his five-year-old son. [laughter]

SH: Did your wife work while the children were growing up?

AG: Not until Janet, the youngest, was in kindergarten. She was active in various volunteer activities, two or three different [things], the temple, plus, … a couple of different activities, the League of Women Voters, the Junior League. At one point or another, she's been in all of them. We were instrumental in founding the Temple in Tinton Falls, Monmouth Reform Temple, and so, from '59 on, we both … have put in a lot of time on that.

SH: Do you share any other passions? I know you golf.

AG: So does she and we have a tennis game at 2:30. So, we play each other. We have a singles game every week. We enjoy the symphony. We enjoy some plays. If you have a chance to get [to] the one at George Street, we saw it last night. It was excellent, very, very good. We enjoy folk music, so we chase over to Princeton every month to a folk concert over there.

SH: Do you play any instruments?

AG: The radio. [laughter] I have tried various instruments. Well, you see, if you can't hear the tone well enough to tune the instrument, you've got problems.

SH: Any other questions?

DE: I do not have any further questions.

SH: If there is anything that you would like to say on tape before we end the interview, please do so. How did your Rutgers experience and/or your military experience make you the man we talked to today?

AG: Well, now, we're going back to philosophy. … Rutgers and [the] military, to me, were adjuncts of what I had at home. That was absolutely formative, as far as I was concerned and I guess, to a very great extent, what I had was a requirement that I do a job well. Do it, do it well, … I found this even in, you know, … Scouting, when I was thirteen and fourteen. I could do it well. I just objected to some of these people from council getting in the way. We knew what we were doing, so, "Go away, get out of my hair." Maybe I was wrong, but as a troop, we did very well. There, the requirement there was the same. "You can do it, go ahead and shoot for it," which included, you know, Eagle Scout level, and so, … another year should take care [of] the third generation of the household.

SH: You were able to do it and, now, your son and grandson have.

AG: My son was, both sons and grandson. So, we'll get there, unless he gets too involved in high school activities or debating or something like that, which seems to have taken some impetus from the Scouting trail. That's what happens to high school kids.

SH: Thank you very much for coming in and taking time to do this interview.

AG: I hope it's been helpful.

SH: It has. This ends our interview with Dr. Goldstein.

AG: Better turn that off before I say anything more. [laughter]

DE: Thank you for coming down, Dr. Goldstein.

AG: You're quite welcome.

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

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