RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH LEONARD J. HANSEN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Mr. Leonard Hansen on December 3, 1996 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler...

Stacey Morgan: Stacey Morgan.

KP: I guess I would like to begin by asking you about your parents, who both immigrated from Norway to the United States.

Leonard Hansen: That's right. You're way ahead of me. They came from two different towns in southern Norway. Both from the Bible Belt of Norway. Norway is not known generally among the world at large as people that are conservative in their religion, but in southern Norway that was the case. One came from Grimstad, that's my father, and my mother came from just outside of Krisiansand, a little town called Sogne. They immigrated here in the early part of this century. To this day, I don't know the exact years. But they immigrated and met here.

KP: Why did they leave Norway, do you know?

LH: Yes. Like so many other people, they found it hard to make a living. My mother and I visited her, that's my grandmother, when I was ten years old. They lived in utter poverty. I mean, it was a shack. It was almost frightening. The first night I was there was when I was ten years old with my brother, Stanley. We went over there and there was hardly any light. It was kind of candlelight, an elaborate shack of some kind. They had to have milk that their neighbors left to them. They were so poor. They had a few potatoes that they grew and some vegetables and it was a hard go. My mother felt that there was a land of promise known as the United States, and took her chance. My father, too, in Grimstadt, although it wasn't quite the same. Grimstadt is a wonderful fishing town, a town in southern Norway, an absolutely idyllic little town. He loved adventure, too, I think. [He] got on a boat and came here and never went back. Whereas his brother, who got into the building business in the '20s, went back in the 1930s, just at the time before the great upheaval of the Depression in this country. Today, they are big landowners there, my cousins. I visit them frequently and someday …

KP: It sounds like your family had a lot of contact with your Norwegian relatives growing up and down to this day.

LH: Yes, as a matter-of-fact, three of my four sons I had sent to Norway to be with a different family [with] Herbert Waarum, in this town of Grimstad, who took care of them. They spent at least, one [son], two years of two months, and the another one, one year, the other two [sons], one year of one and a half months each. They love Norway but they love this country, too.

SM: That's wonderful for them to have that opportunity, that's really wonderful.

LH: It's a plus. I also had a great friend, who was in charge of all of the shipping for one of the giant companies, who lived in Englewood, and he put them on their [company's] boats to take them there and they worked for a dollar an hour and so on. This was when they were teenagers in high school and college. It was very nice. They love Norway in the same way, and it is kind of

getting to be almost a boom country. It was always very poor, struggling always, because it's rocks and it's endless waterways and islands. It goes on and on and on. I've been there four times now. One time I went with the University Glee Club. I was then known as "Oh, Great Viking," not "Great Viking," but "Oh, Great Viking." So, we had a lot of fun.

KP: It must have been very thrilling when you were ten to go to Norway and then to go across the ocean.

LH: Yes, absolutely. We went on the *Bergensfjord*, that was an ocean liner, when I was ten years old, in 1930. I remember vividly some things that happened. At that time, I had a heart problem. I had a leaking valve. Doctors knew so little, really, about the causes of the heart in the late '20s and so on. But it was apparent, when I came back from four months of living on this farm in Norway, I came back and I was much more fitted to indulge in athletics and so on. That's how I no longer had to be, I was confined to bed for two months and then I was out of school for a year when I was seven and eight years old. And then I gradually outgrew that heart problem.

KP: And Norway is some ways ...

LH: ... The air was so extraordinary. The air was clear. There was no smoke stacks all around. My mother always attributed to Norway, to the change [in my condition]. Whether it was true or not, maybe I would have naturally outgrown it. I still have a little murmur. Everybody has a heart problem when you get to be my age.

KP: It sounds like you were fluent in Norwegian ...

LH: I would hardly put it that way. I would say we mimicked our parents because when they spoke they tried so hard to speak English. They would break into Norwegian and we would have both going at the same time. My fellows, my friends, who were also sons and daughters of Norwegian parents, had great fun and mimicked them, you know? Attempting to mix the pickles. We enjoyed that because we all went to the Norwegian churches, which was Fundamentalist and Evangelical and Puritan and that sense. When I went to church in Teaneck, New Jersey, we had Norwegian sermons in the morning and in the afternoon. Occasionally, we would have an English affair at night, where we had testimonies and that sort of thing. It was very, very strict. No smoking, drinking, gambling, playing cards, going to movies, and that kind of thing. None of that at all, and it was very clannish.

KP: The Lutheran Church, if I remember correctly, is the established church in Norway.

LH: They weren't wild liberals compared to the Norwegian Evangelical preachers, which is true.

KP: What was is like to be part of this Norwegian community, where, for example, you worshipped in Norwegian and then to be part of public high school?

LH: Fascinating. Absolutely. There were two worlds. One world where we grew up and we were all close friends. We sang together. We had a basketball team, which I played on, and we played

the other Free Churches in Jersey City, in Brooklyn, and in New York, and Orange. They all had Norwegian churches. The preaching was all in Norwegian. We had that camaraderie and I had very nice parents, very good parents. They cared for us very carefully, you know, so that when we were let out into the big wide, wild world, like going into high school, that was something, changing gradually and I managed because I wanted to play basketball. I played basketball and football at high school, at Dwight Morrow High School in Englewood. There, of course, you sweated and you used some obscenity on occasion. I listened to this … I always thought my basketball coach was surely one of the great Irish gentlemen in the field of wonderful obscenities. He made them up. They came from his soul. It was so original. They were very strange and we acclimated ourselves to that world but it worked out. I was still what you might call a born-again Christian. I was born-again twice, once when I was about fourteen and once when I was about sixteen. They hovered over us to make sure that we were, that everything was all right with God. I'd say, "Yeah, things are okay."

KP: So, the personal relationship with God and having conversions was a real ...

LH: ... Very real thing, yeah. These were people who were absolutely sincere. There was no tele-evangelism about them at all. It was very much a deep belief in that world. That was the world, that was their social world, that was their intellectual world, that was the world of everything for these people. Most of them were carpenters, or seamen, or builders, and, which was my father, grocers. They had a variety of things or any job that they could get, but that was the field, very much in the building trade and a lot of carpenters where we were.

KP: What led your parents to come to the New York/New Jersey area when they came over? Do you know why they picked this area?

LH: I really don't know why except that it must have been [that] some of their friends who came first and [that] New York Harbor was where the mecca of new life was to be. Not to go to South Dakota or any of those places but [to] make some attachment. And of course, that is what they did. My father, in one of his first jobs, worked in the clay firms in Perth Amboy, interestingly enough. I never knew much. I never questioned much about it. When I grew up, we never questioned them about it. If I had my father now, I would ask him endless details, you know, because I have a big world of history behind me now that I care very much about.

KP: It is interesting you mention that because I was raised in the Lutheran Church ...

LH: Oh, you were German Lutheran or ...

KP: Well, it was the American Lutheran Church, which sort of amalgamated a lot of the different groups, but I know there was a Norwegian Scandinavian contingent.

LH: Oh, absolutely.

KP: And they could be incredibly, they were very terse and you often really had a ...

LH: Well, we outdid them.

KP: Oh, I am sure.

LH: Because I had a girlfriend who was a Lutheran. She would laugh at me at times at how strict we would be.

KP: I know that they can often be very, they don't gush a lot in terms of talk ...

LH: Yeah, that's true. They are not Irish or Italian.

SM: When your parents first came over, did they settle right in Englewood, or did they move around the area a bit?

LH: Yes, they lived first in Hoboken, New Jersey, which was close to New York City, and my father had a grocery store there. After Perth Amboy, oh, he must have been in Perth Amboy first, now that I think about it, and then he moved there [Hoboken] and had a grocery store. Then his first wife died after having five children and all the children were put in the Christian Orphan Home, which at that time was in Jersey City and then moved later to Fort Lee. There was my mother, who worked as a cook and helper in all areas of the, that's where she got her job, at the Christian Orphan Home of Jersey City, at that time, and then later Fort Lee. He met her there and then married her and she brought up all of my five half brothers and sisters. I was the lowest one, the newcomer, the kid. Six years difference between Stanley and I, and there is only one sister still alive. All the rest have died. They were all six, eight, nine, twelve years older. Only Ethel remains, but she has Alzheimer's.

KP: What was it like to grow up in such a big family where you were clearly the junior?

LH: I was knocked about. My brother, Stanley, tormented me. I did well in grades, to some extent, and Stanley never got beyond the eighth grade and he had something of that demeanor that he made sure that life was not beautiful for me all day long. He would whack me about a bit here and there and tell my mother things about me and exaggerate a little here and there. That was my brother Stanley, that was my next oldest. The others didn't care very much. My sister Ethel took good care of me when I was a baby. She always rode me around and so on. My mother favored me because of my heart condition. She gave me cream and all the rest got milk, you know? Things like that. I said, "Mom, for God sake," I didn't use God sake, I said, "God, please don't do that." Stanley would come along and poke me.

KP: The other irony is giving you cream, because with heart conditions, it's bad for you. That's the last thing you would need.

LH: She gave me cream and what else? Some of that heavy castor oil. Anyway, I was so frail, I was really in bad shape for quite a while, but we came through. Stanley and I had our day of reckoning. We are sitting at the table, it was about when I was feeling my oats, [and] I was a pretty good football player and I think it was my junior, maybe my senior year, [and] we are all at the

table, [and] he was the only one left in the family, all the rest had gone. There was my mother, father, and Stanley and I, and Stanley was still the boss around there, make no mistake about that. So, I knew there would be a day of reckoning. I didn't know when it would happen, but sooner or later, something was going to happen. I said, "Stanley, pass the potatoes," and Stanley said, "You say 'please' when you ask for the potatoes," and I said, "Pass the potatoes." He looked at me, looked me up and cracked me across the jaw and I fell to the floor. And I got up and I was livid. I practically beat the hell out of him. I remember all the pots were falling all over this little kitchen we were in [and] my mother was screaming and yelling, "What's going on here?", and my father said, "All right, let's have it out. Go down the stairs." We were on the second floor, renting for about thirty-five dollars a month. This was [during] the Depression days. We went in the backyard and we put up. Neither of us were boxers, but we went at it for about a half hour and I got him up against the garage and, my father, blood was flowing down on us, my father grabbed me and said, "That's enough, Son." My mother locked the door on my room for two weeks. Stanley vowed he was going to kill me. We got over it. We got over it, but it took time, I tell you. It really took time, but there it was, Stanley never bothered me, he was always nice after that. Unforgettable moments in one's life. That was quite an event.

I enjoyed high school very much. I became like a hero because I was captain of the championship basketball team. I played football and so on. Those are nice years. That was, my father had a partner, Mr. Omley, it was called Omley and Hansen [and] we used to call it Homely and Handsome. Mr. Omley was the same kind of person, came from Norway, and they always moved. They were always partners in everything they did, from the building, Mr. Omley had a delicatessen, my father had a grocery store. Then they went into the building business together. My father handled all of the business and Mr. Omley was the carpenter, personified. He was terrific. He had that kind of a mind, completely different from my father. That's why they got along so well, I think. Then, we went through all of that and my father, when he hit the Depression, he scrambled for any kind of work and went into the real estate business. Well, Mr. Omley just did odd jobs and so on but they hung in together. Mr. Omley had three children, one was Kenneth and one was Herbert, both of whom went to Rutgers, and Lillian, who I don't think she even went to college. But Ken Omley was two years ahead of me at Rutgers. I came in 1939 and he came in 1937 and he was a big man on campus, and he was big, too. He was very heavy. He played football and he played basketball and we played together. When I started my sophomore year at Rutgers at right tackle, Ken would come in and replace me and then Ken would start the next game and then, we would always play the same post, so we were that close in everything we did. Ken died in the war. Kenneth Omley. He was flying over England in a test mission of some kind and was killed in the war. But it was Kenneth Omley that sent me the papers for the Upson Scholarship that I got. All he said was, "Fill them out in a hurry and get them right back." I did that and I got three or four letters from different people and that kind of thing, my whole background. Ken called me about a month later and said, "You got one" and I said, "Wow. My mother and father, I don't think they're gonna like my going to college." He said, "I got my parents over it, you are going to get your parents over it." So my mother still was not sure, my father said "Good, Son, okay. You get an education." So, Ken was a DU and Ken got me a scholarship in the DU house. I made beds. It cost my father about fifty dollars or seventy-five dollars for the whole year because, all the rest I did on my own. I got the scholarship, I made the beds, I waited on the tables, I did dishes, I did all of these things. I used to make the beds on the third floor and you know, a lot of these suave kids

who came in, and they went to the special schools like Hun, and they weren't used to hard work or anything, so I would make their beds. We had about thirty beds on the third floor and I didn't do a good job. I moved quickly on these beds, I mean, I threw them on, I wrapped them around. I think I did thirty beds in about thirty minutes, and it finally came out that "Hansen was derelict in his duties." So I got a couple of whacks, you know. In the fraternity house you have these meetings every month and everyone had to bend down and get a whack. In the hazing days, we went through a lot. But, it was a great experience, getting that piece of paper that I signed, getting the scholarship. I had great years at Rutgers. The first two years I was still a born-again Christian. I used to kneel on my bed every night and I had a sort of a non-entity partner. He hardly said much. I mean, he was my roommate and we were in Hegeman Hall my first year. The next three years, I moved into the DU house but just the first year. He said very little and there wasn't much life and spark in him but he used to look at me a little strangely, [thinking] "What's this guy doing on his knees there?" But we got through that all right. The end of my sophomore year, I was emerging as person that now, on occasion, had a little scotch or beer with a couple of the kids and acted strangely, you know. At the same time, I was taking these course in World History and Humanities that went on for, like two years. Professor Burns and Professor Heald [were] fascinating teachers and I was [also] coming out of the tutelage of Howard MacKinney and music [with] Soup Walter and Scottie Malcolm in the world of English. I had this one memorable moment in my first class in English. We were all in there and they had them broken down into tiers. I guess they did the best, the second, and the third, you know, sort of grouping that way, and I think I was in the first. He assigned everyone in the class, I think there were about twenty [students], to go to a movie, it was a Friday, go to a movie over the weekend and [he said], "When I see you Monday, I want a written critique of that movie." I raised my hand and said, "Professor, I am forbidden by religion to attend a movie." He said, "See me after class, Son." When everybody left, he came up and he congratulated me and said, "Don't worry, I have a short story I want you to read. There isn't a good movie playing in town." He was a very fine teacher and we got along well. I took German, I flunked math. I was a lousy mathematician. The only way I saved my skin in German, first under Holtzman and Herr Doctor Nabholz, was that I yodeled and I sang and I played folk songs. I learned a couple in German and he used to take me around to sing a folk song, you know, and he got me through German. But I made it. I was what you call "a good B student." Most of the rest, except for I got As in sociology and in music. The rest were like Bs and Cs. Mathematics, forget it. I took a course in economics, too, and I survived that. I've forgotten his name. I always remember hearing him talk. He had a nostril that went this way.

KP: While you were college material, in many ways, your parents really did not know what college was.

LH: That's correct.

KP: Or how important it was.

LH: Of all of my brothers and sisters, only one graduated from high school. Some went to high school and never finished. Stanley only got through the eighth grade. Alice only got through the eighth grade.

KP: What did they do?

LH: Stanley became a crane specialist. He was a mechanic's person. Very good in that field, but that was it, okay? He had a coarse personality and [some]one who remembered how to handle me and that kind of thing. But of all the rest, my brother, Wilfred, became a complete alcoholic. My oldest brother, Warren, he was a laundry man. He brought the laundry every week and picked it up. And Ethel became a housewife and married twice. She is the one still living with Alzheimer's now. She's about eighty-five, or something like that.

KP: So your life really changed by coming to Rutgers.

LH: Dramatically. Howard MacKinney used to tell people, "It's not what Hansen did for Rutgers, it's what Rutgers has done for Hansen." We became great friends. We became life-long friends. I became so involved in music. I bought all kinds of records for the DU house and we had sessions of listening to it. Beethoven and Mozart, Brahms and Pergolesi and all the moderns and so on. And, of course, the closeness with Soup [Walter] was like a happy family with his conducting. And I was a soloist as a yodeller and singing folk songs. I grew up singing folk songs and I played the guitar and so on. One time during the war, we had our big spring session concert at the gymnasium here and all of the lights went out. Soup, I was near front, he came up to me [and said], "Get your guitar and yodel because they can't see me. We can't sing." So I had my guitar nearby and I yodeled and, Soup will never forget this, I yodeled several songs and so on and then the lights came on. The great times in the Glee Club, going to Buck Hills Falls, going to Atlantic City, going to all of these special concerts and so on, was very memorable and Soup was like one of us, you know? He was, do you know, have you met him?

KP: I haven't met him personally but I have seen him ...

LH: He's an icon here. He's a special person and he's eighty-five. We just had a big, it seemed every time we have another big concert for him because he's eighty and then he's seventy-five. He's always having big honors, which he deserves every bit of, because it was enjoyable.

KP: I actually, Bob McCloughan invited me to the ...

LH: You know I'll be going?

KP: Yeah. It ended up becoming a more crowded day, but I remember I got an invitation to go to the eighty-fifth concert but I just could not do it on that day.

LH: You can come to our concert on the 14th. It's a Saturday, I think at three o'clock or three-thirty. I've got to sell a little bit.

SM: Sure.

KP: I have a commitment in New York.

LH: Okay. Do you know Dick Hale?

KP: I don't know Dick Hale, I know Bob Moss.

LH: Oh, Bob Moss, sure. We're second tenors together, Bob Moss and I. Dick Hale's a first bass and McCloughan is a second bass. We're about twenty, twenty-two, in the Alumni Glee Club.

KP: I heard you perform at the Friends of the Library reception. In fact, I tell my students ...

LH: Do you remember me? I was always at those. I was head of all the exhibitions for the past five years or six years, for the Friends of the Library. And three of the exhibitions were from my own collection of books, rare books. I've begun to give a lot to Rutgers, already, a little each year, on New Jersey, on a special, on a big collection on Englewood because I was a real estate broker there for twenty years. That collection went to Rutgers and there's very interesting stuff in there, so much so that I almost regret doing it. I want to put on shows at the Englewood Library or Bergen County and that kind of thing, and suddenly I have to go down to Rutgers and pick them up again and then I bring them back. I gave my small, but very elegant, music collection of rare books and illuminated manuscripts, single pages from the great choir books, to Rutgers. And the deal is, I can keep it until I die at my house. But they have everything. It is a contract, you know? And upon my death or if I choose to do it before, which is very possible, move them down there. And I'm giving a lot to Union Theological. I was the chairman of the Union Theological Friends of the Library for two years, two years ago. I'm very close to them there and I gave them $35,000 worth of my rare bibles and manuscripts and so on. That's the appropriate place. They have the greatest library in the North and South America in theological books. In fact, we have a shelf that just came down from the Grolier Club, where we had a big opening of two hundred people and so on. So, they have real scholars on their board, you know what I mean? They are curators of special collections and all that sort of thing.

KP: Since we are on it, I guess one of my questions is, how did you start as a book collector and manuscript collector?

LH: Okay. What happened was that I married Eleanor Mather, who grew up in Highland Park. Eleanor went to Douglass. She never graduated. She didn't finish her senior year because we got married at Kirkpatrick Chapel in my senior year. I met her in the end of August. I first saw her when I attended a Princeton, what is the name of the Princeton theater?

KP: McCarter.

LH: Yeah. And she was there and she was a dazzling beauty. I went with a gal, one of the Harper sisters, who also graduated from Highland Park High School and I asked her who she was, and she told me, "Oh, that's Eleanor Mather, she's a neighbor of mine, we practically graduated from high school together." So, I also used to go to Perry's Bookstore, which was a antiquarian bookstore in New Brunswick, which is gone now. I used to work for him in setting in books and so on, and someone told me that Eleanor Mather would come in at a certain time every day because she was a book person, okay? So I said, "Well, Perry, when she comes in, you yell to me or if I see her,

introduce me." So, he did. I had my big red sweater on, it was the end of August, [with a] big "R," and I walked up and we got to talking. We moved up to the steps of Kirkpatrick Chapel, sat down, and I asked her for a date and that began it. The first date she stood me up. We used to go to the clay pits where we used to swim. DU had a big party there with lots of beer and lots of swimming in this clay-like water, … and I don't, to this day, know where it is. Somewhere near here. We used to swim at the clay pits and they were embarrassed that Eleanor stood me up for this big opening date. This was early September, and they got me another date. But I called her and she apologized. She was up in Boston. She forgot about it or something. She was a little bit dizzy. No, erase that. So anyway, what happened was, we got to know each other and I got to know her family, which was a crazy, disoriented family if there ever was one. They had three generations living in there. I used to go in the place. I think some of the ceiling was, you look up at the ceiling and the slats would be showing through the ceiling and everything was dark and there was one uncle who sat in the corner with his spittoon, spewing it out as he listened to the radio in the corner. Enough of that. Anyway, it was a disoriented, dysfunctional family. Eleanor grew up hurt by that very much. But, we married five months later, January 16, 1939 and have been married ever since, except she has Alzheimer's right now. My son, Tor, is with me, taking care of her. We have four sons. Anyway, so then Eleanor was among the literati here. There was a very close-knit literati group that was, who all knew each other. I was not a member of that but I was a member of the music group and the fraternity, you know? The swaggering group that did everything, sang, Big Man on Campus and the whole thing. And football, playing four years here, and two years of basketball, I quit after two years because I saw I couldn't make it and secondly, I wanted to join the glee club and you can't do everything, right, and keep up with your studies. So that's what happened. So, Eleanor and I, after the war, set up house in her house on 14th South Second Avenue in Highland Park, which didn't last long, and we moved Englewood. My father found me a place, he was on his last legs, he'd had two heart attacks, did real estate. Then we moved to veteran's housing, then. I worked for the NLRB, National Labor Relations Board, as an examiner and I went to the New School for Social Research as a Hillman Fellow for awhile. That was about a year and I was trying, then we had three children by then, so what was happening was that something had to give and my father went to Norway for the last time in 1950 and I took over. I got my license and suddenly I was selling houses. And I didn't know much of what I was doing, to tell you the truth. I had no training whatsoever. But you learn by doing, okay, and by listening and comparing yourself. So I survived, and I survived for forty years selling houses. It was not a bad life because in Englewood, we have great estates and wonderful homes and interesting people. I used to say, "I'd shoot myself if I had to sell these little development houses, every one alike each other," you know? There's no challenge, there's nothing there. So, meanwhile, I had this other life, the world of the arts. All the arts, the literary arts, the visual arts, the musical arts and I became very active and we became collectors. Every piece of money we could find, we would use it to buy an art collection. We bought early medieval pieces and renaissance pieces and objects. The house we bought in 1952 is still our home. It's eleven rooms and three and a half baths and we began to fill it up with objects that, they call the house we have a museum today, which it is because I have seven rooms of books. The third floor, the second floor, and the attic, plus the basement. Then [on] the first floor mostly are art and books, of course, two libraries on the first floor. So anyway, Eleanor had an impeccable eye. You know, like singing on pitch. I mean, it is a gift. Can you sing on pitch?

SM: Oh, God. No.

LH: Eleanor had that sense of taste. It comes to certain people. Some people, no matter how hard they try, don't have it. But she always had that eye. It was amazing. So one time, I was having the house painted, it was 1960, and in 1960 I decided, "Hey, I sold a couple of nice houses, let's have someone do some of the painting and so on. Let's go to New York and stay at the Plaza Hotel for five or six days and go to the theater and we'll go to the museums and we'll eat well." And we did. In fact, I had just refinanced the house, I was bulging with money and by the time I came back after those five days, all was spent. Every piece. We bought four amazingly interesting pieces of art. A *Madonna and Child* from 1290, from Northern Spain, a Benedetto Damaino, the Italian artist who was a great sculptor … and so on, and two other pieces. And I was broke. I said, "My God, this is crazy." Without Eleanor, I would have never have chosen these pieces because she had that eye that could detect a fake from the real thing and also something interesting for what monies we had to offer, which was small. We were adventurous. So that was the story [of] how I began to take, systematically, courses at the New School in the history of art and then at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and then at the Institute of Fine Arts, 78th Street and Fifth Avenue. I would, during the 60s, take one day off a week, go to a course by some of the greatest medieval professors in this country, Harry Bober and Colin Eisler and three or four others, but mostly Bober, who became a great friend and so on. So anyway, that is how it started but then toward the end of the '60s, the prices were rising and we couldn't afford anything. I took a course with Colin Eisler at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in which there were only doctoral and masters candidates sitting around the table. There were about ten of us, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in fourteen sessions, and Colin Eisler would pick out a book that was about this big and he'd open up the book and here we would see these original prints, these original wood cuts and they'd be inserted back into the book and I thought, "God, this is more than a book, this is a work of art. This is a craft, a supreme craft." And then to see the bindings on some of these, [they] made my eyes pop. I began to go to Swann's Auction House and Christie's and Sotheby's and I was a bidder there for the last twenty years. I don't go so much more now, I am ... I have been retired for five years.

KP: It sounds like it was enormously fun at times, especially ...

LH: Oh, yeah. All this time, I met all the artists. I was selling houses to people who were scholars, who were musicians, who were writers, and people who were artists and designers and so on. So I formed a kind of specialty in that area, so I managed to do well, paid the bills and, at the same time, be able to build this collection up. I don't own a single bond or stock. If I ever had one given to me, I would sell it. But we've had a wonderful time and fantastic parties at my house through the years. I sang for four years with a group called the Goliards. That was during the '60s, too. We sang Peter, Paul & Mary sort of thing. In fact, we used to go in and watch Peter, Paul & Mary and stay after they closed until the bitter end. One was an Irishman, Ed Kelley, who also married a gal who grew up in this area. He was six foot six, he had a handlebar mustache and he was a senior pilot for United Airlines. And then there was Don Selby, six-three, who was a fund-raiser, who I met in 1960, raising $5 million for the Englewood Hospital. I was six-one and Clare Duffy was a jazz singer and a gospel singer [who] grew up with the Cromwell Sisters, touring the country. She was the only pro but she was five-two. We had one banjo and two guitars and we had calypso instruments. We did Israeli things, we did American folk songs. We stole a lot of Peter, Paul & Mary stuff and we sang together for nine years. We could only rehearse around eleven thirty or

twelve at night because it was the only time Ed Kelley, getting off from his flight, could meet with us. I would go in, after coming home at three o'clock. And I'd go to real estate in the morning and I'd be falling asleep. But it was worth it all. So that was nine years and then, of course, we broke up because two of them moved to the West Coast. Both of them are dead right now, sorry to say. The memories of those days were wonderful. They were also members of the University Glee Club, which I am a member now and still sing. I've been a member for eighteen years. We rehearse every Thursday night and we do two major concerts a year, one at Carnegie Hall and one at Avery Fischer, and then we do smaller concerts. Then we travel every other year to Europe and we go on two and a half week tour, the first one to England. There, I had one of the great experiences of my life. It happened that my book collection was growing and I was often invited into the Grolier Club in New York, that's the great book collector's club, and I met the director of the Bodlian Library at Oxford. I told him that I had these two enormous volumes on the writings of Cicero, in Latin, with the beautiful binding. But what was most curious was that there was handwriting in Latin and in Greek on the fly page and it said, "Dr. Thomas Barlow." I said, "I looked him up and it seems that he was the third director of the Bodleian Library, who directed the library from 1650 to 1658." That's the Interregnum, the Cromwell period, okay? And he said, "Yes, of course, we have the collection of Dr. [Barlow]. We have this enormous collection. He was one of the great writers in theology. He was a casuist. He wrote about matters of conscience." He said, "Mr. Hansen, would you do me a favor? Xerox it and send it to me. I'll be back in a few days and I'll match it with the handwriting of Dr. Thomas Barlow." A week and a half later, I got a nice, lovely letter from him congratulating me for owning this. There's no question that it came from the Barlow collection. And it happened that a month later, we found we were going to go to London and Wales for two weeks and sing. We were going to go through Oxford without stopping, on a Sunday. I thought, "Wow, this is a good chance for me to give the book back." I called him up on the phone and I said, "David Vaisey, who …

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

LH: "David Vaisey. This is Leonard Hansen, you remember? I met you at the Grolier Club." "Yes, of course I do, Mr. Hansen." I said, "I have a group of middle-aged men singers, about sixty of us. We're touring Great Britain and Wales and it happens [that] on a Sunday we're going through Oxford without stopping. How would you like it if we stopped and we'll sing for you and I would like to return the book to you and give it to you?" He said, "Mr. Hansen, we will open. We are closed on Sunday. We will open the gates. We will have some of our people there. You will be taken on a tour of our rare books exhibition. You will go into the convocation room where you will sing. You will make the presentation. We will have the books on the table and you will speak first and I will speak second. You will sing some more and then, it's in the room, you must understand, in which the carvings on the ceiling are some of the greatest in all of England and that it was done two years before your man, Mr. Columbus, put his foot upon your continent." That was the phrase, I will never forget. I've told that story so many times. And of course, it was the hit of the whole tour. At the end, Don Selby, my fellow guitarist from the Goliards, he came on the trip and he was also a member of the University Glee Club and he brought his guitar. And I said after he spoke, "Yes, Mr. Hansen?" I said, "I have a footnote if it is all right?" He said, "Yes." I said, "I'd like Mr. Selby to come up with his guitar because we want to remember Dr. Barlow and the song we were going to sing in eight verses is, "The Vicar of Bray". It happens "The Vicar Bray"

wanted to keep his job and the way it is done. He said, "Fine, we know "The Vicar Bray." So Don came up and I sang as I held out the words. We did all eight. He sang one, I sang the other, and then I had the whole Glee Club do the chorus. Then he, Bassey, got up and said, "And now, gentleman, we shall have more wine and cheese." It was a three hour stop-over that was a great hit and a thrill for me, of course.

KP: And it sounds like he was delighted to get the book.

LH: Absolutely. We have so many great pictures that he wrote all about. He wrote reports, he has a quarterly and there is a big story about, "New York University Glee Club comes to the Bodlian Library." So you asked, how I got into books It got worse and worse. I began to do exhibitions all over, at different universities, at different libraries, locally, Englewood, Bergenfield, Ridgewood, Tenafly, Teaneck, and Rutgers and other universities. Then I used to, I've lectured on about thirty, forty different topics, all related to rare books and related to, the one I did most recently here at Rutgers is one of the best. I take eight books that I acquired that are rare or they're manuscripts and so on, and I tell how I acquired it, often what I paid for it, and what happened as a result. I bought the "Writings of Cicero," in Latin, 1551 and 1555, two enormous volumes, at a Swann Auction. I paid seventy for it because I went back and looked at, that was about 1972, and there was a dealer in New York that wanted to pay $1,000 for it and I didn't want to sell it for $1,000. Then it went on and on, you know? Probably worth $2,000 or $3,000 today. But anyway, because of the writing, that made a big difference, it's all these little touches that make all the difference in the value of rare books. So that's how that came about. I associated with, I met all these dealers from all over, and that helped, and we would go to London together on a buying tour and that was fun, too. I bought a lot in Europe and so on. It got, each of my children's rooms on the second floor, we have just our own bedroom and then the other three are all libraries. One is a special Shakespeare library. I am an Oxfordian, by the way. I believe the 17th Earl of Oxford wrote the plays, we finally got the man and I've attended many sessions in different parts of the country. They have three or four-day affairs and I have a lot of early material. I became a great friend of the chancellor and founder of Fairleigh Dickinson [University] who wrote a book on that. He has now since then died. I had debates. I had a debate at Englewood Library. I was the moderator and so on. It was great fun and we'd have a big party afterwards, you know. But lectures and that world, and then collecting Shakespeare, a bible. The reason I developed a bible collection, one, I have some history because I had to remember John 3:16: "for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son ... whosoever believeth in me . . ." because I had to learn these things for my early training at church, because by then, we could do it in English by the time I got to be fourteen. That was a world that I developed, you know. In fact, more than art, more than antiques, the book world became the big thing, all over, that people knew me for in the Englewood area. And still today, I teach courses in medieval art. I taught a course, five sessions of an hour and a half each, on illuminated manuscripts, One Thousand Years from the Book of Kells to the Dawn of Printing. Another one on, five sessions, on medieval art. Another one on Ten Great Libraries of the World. Another one on the Age of Elizabeth I. Another one on the Royal House of Steward. My book collection is in the 1500s and the 1600s, some incunabula, that's the late 1400s, the fifty years after the Guttenberg Bible. So that's the book world that I am immersed in. That's why I'm here at the library today. I've just been made head of the Rare Books and Special Collections Committee for

the Friends of the Library. We have a wonderful group of people that I'm assembling, including your new Dean at Douglass.

KP: Oh, okay.

LH: Have you met her?

KP: No, not yet.

LH: Her name is Shailor. Barbara Shailor, and she came to our first meeting and, oh, it was a terrific meeting. She feels at home now. Because she spent twenty-one years in the archives of Yale University producing three enormous volumes on their total manuscript collection, including illuminated manuscripts, and then she wrote a short book on the medieval book, beautifully done, which she sent me. That was a surprise and when I called her, I said, "How can you accommodate yourself to a world of administration after being such a scholar?" She said, "It works both ways. I'm very happy." Interesting isn't it, how everything ties together? So that's the world of books. We haven't even gotten to the Army yet.

KP: I know. I haven't finished Rutgers but it seemed like such an inevitable tie-in.

LH: You can almost expect what's going to happen when I get into the Army.

KP: You mentioned you were quite a man about campus and that you played football, which was ...

LH: Four years. Sixty minutes both ways. Played against Princeton, blocked a kick. Played against Brown, where we won … [at] the end of my junior year, wow. We played against Syracuse and lost. It was thirty-eight to nine. It was a blow out. We came home, like, we were in bad shape.

KP: Did your parents ever come to any of the games?

LH: One. My mother came to one game and she said, "All falling on top of each other." That's really true, you know? She said, "Leonard, I don't want to go to those games." My father came to a couple. He kind of laughed through it because, hey, he had to live with the real world, selling real estate and building, so on. He was a little more, less protective.

KP: Than your mother, who …

LH: Who lived in the house and was a wonderful cook and a great mother and so on. She took care of those five half-brothers of mine. Boy, that was no easy job.

KP: I interviewed Ralph Schmidt and he mentioned that his parents once came to one football game and left before it even finished because ...

LH: Oh, Ralph is a great friend of mine. I put him up three years ago to be in the Hall of Fame and he didn't make it. I was terribly shocked by that because he was a great football player in my day. Vinnie Utz, yes, but Ralph, right along side of him. I mean, I grew up and I played with these guys ...

KP: Vinnie Utz is also a name that has come up quite a bit. People have very distinct memories of him.

LH: He was an unbelievable character. Is that the word you would use?

KP: Yes, yes.

LH: Vinnie. Oh, he was funny, yeah. And nothing stops him. He was courageous and funny and talented and we all enjoyed him. He could say funny things in the huddle. While we were being beaten to death, he would get back up, you know. Ken MacDonald, did that name ever come up?

KP: No, no.

LH: Ken was one of my closest friends at Rutgers. He was a Beta. They had four Betas that became members of the Cap and Skull, and DU had four members. I was one and I was president of the senior class in my last year. There was nothing to do, let's face it. It was just sort of a title, you know. My name was out in front because I was a football player. It was as simple as that. I didn't have any [of the] talents of being president of the class. There were many so much better, but it didn't matter. I mean, that's all that mattered. It was a name. These people, Ralph Schmidt, the same kind of thing. He won a sportsmanship trophy and things like that, which sits in the gym here. I saw it just a year or so ago.

KP: Ralph was remarkable because of the number of sports he played.

LH: Yes.

KP: In fact, he was a Chemistry major, which to me, is incredible.

LH: Absolutely. Yeah. There are those kind of people that exist, that have that technical knowledge. It always floors me. I'm the world's worst mathematician. But I knew how to write a contract, if I had to, for real estate and add up the numbers. That I could do.

KP: You mentioned some beer parties and drinking some scotch, which inevitably brings up, Dean Metzger, who was ...

LH: He married me. Yes, he married Eleanor and I. Howard MacKinney sat in the pew, Soup Walter played the organ, Mary Jane something like that, played the harp, and we had as many professors. We had a lot of professors there because we enjoy, by the time I was a junior or senior, I was really enjoying my studies in history. I moved from business into history. MacKinney would say to me, "While you're here, you get into the atmosphere of some of these professors. You'll

never have this opportunity again, like you have at your age and this time and [so] forget business. You'll get into business, which is fine. You'll learn it or you can take your courses," which I did, which is what happened. I took courses in appraising and in real estate, later on, after my initial first few months when I knew nothing. But I began to take courses and so on, he was right, for me, maybe not for others.

KP: So in college, you really enjoyed the intellectual world.

LH: Oh, are you kidding? Absolutely. There's a story in my senior year, how I had put down that I was at a lab. After playing on Saturday, we had an easy day on Monday. We ran around the course a few times, we did a few calisthenics, we went over a couple of plays. And my senior year, I put down that I had a lab until about five-thirty, as the sun was coming down, and one of our coaches, I have forgotten his name at the moment, he went up to me and he said, "Hansen, what's this lab business? We checked every lab and we can't find that you were at any lab." And I said, "Well, I'm taking a course with a professor in music, a professor in literature, and a professor in art and the three of them teach the History of Western Civilization through the arts. There are only a few permitted in this course and it is a non-graded course and that's what I call my lab." He said, "Boy, I've heard everything now What until Harvey Harman hears this!" He really hit me on the back a little, you know, and said it, "Okay, we got the idea."

SM: What was it like playing under Harvey Harman? When I was doing my research, I read so much about him in the *Targums*."

LH: He used to take me with my guitar and banjo, not my banjo, my guitar and my folk singing style, on a tour to the high schools. There was a Professor Charanis who often came, okay? I had taken course with Professor Charanis, does that name ring a bell?

KP: He, unfortunately, had retired after I got here, but his name is still legendary among the faculty here during the sixties and seventies.

LH: … I mean, he was teaching Ancient History and he loved the Greeks so much. He never got to Roman history and he made us answer all the Roman history questions. So he would, Dr. Charanis, would give a little professorial speech and then he'd have me play the guitar and sing a folk song. He said, "See that man, Hansen? That's what you are doing at Rutgers. You are going to get an education, you can sing, and you can play football." I liked him, but again then Rockafeller took over the junior year. I had him in my sophomore year and, of course, there was a freshman coach who was a wonderful coach. I have forgotten his name at the moment, but anyway, Harvey Harman and I, we all liked him and then we all liked Rockafeller, too. We were depleted by the time, you know? Scores were going [to war] and being killed, to tell you the truth, by the time I was a senior. But we survived and I liked both of them very much. I was a right tackle all the time. It never changed. They never asked me to run with the ball because I couldn't run. I ran like an old lady. But I did make, I was considered the best lineman that Lafayette faced in [my] junior year, I think it was. I made All-Middle-Three, you know little things like that. So, at the big events at the University Glee Club, "Here comes All-American Len Hansen, who played right tackle for Rutgers. All-American, let's have a big hand." I'd fall down on the floor, you know.

KP: One of the things that students have observed, which you brought out, is in the *Targum*. It was clear from reading the *Targum* that fraternities and athletes ruled the campus, that you were really the "Big Man on Campus."

LH: We even competed in song, for a cup. And we always won, the DU house. Dick Hale was a singer and I was a singer and we had a terrific group of singers. We all beat the rest of them.

KP: You mentioned that you were raised in the Evangelical tradition and that college had a real impact...

LH: Absolutely. I was transformed. I broke what I call the "shackles" that bound my inner world and became a free person, a free thinker. That is why I liked Union Theological. They didn't ask my, what my thoughts were, being chairman of the Friends of the Library, and they still don't mention it. I think Union Theological is at the forefront of everything. They tackle all the tough problems relating to religion. They're very, very liberal. Very open-minded and attempt the answers of science, the answers of the feminist movement, the answers of all of these things and the inner-city problems and so on. That's why I am very fond of the people there.

KP: What led to this break? Can you trace it to any event or ...

LH: To the break?

KP: Yes ...

LH: It was gradual. It happened. My courses, number one, and the guys I met at the DU house. Some disreputable fellows. Some of the stories of Swede Nordberg going to the CT. I mean, they would come home so smashed sometimes. I mean, they drank in those days, I have news for you. I understand you have a problem these days ...

KP: Some of the alums have kept a tight lip on that but others have sort of confessed that in fact ...

LH: Oh my goodness. The CT, as it was called in those days, was a stable for many of my friends and neighbors at the DU house. They would drag me in, but I wasn't too much. But we would have parties there, at the place. In those days, it was a very gracious fraternity. We had to wear jackets for dinner, we had rugs on the floors, we had paintings on the wall, we cared for the way the place looked. When I went back to the DU house, it was unbelievable. A dirty rug, nothing on the walls, a big screen in the corner. I went down the basement after one of the football games, about five or six years ago, and there was a toilet up above and the toilet was flowing over and falling down onto the bar and I said, "Hey" and the bartender said, "Oh, we have a bowl here, don't worry about it." And they glorified throwing spaghetti, spaghetti throwing affairs. It was *Animal House*.

KP: Are you disappointed the way the fraternities have declined? Because you have been so involved in ...

LH: Absolutely. Dick Hale and I talk about it a lot. It was a gentleman's world and to be part of the Rutgers, taught me how to dress, how to behave, how to speak graciously, how to care about people, how to have manners, and certain rituals which we were fond of, you know? And the gong every day and we all came down to eat, we had to be there on time. There were no locks on the doors, nothing of that kind. And we made our rooms attractive and that kind of thing. The third floor was something else when I made the beds, though. But really, it had that quality.

KP: We have been struck by the fact, my students observed that they would publish lists of people who had attended a party or who was invited to parties at fraternity houses and they have actually been very envious, for example, of the Junior/Senior Ball and the Military Ball. They have really commented ...

LH: Did you see the pictures that always occurred in the yearbook? Did you ever look at some of the yearbooks?

SM: Yes, definitely, definitely.

LH: Because Mal Schweiker, who was my best man, who was killed in World War II, Mal Schweiker, was the Phi Beta Kappa, lacrosse, soccer. He was editor of the yearbook, he was cadet colonel of the ROTC. I mean, … he was my roommate at the DU house and to live up to Mal Schweiker was something. I knocked my brains out to try to remember a few paragraphs for the test the next day and Mal would look at it for about a half hour and say, "Hey, let's go down and have a beer or something." He had a photographic memory and he also had good training. He went to Valley Forge before he came to Rutgers and so on. He was a member of the religious group in the (Schwanum?) House, or something like that, in Pennsylvania where he was brought up. But that was certainly an interesting world and we had a rumpus room in the basement where we had a lot of fun. We drank on the weekends, when necessary, to let us survive another week of, I mean, every hour was taken up. You couldn't afford to not use your time when you were there.

KP: You kept a very busy schedule. You were enrolled in everything ...

LH: Boy, I'll say. But it was very grim the first year. It was hard for me the first year to do all the work at the DU house, to keep my scholarship there, to keep up my grades and taking math my first year, and then German, … and then novels, and also football and basketball. Spring training in football, again, so just to keep up my grades and so on, was grim because this was a whole new world for me. By the middle of my sophomore year, I was changing, I was relaxing a little. I even could be humorous on occasion when we would have some fun at the table.

KP: You mentioned dating, which was another thing our students were also struck with, about how innocent it all was.

LH: Oh, you bet, unbelievable. It's like the first time you kissed a woman under the apple tree.

KP: So that part, that image is correct?

LH: Oh, absolutely. There were some guys who were a little wild and they would get drunk and come in and talk, while all the rest were trying to get to sleep, about their date and what they did and so on. But mostly, it was very demure, very. Dates were very formal and we had house parties in which Dean Metzger and Howard Crosby occasionally would show up. We all had to "run for the hills." All the blankets would pop out and the lights would come on, which was true. I enjoyed the parties. I think that partly changed my mind about some of these restrictions.

KP: Drinking, even going to the movies, which you would not ...

LH: I began to go to movies. I never had an interest in playing cards.

KP: So you never gambled, even in the Army?

LH: Even today, no, never gambled.

KP: So that has been one stricture that has remained.

LH: Women were a different story. I always was attracted to women, and happily so.

KP: In terms of World War II, you would enter Rutgers in 1939 and my students have read that President Clothier gave an address, you may not remember exactly, but in the *Targum* it is reported, he sort of said, at that time, that there was no reason for Americans to get involved in this war. What did you know about European affairs in the 1930s? You had been to Norway, so ...

LH: From one to ten? Minus one. Absolutely. A dunderhead. Even though I took a couple of courses in history at Dwight Morrow High School, which were good, it was just sort of like the Seven Years War and that kind of thing, you know? Nothing to do with contemporary events but I was a complete dunderhead. "Innocent" is the word, okay? And not with it. It wasn't until I got to be a sophomore that I really began to enjoy my studies and so on.

SM: On thing I noticed in my research was there was a huge campus-wide debate over aiding Britain. I guess I read it around '41, maybe Fall or Spring of '41. The *Targum* talked about the fraternities, the sports, and this huge debate over whether the United States should aid Britain. Do you remember that? What was your opinion on that?

LH: Oh, yes, yes. Also, Wendell Wilke came to Rutgers and made a big speech and was very popular.

KP: A lot of people said he was a very impressive speaker.

LH: Oh, most impressive, absolutely. I remember that and then toward the end of the my four years, I was actually one of those who went to Bryn Mawr for a weekend of seminars on Current History and so on. So I was waking up, okay? It was kind of the "Great Awakening" in my sophomore year and it continued my junior year. Professor Heald, Professor Charanis, Professor Ellis, Burns, also all the rest were in the liberal arts, in music and art and literature and so on.

Philosophy of Houston Peterson, oh my goodness. I am glad I woke up to that. Houston Peterson was one of my absolute favorite professors and he was a spokesman, at the time, for us. I had two years of studies with him in logic and philosophy and then in my senior year, probably one of the best courses, well one of the best courses certainly at Rutgers that I ever took, was called World Prospective in Modern Literature and we had to read ten books that whole year, beginning with Beowulf and then going on into the French writers, Hugo and Byron and Germinal on through to The Magic Mountain, in which, in The Magic Mountain, we had to read it concurrently while we had three hour sessions once a week. I think he devoted the last four sessions to The Magic Mountain. It was his favorite book. He said he would read it once a year. He had a flair for the dramatic and when he spoke, I mean, something flowed out and we would all bend and listen to him. I think there were only about eight in the class and he made each of us a person who was in The Magic Mountain and the innocent man who was exposed to the intellectual dueling between Naphta and Settembrini. And then there was the dueling between a psychiatrist and a physical doctor. Then there was the great love affair, I've forgotten her name, she was a Russian and she was very, she had all the mystique of a woman who attracted these men and they were all were attracted by her. Then there was Peeperkorn, at the end, the Man of Great Power, who sweeps these little intellectuals off a corner because he had money and power and ran the great industries of the world. I was the hero, he made me the innocent, so I had to know, I had to respond in, we had to respond to each other. It was a very effective way of teaching because we had to know, we had to do the reading, otherwise we wouldn't know what happened. Intellectuals were terrific. Intellectuals in the group loved to be Settembrini and Naphta. Naphta was the Catholic, the formal Man of the Medieval Mind and then the Man of Enlightenment, was Settembrini, who knew everything. He was pompous and very, like an Italian man ready to answer all questions. It was a wonderful learning experience. I still remember to this day. I look back with fondness on it. Houston Peterson was certainly very dramatic. His course in logic was not that important, as far as I was concerned. Philosophy was interesting, but this was the course. This was the course. Yeah.

KP: I would imagine, given your family's ties with Norway, that for you World War II really began with the invasion of Norway. How did that affect your family?

LH: Oh, wow. Yes, my goodness. Oh, wow. It was grim and my, I still hear the stories from my cousins and uncles who lived through the horrible period when the Nazis took over everything. Of course, when I went back with the, I've been back four times, and they have a great museum there in Oslo about how they fared under Nazi occupation and the Quisling and Hansen. And all of these people who sided then with the Nazis, and the horror of it all and the anger with the Swedes, even though they were neutral but they didn't aid that much. Then the great stories of blowing up that, you know, that fresh water ...

KP: Heavy water ...

LH: Yeah, heavy water. That was a wonderful experience. And then it all came back again in the Olympics when I got so proud of Norwegians winning in the Olympics. Four and a half million people versus two hundred and eighty people million people from this country and so on. But that's their media. That's their baby, in the snow and the ice and jumping and skating and so on. But still,

it's a phenomenal thing, though. A little country, too. I mean, look at Sweden and look at Switzerland, lots of winter sports there and so on. Then they told the story of the six men who blew up that heavy water plant. That was a, do you remember that?

SM: Vaguely.

LH: Yeah. Wow, what a story. So, yes, we all were very concerned during that period and I got more concerned as I was taking courses in history and learning what was going on.

KP: I sounds like when you were growing up, politics really wasn't discussed very much.

LH: That is correct. I mean, they were not able to, my father was a Republican, by the way, because he associated himself with the winners in business and the business world and, although during the Depression, I mean, if he rented a house and got thirty-five dollars for an apartment commission, that was a big deal. We survived somehow. I sometimes wonder how we did it. But he stuck it out. He spoke frequently in broken English when he first started and then he got better and better. He learned how to say "Whoopi" and "Hot Dog" and really, he got to be ...

KP: It sounds like you observed your father, because of the demands of being a real estate broker to become more Americanized and ...

LH: It was funny.

KP: Although it was a very, it sounds like your father was very deliberate in trying to be ...

LH: Yeah, yeah. At the age of fifteen, he used to put me in charge of the little office he had across from where we rented. I didn't know anything but he taught [me] how to take their name and telephone number, that was the most important, so he could get a hold of them, you know? If he when out with a person, I would just sort of man the fort. That was it. He was a one man operation. So that's all tied in with the family.

KP: Where were you when Pearl Harbor occurred?

LH: I know exactly where I was and I think, I'll bet, I'll wager, that almost everyone you have interviewed know where they were that day!

KP: Pretty much. There has always been a handful that can't remember.

LH: Okay. I was on a bus going to Trenton with the Glee Club and we were scheduled to sing at the Trenton Auditorium in a big concert. It was Sunday afternoon. We left about one o'clock or two o'clock and, I think, we went on about two o'clock or two-thirty and we went to through our whole concert and then at the very end, a man came up and handed Soup Walter a paper. Soup Walters read it and turned around and in kind of a broken voice said, "Pearl Harbor has been bombed. Japan has declared war on the United States." And he stopped and the concert was finished, except we hadn't sung the "Star Spangled Banner." He turned around and there were

things shooting up our backbones, like unbelievable. All of us were, because we were going in the war and we sang the "Star Spangled Banner" like we never sang it before. It was thrilling. It was frightening. On the way home in that bus, all we were doing was saying, "Where are you going to go?" "Where are you going to go?" because we knew we were going to be in war.

KP: You were still in the ROTC, weren't you?

LH: Yes, I survived four years by the skin of my teeth. I was always low man on the, I was the lowest. I mean, they would all laugh when I would have to answer questions, like "Here, Hansen.

KP: Because it sounds like you ...

LH: I was the world's worst soldier. I certainly, I hated war, I hated militarism, I hated the whole notion of it. I knew, like everybody else, that we had a duty to perform and there was no question about it and we believed it. We believed completely in the evil, that the Nazis were a completely evil empire, an evil world.

KP: What about the Japanese?

LH: Same thing. Except there was something worse about the [Germans], because little stories began to come through about the killings in the German [camps] and the Jews, you know. That began to, a little bit, enough to know how cruel things could be. But the real story didn't come out until much later, of course, when we really got the …

KP: Did you have any contact at all, even through the Red Cross, with your family in Norway? Did you ever ...

LH: During that period?

KP: During the war at all or ...

LH: Yes. My folks wrote and, you know, I really don't remember much. That's an interesting question. At that very time, I was so self-absorbed, self-concerned about my own life, okay? Because this `39, `40, I was now coming to Rutgers and so on and I would write letters to my mother about my life at Rutgers and so on. No, I think not much.

KP: You knew you were going to go into the service but it sounds like you very desperately wanted to finish school.

LH: Oh, yes.

KP: That was a real ...

LH: Oh, yes. As a matter-of-fact, we were drafted into the Army in my senior year. I was made a corporal and I was in uniform and we had to go in uniform to our classes. I had to get up, after I

was married and living in Highland Park, to stand reveille at six in the morning, on a winter morning. What a low life that was! It was unbelievable to us, who lived a libertine life, life of freedom, complete freedom, to the extent of our pocketbook. There's always restrictions.

KP: Did the fact of the war include your decision to get married when you did? Do you think you ...

LH: Yes. My father and mother were violently against it. Mostly my father. He said, "You may come home hurt, mangled, you don't know." I said, "I have to do it, Pop. I just, this is what we want to do." We ran, we did it all ourselves. We wrote out the invitations, we invited everybody, we had a big event at the DU house after the ceremony. We never called for any reservations in New York for our honeymoon. We got to New York at about twelve o'clock at night and there was "no room at the inn." We went to the Manhattan Hotel, we went to two or three hotels. I kept a taxi cab driver busy just ringing the bells. He finally found us a little flea-bitten place that was one of the worst I have ever been in. Some bad things coming off from the ceiling. That was our honeymoon night. Then the next day, we got a good room for three days in, I think it was the Manhattan Hotel. It was a Saturday night and there was no room.

KP: Well, especially if there was a war on.

LH: We took the subway in and they had mangled all of our clothes and gotten into our two bags. They had ripped up one of my nightgowns. That's hard days. Which was all right, that was the least of our worries.

KP: You were in the ROTC so you knew you ...

LH: Four years.

KP: It sounds like you would have not have stayed in ROTC if it hadn't been for the war.

LH: Correct. I'd have run for the hills immediately. I had no interest in it. I had to do what everybody else did and, since I started, I was going to finish it and I did. Then I went to, and became a ninety-day wonder, I went to OCS in Fort Benning.

KP: Which in some ways was supposed to be refresher course but it sounds like for many it was really ...

LH: It was beginning from the bottom.

KP: Yes. Yes.

LH: ROTC was just a laugh, in a way. I mean, you had a uniform and you came to arms and attention and moving to the right and marching and learning it, the functioning of the BAR and the .50 caliber, which I always messed up. When they asked me to get up and explain it, the "hahas"

would begin. All the guys would start laughing and I said, "The hell with it. You finish the job." I never got it. I didn't have that kind of a mind.

KP: But you also went to Plattsburg or did you not?

LH: No, I didn't.

KP: You never went to Plattsburg?

LH: No, we didn't.

KP: Because of the war?

LH: Yeah. They stopped it because they wanted, the training was going to go on. It wasn't at Plattsburg, it was going to be at Fort ...

KP: They knew that you were going to Fort Benning and ...

LH: That's right, absolutely. I think I missed it by a year. Our class did not have to go to Plattsburg.

KP: Because for those who were in the advanced ROTC, that was a real memorable ...

LH: Oh, I guess so. That's were they did some learning, I guess. That's the real thing. But I mean, to spend an hour, or an hour and a half, or two hours at the most in ROTC, it was sort of intellectual. You had to learn the azimuths and you know, all that sort of thing.

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

KP: This continues an interview with Mr. Leonard Hansen on December 3, 1996 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler and ...

SM: Stacey Morgan.

KP: You graduated in 1943 on an accelerated program. How did people react to an accelerated school year? Particularly your first two years, it was a sort of leisurely world in a lot of ways. But after Pearl Harbor, things ...

LH: ... Got grim and tightened up. Speeded up and, yeah, I don't know, I just went along with everything. Looking back, I can't detect too much difference, except for the [time was] clouded over with the military, uniforms, getting up and much more involvement in that. That was much more serious. But we knew that we were going to go into Fort Benning, if I was going to be in the infantry, which I chose.

KP: Had you thought of trying another branch of the service?

LH: Not really.

KP: It sounds like you just accepted your lot.

LH: Absolutely. Whatever they wanted to do with me. I had no great desire to be a flyer in the Air Corps. I had no desire to be on ships. I had a seasick problem, too, so that kept me away from that. The Marines were too much for me and, yes, the U.S. Army is okay. They need you, remember that? That poster.

KP: So you got married and you finished school. When did you report to Fort Benning?

LH: In June of 1943, right after graduation. We moved immediately and there were, I think, twenty-five from Rutgers and twenty-five from different schools, colleges all over the country. Jack Everett and Mal Scheweiker were two of the best. Has the name Jack Everett ever come up?

KP: No, no.

LH: He was also with Mal, top person. They were fighting it out and, these two, of all the schools, they were right on top there, again. These two men of 300 of our class. I think I was rated 294. Mal was rated either one or two.

KP: In the Fort Benning ...

LH: Yeah, and there were one or two other guys even worse than me, but that was about it. I hung in by my nails during that whole thing because that was strong training, all day long, in the heat of summer.

KP: As a football and basketball player, physically you were in ...

LH: … Reasonably good shape. But don't forget, I was a little out of shape because this was, now, after the basketball, after the football, you know? The six months in there. So, I wasn't in the greatest of shape but I'd been an athlete, that's for sure, all my early career.

KP: What did you find so difficult about Fort Benning?

LH: Oh, the heat and the marching. We could march twenty-five miles in one day with the M1 slung over your right shoulder and a knapsack and march for fifty minutes and then have ten minutes, you sat down, and then you marched on. We did the same thing in maneuvers and so we got in good shape or we didn't make it. There were a lot of people who never made it, oh, yeah. They were thrown out all the time.

KP: Really? That was a real ...

LH: Oh, absolutely, at Fort Benning, as a ninety-day member. How I escaped, I don't know. But I hung in there. I did what I had to do.

KP: If you got thrown out, where would you go?

LH: I had no idea.

KP: You didn't?

LH: I'd be probably a private, somewhere, in some outfit. I don't know what happened to these people, to tell you the truth.

KP: So when people dropped out or were thrown out, one day you would wake up and at reveille you'd look around and ...

LH: … There would be no one there. I can make a guess, maybe, like of the 300, there must have been like thirty, thirty-five, that didn't make it or something like that.

SM: How long were you at Fort Benning?

LH: Three months. Ninety-days. "Ninety-day wonder," they called us. And we were still green. Oh, God. We still didn't know, I mean, you know, the training. The difference is that many regular Army people, privates and privates first class and corporals [and] sergeants, were in with us. This is something that's most interesting. I remember very vividly because a couple of guys came from Brooklyn and we had to give each other's evaluations every other week during this whole session. The evaluation, I will never forget it, I mentioned in one evaluation about another person that he spoke "Brooklynese." Who was I to speak? I came from Jersey City, Hudson County, Bergen County, and I had a touch of that myself. I mentioned that and I went into the shower and of course, nobody knew who gave the evaluations, that was strictly private, and this guy in the shower was the tough guy from Brooklyn. He said, "For Christ Sake, one guy told me that I didn't know how to speak the English language." So I said, "Jesus, God, that's me." You know, I said, "That's a dumb thing. I'm gonna leave that one out, in the future." I remember little things like that. I remember also always heading for the library on Sunday to write letters and get away from the military life because we had Sunday off. Then I would go to a church where I could hear some singing or something, you know? Saturday night, going down, listening to music at the music store. Otherwise, life was grim and unhappy, but necessary. So, you just did it, okay? You just went through it. We could joke, we could have fun, you know, because there were those who took their military life seriously and there were those who thought, "This is a bomb. Hey, I can't wait until this war is over and we get the hell [out] as soon as we can because this is a life so opposed to anything that we were brought up to love."

KP: Because I have noticed that in interviews that some people, you interview them about the war and they loved it. I mean they really enjoyed a lot about the military. For others, it really was an interruption but they did it because it was expected.

LH: That's right. I would think most of us college men, who loved the college life, which was, … sure we had to do our studies but that was, in many ways, a pleasure, and in some ways a little hard on certain subjects. A combination of things.

KP: Do you remember your drill instructor at Fort Benning?

LH: Yes, he was red-headed. He had a high part, a lot of freckles. I can't remember his name, but he was very kind to me. He found me to make a lot of mistakes, to be not "bright-eyed and bushy-tailed" at every little detail but somehow, a sort of a decency. We got along okay. He was very good. He was mildly tough but not overwhelming, not a sadistic human being, if you know what I mean, who were around the place. But, yeah, I remember him but I can't remember his name. But I remember that Mal Scheweiker was in the class and, we had about twenty-five with us, … many who were killed. Both of these were killed, Jack Everett and Mal Scheweiker. I think we had, is this true, did you know this, did we have the highest number killed, Class of `43?

KP: I still haven't figured that out. There are several classes that claim various ...

LH: Well, the Class of `42 is the class that won the war.

KP: No, no, no, Class of `42 never had that slogan. It was Class of `44.

LH: `44. Thank you.

KP: I remain loyal in many ways to `42 because they started the project, but that's one claim they have ever made.

LH: Oh, okay. That's right.

KP: They were a little aghast at `44.

LH: "We're the Class of `44. We're the ones that won the war!" Yeah. That's Dick Hale's class.

KP: Yes. Other classes have looked at that slogan a little skeptically.

LH: Yeah, yeah, I would say.

KP: But that's all I'll comment.

LH: We have a special spot, out there in the campus, across the water.

KP: Yes.

LH: You've been ...

KP: I haven't seen it but I have heard of it.

LH: I think we did that about ten or fifteen years ago on our fifth anniversary, and every fifth year we go out there. I usually don't make it because I am always singing with the Rutgers Alumni Glee Club. I always pop up later, you know.

KP: What did you think of the South? Although you didn't have a lot of free time, I mean, it sounds like this was your first experience in the South.

LH: Indeed, it was. Columbus, Georgia. I only went into Columbus on Saturday night and sometimes on Sundays because that's all we could do because, I mean, studying after our food at night and after drilling for eight hours, and then supper and then more hours of study, hitting the books and getting ready for the morning's work out and so on. So it was a little foreign to me. I didn't know much about it. I went into Columbus, I would go to a music store, I remember, and have them turn on Beethoven or Brahms. A group of us, we kind of liked that. We had our own little gathering and then on Sunday morning, I went to a couple of churches and met some of the young ladies there who would take us to their homes for dinner, on occasion. That was a nice break. But that's about all I remember. Otherwise, it was just intensely military. Morning, noon and night. And on Sundays, I would write a letter home.

KP: Plus, you were in the South at the hottest ...

LH: Hottest time of the year. Bloody hot, nineties, hundreds, and sweating it out, doing all of these drills, you know? Working the different guns and marches and maneuvers and that sort of thing.

KP: After Fort Benning, where did you go to next?

LH: Okay. My recollection is not perfect, but I was, I believe, I was sent and dropped off in maneuvers in Mississippi, the state of Mississippi, directly in maneuvers and reported to the major in charge of our, what was it? Could have been our regiment. No, it was probably our company, and immediately shown where everything was. I got my little course, half hour training of what was coming up and so on. Immediately on maneuvers, marching the next day, something like twenty-five miles, right back in the saddle again. I thought, "Gee. Wow." I remember one of them being so bad that I could hardly make the last five miles. Every step was a burden on my knees and my ankles, carrying all this load, the hot weather and I landed, by luck, in a, I became the platoon leader. I had a platoon, which is like about thirty-five [men], thereabouts, and most of them were hillbillies. Most of them came from Kentucky and Tennessee and West Virginia and, by a stroke of luck, they carried their instruments with them, their guitars. And, by a stroke of luck, they found out that I could be a lieutenant that could play the guitar and sing folk songs. We would build fires at night and sit around and sing folk songs. It was wonderful. And then by the next morning, again, it would be so cold, it would be practically, it'd go down in the '30s, you know? And we would have to get up, shivering in the tents, and get a hot cup of coffee and start our work. But by the end of the day, it would get warmer, and then we would build a fire and we would sit up singing at night. I became a hero, absolutely. I was the only lieutenant around that, you know, in a mass of soldiers. But I was a terrible solider but I got along with these guys.

KP: It was interesting because you were hearing this folk music, which today is ...

LH: Sophisticated folk music, that's what I grew up with, okay. This is the real thing.

KP: This is not the media ...

LH: "Jesus, hold my hand, I have a friend along the way." I remember one of the songs they taught me. I don't remember the words now. "Jesus Hold My Hand" was one of them and we sang that all the time with gusto and fervor. It was a saving grace, you know, on maneuvers and so on.

KP: They were also, people who had hillbillies in their units described that many of them had never worn shoes before the Army.

LH: Is that true? Yeah, that could be. I wouldn't make an observation. I don't remember that, if that was true. But I knew they were rugged people. They had instincts that were so far superior to mine in many cases because they were brought up in the woods.

KP: Did they all know how to read and write?

LH: No. Not well. Some did but some, not well. But they could be good soldiers. They could be crackerjacks with that rifle. They knew how to maneuver around in the forest and take their cover.

KP: It sounds like you learned a quite a bit from them, in terms of ...

LH: Oh, I did. Oh, yeah, oh, yeah, I learned a lot from them. One of the most ignoble experiences of my military life, I was never great at, you know, you had to lead your troops by striking an azimuth and you used that reckoning by going from tree to tree to arrive at a certain point where the enemy was. This was what we would set off on a day problem and all of our platoons were competing to get to the right place in each of our stations or the right mountain, okay? Because these were hilly parts that we were in. I was at my very best leading my troops with great aplomb and excitement. The trouble was I landed up in the wrong mountain and that became a hilarious tale for all of the other platoons, because most of them made it. Most of them were much better at striking an azimuth. You use this little gadget and you look through this thing and you get to that point and you take the next one and you go on. We were supposed to be whiz kids at this, but I guess I never did so well. Anyway, that was a blow to my ego but I accepted it. "I don't like this life" I told them.

KP: After maneuvers, where ...

LH: Okay. They sent me to Texas and I think, I went to two places: Paris, Texas and Tyler, Texas. Both interesting towns. Not too far, let's see, I guess it’s sort of the central east corner.

KP: So you didn't stay with this platoon you had?

LH: No. No.

KP: You were taken out.

LH: They moved me around a lot. One of my friends was Earl Thompson. Earl Thompson and I were on maneuvers together and we would meet and we would recite Shakespeare to each other. We'd read from Shakespeare to each other, which was very unusual. He was an English major at Rutgers and we became good friends. He was eventually killed leading troops in, I think, overseas, on the European Front. When I landed at Tyler, they looked over my record and they found out that I was a football player and so they summoned me in and said, "We are forming a football team here to keep up the spirits and morale of people in Texas. And Lieutenant Hansen, we are going to put you in uniform and you will practice between three and five every afternoon. We have a schedule of five games against North Texas Aggies, against some of the other Texas teams and teams from Oklahoma and Arkansas." We played under the lights on a Friday night, believe it or not. They were so way ahead of us in those days because they loved football. I played right tackle. I was playing football with a lot of others who had a record as players. They looked over our personnel sheet and found out that I played and same with the others, and we all came out of boondocks and, "Well, I guess we're going to play, guys." It was kind of a relief in some ways from the monotony of other things.

KP: Because of your day job, what would you be doing?

LH: On the day job, it would be more drilling, more training and more of the same thing. Practicing with the BAR, you know, your gun training and shooting at targets.

KP: And you would lead the platoon through their ...

LH: Yeah, right, right. And then at Paris, that was another session. I was there for a while. Those were the two towns. Then I was assigned, I think, to the Checkerboard division, which curiously, went into the Battle of the Bulge, in which I did not. I think the brains suspected that something was amiss with Hansen and would rather see him shifted over to the Japanese war, which is what happened. I was then given, they cut orders, and I was sent to Fort Ord and I remember being on the way [on] regular trains, you know, that we took. It wasn't only troop trains, but some were troop trains, some were regular trains, as an officer, with my duffel bag and away we go. I arrived at Salinas, California at about five in the morning and I saw one of the most white, most beautiful towns I ever saw in my life. It was an interesting town. It was the scent of the town, all sort of white buildings and clean and crisp and that wonderful air of California. I was so impressed, this new world, I had never been out to the West Coast. Then I was sent over, I got a taxi cab and I got to Fort Ord. Now, Fort Ord is in one of the most glorious places, visually, in this country. That's the seventeen mile drive in Pebble Beach and that's the country that Steinbeck wrote about. Monterey.

KP: Which was all undeveloped then, relatively speaking compared to what ...

LH: I went down to the water the second day and there were still the remnants of the sardine fishing fleets right there in Monterey. And the smell. I mean, I can just smell Steinbeck's

wonderful phrases, how he would describe it. And I thought, "Wow, isn't this wonderful? Extraordinary." And I then was at Fort Ord for about, I think, six weeks and I had the opportunity then to go into, what is that town? That famous town next to Monterey, that is an idyllic town, started by artists in the late 1800s and then bought in, as all these places are, by the wealthy families who now take over and make it a cutesy town, and so on. You know?

KP: I can't think of the name but I ...

LH: Anyway, there was a, I said, "My God, this is where Robinson Jeffers lived." I always loved Robinson Jeffers' poetry and I went to find his house and I found it. He had built this house out of stone, himself. Huge stone, and I thought, "Gee, I'll go up and knock on the door and say 'hello' to him" Hey, I was a lieutenant, you know, and a lot of people would do this to me. So, I knocked on the door, there was no answer. They were away. I just sort of stayed in his backyard and mingled, finding out, because this man build this house like on a Scandinavian model. A round, forward-like building with additions and it was wonderful. That rocky coast with all of its cypress trees that were twisted and bent from the wind and the great shore. It was not great swimming like we have in the East Coast. It's different. The water is cold and it is splashy and it's, it never gets that hot, but I loved that. Pacific Grove is another town there. Like Ocean Grove, a religious town, and what's the name of that wonderful town? Anyway, that's, that's all of these great houses.

KP: How long were you in California for?

LH: Only, okay, that was only for six weeks.

KP: But it sounds like those six weeks you ...

LH: Oh, I loved it, yeah. Every time I had any time off I would be down the shore looking at the houses, meeting people ...

KP: Did you ever think you would settle in California?

LH: Well, something happens now. Then they ship me to San Francisco. I have forgotten the name of the little place, just thirty-five miles. And I had another two weeks delay and there was sort of just shaping up to go overseas, okay? Just waiting around, not much drilling, but I could get a chance to go into San Francisco. Well, God. What a town, the best in the country. I got to know San Francisco quite well. All the areas of San Francisco. Every chance I had, I went. I met some other guys who enjoyed doing the things that I did and we took a bus back and forth frequently. About two weeks later, I got my orders and I was on a boat called the *Loralene* which was a boat devoted to taking soldiers to the Hawaiian Islands. So I got to the Hawaiian Islands ...

LH: Is everything all right?

KP: That's just my answering machine. I turn off my phone while ...

LH: Okay. So, I landed in Waikiki and then put on a bus to the 13th Replacement Depot in Wahiawa, which is in the central part of Oahu, okay? That's the main, that's where Waikiki is, Honolulu and then the great airfields, Hickam Field and so on. Wahiawa is at the top, in the front, in the center, with all the pineapple patches but also Schofield Barracks. The 13th Replacement Depot was where all the troops landed for training until they were sent overseas on a mission. I was there a couple weeks, still hanging around like all the rest of the Louies and so on. One day they cut orders for 287 officers and we were loaded on these trucks. There were about four or five trucks, all standing there when another man ran out with a new cut of orders and took thirty-seven of us off that truck to be there and to maintain and be administrators at the 13th Replacement Depot. That is how come I fought the war of the "Twenty-Seven Pineapples" for three and a half years in Hawaii.

KP: You literally ...

LH: I never went overseas beyond the Hawaiian Islands.

KP: You were literally, just a few hours later, you would have been gone.

LH: We have tried to analyze who was taken off, how did they know who to take off, why did [they] take some? We noticed a lot of Hs and a lot of Gs in the last names, okay? I was a Hansen and so on, there was a Hermanson and there was a Hudson and it could have been that simple. It could have been that simple. We never knew, to this day. It wasn't my attributes or my background. Maybe it was my background. Maybe they feared me leading troops. I honestly have thought about that. I don't blame them. They sent a guy like Mal Schweiker out and he got killed in his first time out. I got the letter, my best man and this Phi Beta Kappa, wonderful guy, from his father and he wrote to me how he was killed, leading troops on … Okinawa. So, that's, we don't know, but there I was. So I spent those years training troops, leading them in how to hold the rifle and do that kind of thing. But somehow they sensed that there were others better at it than I and they made me mess officer, they made me the non-commissioned officer's officer. I got into, they made me build up a library, I ran a little newspaper, I did a number of things and that suited me fine. And there was kind of a little cult of people who worked in personnel who were very bright guys, that had doctorate degrees and that kind of thing. We formed a nice little gathering there. The one thing that hurt almost all of us was the homesickness and boredom.

KP: In your case, you were away from your wife now for several ...

LH: You're absolutely right. She came down to Fort Benning once. She came down to Paris, Texas once for a couple weeks and we could meet at night and so on. By that time, we had one child. All I did, I have in my possession in the trunk in the basement, 300 letters from Eleanor to me and 300 letters from me to Eleanor.

KP: Have you thought of putting those in Special Collections?

LH: I have thought about it but I told no one about it.

KP: Because some people have given us some letters and diaries and those, along with the interviews, we particularly crave. I know, since you are both a collector and a donor, I thought I'd express a real interest.

LH: Eleanor wrote extremely well. She has her own style of handwriting and so on. You feel the great loss of not being together and how she would express it, you know? And what she was reading and what I was reading, because we, you can't say "I Love You" endlessly, you've got to graphically describe what you are doing or else, why write? It's sort of a history of my life, that's really true. I looked at it about a year ago and I sorted them all out as much as I could and I cleaned off the cobwebs that were accumulating after forty or fifty years or something. But they're there and they can be read. I'm almost embarrassed to read them. You know how it is.

KP: For historians, that is a gold mine. We ...

LH: Three-hundred. Also, Eleanor left her letters in her box of all the men she dated before she met me and what an eye-opener that was. There were about fifteen different men who, Eleanor was very extraordinary, as a professor of philosophy said, "She's beautiful and she's bright" and you have them both in her. But she also was psychologically wounded by her family. She could be very depressed easily. That's part of the whole picture and that's found in these letters. It's kind of interesting. Well, I have thought about it but I have never mentioned it to anybody. Eleanor has never looked, because she's gone now. She's a different human being and we have to take care of her everyday.

KP: It sounds like it must by very hard because your wife was so bright and so intelligent.

LH: Absolutely. Oh, absolutely. She's a completely different person. I have my son, I have a place up in Cape Cod and I have my son, Tor, who is slightly schizophrenic, down helping me. He doesn't know how to make a living but he is wonderful as an artist, as a naturalist. He works for the museum up in Cape Cod during the summer period but then there is not much work there otherwise. So he does work in painting and printing and mostly sculpting. He got his Master's degree in sculpture at Columbia and he carves a lot, as well. But he doesn't make enough to make a living so he stayed with me last year. Eleanor has had this heart attack for two years now and she's had other problems before that for another two years. So it has been downhill all the way. But the latest, you know, she's really out of it. She doesn't know where she is sometimes, can't remember anything, repeats everything over and over again and breaks down to tears endlessly. So that's the story. She's seventy-six now and I am seventy-six now. So anyway, all those years. Then at the 13th Replacement Depot, there was really a place that was much more forbidding, it was called a Helamono, where we do the training of the troops. It was among the pineapple patches, there wasn't a house around, not a city, nothing around, and that's when some of these soldiers began to climb the walls. But we did the best we could because I tried to keep the non-commissioned officers happy and the officers, we had separate places to socialize, and every new batch would come in and we'd have to go through the same thing again and [with] the new batch.

KP: Being in Hawaii, there have actually been historians who have written about what life was like in Hawaii, both for the Hawaiians and for the troops. It sounds like your Hawaii was a boring place in a lot of ways. A lot of your day was spent doing routines, tasks ...

LH: Could you imagine me a mess officer? I knew nothing about being a mess officer and here I am, handling these guys. I mean, I'd let them do things and I didn't know that it was a dumb thing to do, but it would happen. But, they needed a mess officer, so I was a mess officer. They needed an INE officer and I ended up being a pretty good INE officer. At the end, well, you see what happened was, I didn't have enough points to go home right after the war and so I had the choice of staying on for six months or signing up for one more year and going home and bringing Eleanor back. They gave me like a two months delay en route. I mean, not bad. So, I went back home and I stayed home for a couple of weeks and then my brother let me have his car to sell on the West Coast and we had a wonderful tour across the country. We stayed with the Indians in Arizona and in New Mexico. We got to know them. Eleanor, at one time, wanted me to be a teacher to the Indians because she was very much involved in the history of Southwest Indians. In fact, we have a collection of pawn jewelry of the Southwest Indians and we have a collection of Hopi masks and that kind of things mingling in with all the other. It was fascinating. And then, when we went to the Seventeen Mile Drive and what's this little town that slips my mind? It's so famous. It is right next to Fort Ord and right next to the other towns, the end of that great highway leading up to … At any rate, it's a gorgeous area and it's this little idyllic town, Carmel. She met these women and she came with me and then I had, that was the first time when I went over there, not when, I'm changing things around. The first time I went overseas alone, she came with me that far, in California, and she stayed for four months in this wonderful house, working in this country dress shop.

KP: When you get the transcript, you can add these. People add things which will make it ...

LH: Oh, sure, this is very important. Okay, anyway. She had a wonderful time and then after four months, she had to go back home and so on. On the second time, when she came and stayed with me, that was nice.

KP: In Hawaii?

LH: A whole year. I was a captain by then. I had developed a library and I set up courses for people to take to get ready for the different kind of a life. All these soldiers waiting around, having nothing much to do, you know? Boresville. I ran the newspaper and that came out like, once every two weeks or something like that. That was nice. We had all Wednesday afternoon off, Saturday afternoon, all day Sunday and I had my own command car and my own driver. We would go to the beach. Hey, this was living and getting a good salary. That was not hard to take. We had lots of parties at Schofield Barracks. We lived on Schofield Barracks then. We moved there. We had a permanent house. One great event was when we got off the ship the first night that Eleanor went into Schofield Barracks with me. These two adjoining houses were built like a U and the at the U ends were the kitchens and the kitchens looked at each other, okay? There was a little garden in between. We went to sleep and we were still rocking, you know, from the boat. Suddenly, we hear all this noise adjoining us and it was yelling and screaming going on. We got up and we went down

to the kitchen to look over and see what was happening. The lights were on and this warrant officer is yelling at his wife who had come over to join him, except something had happened to him. He had fallen in love with a Samoan princess and he was shouting, "I love this Samoan princess." This woman is there, aghast at this all. She came over with the two children and we were witness to this thing. I thought maybe there was going to be violence in it, but somehow after all this yelling, [things] had settled down. The result of the whole thing was that we were all caught in a web of intrigue because this warrant officer had fallen in love with this gal. He had invited her to come and stay at the same house with his wife and the two children in this little place right opposite us. The fireworks that went on led to a court-martial that was a very serious thing. This warrant officer was court-martialed and dismissed from the Army and Jane, this red-headed gal who was the wife of this warrant officer, came from a military family in Pennsylvania, in the Gettysburg area, and we became good friends and so on, but this was one of those episodes. So, life was pretty good. We were picked up every day to go back to the 13th Replacement Depot and so much time off and so on. But life was ... good.

KP: It sounds like your second stay in Hawaii ...

LH: ... Was quite different.

KP: It almost sounds like, you would have no way of knowing this, but it almost sounds like the Army was reverting to their pre-war days in Hawaii.

LH: That's right. I think that's correct.

KP: There was really a very routine existence and that there was a lot of the social aspects of being in the military for officers who came back.

LH: That's right. We had a dance band every Saturday night and dances and that sort of thing. That was kind of nice.

SM: Didn't you do some singing also when you were in Hawaii?

LH: Yes.

SM: I had read an article about that.

LH: That's right. WOR opened up a new station. They needed people to fill in. I had a half hour program once a week on folk songs of America. Oh, did you read that?

SM: Yeah. I read an article.

LH: I almost forgot about that. Yeah, and I would tell a story on the background of the folk song and then sing and so on. But I couldn't get used to [having] an audience. I couldn't get used to the fact that there's no one out there, you know? You are just before a mike and try to talk to the mike. Well, that lasted a few months ...

KP: That's while you were in Hawaii? ...

LH: The last few months, I was in the Hawaiian Islands. We traveled. I got to Kauai and I got to Hawaii, the big island, on nice trips. During the stay there, they gave us a delay en route, and they gave us rest and recuperation periods, you know, where we'd take six days and go to Kauai with two or three of us officers together, and that was nice. That was a good change of pace.

KP: It almost sounds like this was the extended honeymoon you never had.

LH: That's true.

KP: Going back to the war time Hawaii, one of the things that historians have been struck by is how Hawaii was really over run by GIs during the war.

LH: That would be the first thing, if you were to ask me, "What struck you as the first thing?" it was a man swarm. A man swarm throughout Honolulu. If I took a day off, which I could do, we all had a schedule and I would go to Honolulu, I would want to go to Waikiki Beach, there was an officers' club, the Mawana Club, right on Waikiki Beach and Waikiki Beach those days, by the way, was not so great. They had all of this sharp shell that would hit your feet and you'd better [not] swim in the water because they would cut you to pieces. It was very unusual. I never expected that. There was this great, Royal Hawaiian Hotel, and then there was the smaller, Mawana Hotel, where we would go and rest and swim. During the, getting there, they had the Seventh Army, they had an enormous amount of sailors, they had Marine detachments. It was, you could hardly move in parts of Honolulu and it must have been twenty-five men to one woman. Women would be frightened of the men at times. There would be brothels there that the men would stand in line.

KP: There has actually been whole discussions in books about these long lines. Everything in the military was a "waiting in line."

LH: Absolutely. Same thing. It was a five minute operation for the brothel.

KP: Since you had such an Evangelical tradition, this must have seemed, like Sodom and Gomorra in some ways. Or you had become more liberal?

LH: You have the correct answer.

KP: Yeah, no, but still ...

LH: Something in my background, I don't swear easily, that kind of thing, still today. Some of my friends, I have lunch with four different groups each week and one member, one group, the Wednesday group at Charlie Browns, we've been meeting since the fifties.

KP: And you meet ...

LH: Just to talk, just conversation, laugh and have fun, you know. Male bonding. And then the small Tuesday group, an attempted literary group that revolved around Shakespeare and so on. But some of these people have come and gone. It is a little small now, but the Wednesday is still big, eight or ten guys. Thursday group is another one. We closed down the Englewood Club, which I was the chairman for bringing in new people. We had a group that met there every Thursday called the Homans Group and after the Englewood Club, which was a social club begun in 1889, and just wrapped up two years ago, for lack of people, you know? Golf clubs and swimming clubs continued, but the social club is gone, where we could eat lunch and we had dinner at night and all that sort of thing. The social life, entertainment. Anyway, that's over, and, so this group that always met on Thursday for lunch continues.

KP: The club may be gone but ...

LH: Half Democrats, half Republicans. Half people who like to tell stories, half others who can't tell a story straight. Anyway, a lot of fun. Doctors, lawyers, bright people, you know, people who have something to say, often about politics. Egos incorporated. One battling another for a chance to get it out on the table. Then Friday is a new group of ...

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

LH: We're moving along.

KP: Yeah, I know you have a one o'clock ...

LH: Say about twenty of, we could wrap it up?

KP: Okay.

LH: Fifteen minutes.

KP: I guess, did you ever feel, on the one hand, you might have felt very lucky, but you also might have felt very guilty? Did you ever have that sense that, "Why was I the one to be in the replacement depot?" It might have made sense that you might have been, seeing that you perceived yourself as a bad leader. But also, the number one person in your Fort Benning class, he ...

LH: ... Went right in.

KP: Yes. He got killed right away.

LH: Yeah, I thought often about that and of course, all I could say, how lucky I am. That's all I could say, how lucky I am. I mean, there's no question about it. After hearing the news again and again of another fallen friend, Earl Thompson, Jack Everett. Football players I played closely with for four years. Ken McDonald, I mean, and people like that. So, yes, I don't know about guilt so much, but certainly how lucky I was.

KP: Because of all the people I've interviewed, you remember the most of your fallen classmates and ...

LH: Is that so?

KP: Yeah. I mean other people will have often very distinct memories but you probably have named the most ...

LH: Oh, I could go on and on with some of their names. Yeah, absolutely. Well, I mean, we enjoyed Rutgers, let's put it that way. These were halcyon days at Rutgers. These were the days when we had wonderful professors, in our opinion. Some that were boring but, hey, that's part of the course. Some that were just great and a great life at the fraternity house. That's the other part of ...

KP: There is one classmate, he wasn't in your class, he was Class of `41, but Joseph Ryan, did you know him?

LH: No, I didn't.

KP: He was a cheerleader, but I was just wondering ...

LH: Bob Harrison was a cheerleader and he was my class. He's suffering right now from cancer of the throat. He is waiting any day, it's a terminal thing. It's horrible. But he was a singer and a terrific, funny man and he was a cheerleader and member of the Glee Club. The overall experience in the Army, when I heard that this was the main thrust of the whole interview, I thought, "Well, you are going to hear a guy tell about the 'War of the Seventeen Pineapples,'" which guys ask me about all the time. "What happened to you at World War II, kid?" And I would have to tell them what I did and it wasn't much. But God up on high knew what was going on and saved my life. I have no other answer except that this is the vagaries of war. This is the way it is. I could have just have easily been one of those. Absolutely, yeah. I do think, it's been stated that our class had the largest number ...

KP: I haven't actually, I haven't even figured out the calculations on ...

LH: You might want to do that. That might be interesting.

KP: No, no, we should sit down and actually do the numbers. So I have ...

LH: Because if you don't know it, I wonder who would.

KP: I have to confess, mathematics has also never been my strong suit, so I shy ...

LH: This is why we have such camaraderie.

SM: Exactly.

KP: Had you thought of using the GI Bill after finishing the military?

LH: Yes, as a matter-of-fact. By that time, I had two children, a third one on the way. I wanted to become a teacher. This was my ideal. As a matter-of-fact, Howard MacKinney had told me he would like to underwrite me to go for a master's or a doctorate but with three kids, how could I do it? So I went to an interview at Dwight Englewood, private school in Englewood and I think I was offered something like $3,400 a year or something. I mean, I couldn't even think of it. So then, I think I used the GI Bill when I got this Hillman Fellow at the New School, which I went [to] for a year. But that was sort of part time because I had to earn money at the same time. I worked for the NLRB [National Labor relations Board] all kind of odd hours and so on and still went to class and so on. That was for about a year, that's all. And then I got into real estate. I built houses for a year or two, too, but I had no money. That was a disaster. Oh, a complete disaster.

KP: You did a number of things after getting out of the service.

LH: Yes. I went into building houses up in New City Park. My father had one plot he let me build a house on, but I had these kids to feed and it took six months to build a house and I was green at it, you know? Then I met a carpenter, a Swedish carpenter, and we set up business for about another year and a half and we built about four or five houses, at that. And still we weren't making it, okay? It was a dumb thing to go under-capitalized to a business of that kind. Then I met the director of the NLRB. Then, because I was a person interested in politics at that time, I also ran for Mayor in Englewood in ...

KP: Oh, I was just going to ask you that because you became very politically ...

LH: Very political. I was an ADAer and I was an idealist beyond measure, world government. We had meetings. I was involved in both ADA and World Government in those days, in the late '40s and early '50s. I met Chuck Douds who was the director of the NLRB in New York City who lived in Englewood and he got me this job working and that saved the day, you know? And he also got me this Hillman Fellow. So all of those followed my two years of building houses which I happily gave up and tried this. And then my father went to Norway in 1950 and then I took over for the summer and found I had sold about five houses and he hadn't sold a house in six months and that kind of thing. So I stayed on and the first six years were very hard. I just about made it. Then it got very nice.

KP: In a sense, it sounds like if your father hadn't given up this business, you might well have stayed in the National Labor Relations Board or stayed politically active.

LH: Yes, that's right. I ran for office three times in Englewood. I was a Democrat. Englewood was seven to one Republican. Very conservative during those days. Lots of estates, lots of wealthy families who ran the town, okay? I ran for councilperson in `53. I was part of that great movement of Adlai Stevenson and we ran the Adlai Stevenson campaign, who I thought was one of the surely extraordinary giants in the world, running for the president. That was great. All the liberals came

out of the woodwork. We all met each other and we became lifelong friends. It was absolutely amazing, you know? Some of them still, today, who are alive. So I ran locally in `53, in the Democratic party and `53, `54, `56 and then `59, for mayor. I lost by only about 800 votes out of 5,000 cast which wasn't too bad. I shook `em up and put some muscle on the Republican party, who had been asleep, and then the war really began in the sixties, [when] I became the elder statesman. I was just trying to earn a living. During this whole period, I also became founder of the Art Center of Northern New Jersey and the first president, and I chaired Community Chest campaigns three times and three times became chairman of the board. I was president of the Eastern Bergen Board of Realtors for two years and then won the award twice for service to people, you know? That's a special plaque given to the broker of the year and that kind of thing. What else? I served on lots of commissions and lots of committees and so on, especially the library. I became chairman of the library board in Englewood and was on that board for six, eight years and some other things. I was very involved in the town.

KP: You have been very loyal to Englewood. I mean you lived there and then you came back to live there ...

LH: It's interesting that you would make that statement because that's what they, that's true. I thought, I have a wonderful place up in Cape Cod, in North Truro and I could retire there any day but my collection and my lecturing and my involvement. Right now I am involved in raising a million dollars for the Senior Center of Englewood. We've acquired one of the great historic buildings and my collection of (?) is gonna go there with, others, also and it's a hard go. Boy, I try to meet, we've hired fund-raisers. We've had to because this is not chicken feed. We are not after ($100,000?) or $20,000. To go after this kind of money, and I have to make visits every week for about five or six families, you know, and beat them over the head. It's gets a little, you know, it gets you down a bit because some people, you know, would shrug it off and say, "Hey, I haven't got time for that." We got one nice gift of $125,000 right off the bat. That set the, that set me up, you know? So, we're working right along. That's what I am spending most of my time doing.

KP: You have always been involved in groups, to this day. You have four lunch groups Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday ...

LH: I avoid Kuwanis and Lions ...

KP: ... and Rotary.

LH: Yeah. So this is my way of, my social life besides going into New York for the, New York also for all my book auctions and the museums which, that's where it's at.

KP: You have really led this social life that most people don't, even when they're ...

LH: Even with Eleanor in this state, I have had two nice groups of twenty each come in and I've got plans to, and I've also been on the board for thirty years of the Savings and Loan and this is my year. This is my last meeting coming up and they're all coming to my house afterwards for a final gathering. They all want to go on a tour of the upstairs library and I'm going to bring in singers

from Rutgers Alumni Glee Club. I'll have just four of us, five of us, all together. Dick Hale comes because Dick Hale has been a close friend of mine all through the years and he's the man who gave the Hale Center to us. He's not a poor person, he's not. I brought him up. I always tell him that. And because I've given books every year, I am now on this President's Inner Circle, would you believe that? They all look at me, "What are you doing here, kid?" So anyway, we've had lots of fun ...

KP: Yeah. Let me look at Stacey, if there is any questions she has before ...

SM: I actually do have a question I meant to ask you. I just am very curious because throughout your life, you were constantly drawn to music.

LH: Yes.

SM: You had mentioned singing early on in the close-knit, Norwegian community. I didn't know whether you had elementary school or high school choirs or anything.

LH: Oh, yeah. Oh, we had a quartet when I was in Evangelical. We sang all the songs. "The Old Rugged Cross," we sang, "In the Sweet, By and By". We did it in harmony. There were three other guys and myself, from that time on and through college. Afterwards, I sang in oratorio choirs a lot, you know, which was nice. But this is a group of kids who never grew up from their adolescence, who are members of the University Glee Club. We kid a little about that, but we do some serious singing. It's a lot of jumping up and down, enthusiasm from the rah-rah days of college and we do the college songs best.

KP: I have heard the Glee Club and I know my interns, who always go to the reception, really love the ...

LH: It's the only time we sing without a book in our front, learning something new, you know? That's true of the University Glee Club as well as the Rutgers Alumni Glee Club. They are all alike. I mean, they never grew up. They still harken back to the days of yore. So, anyway.

KP: Is there anything we forgot to ask, because I feel I wanted to ask you more about Englewood but that would probably be a separate interview.

LH: I think I landed on both feet when I was able to sell houses and I became probably the leading broker for fifteen years before the giants moved in. I had a small office. I had no more than three or four sales people at any time. They all made money and they all did well, therefore I made enough to pay my bills and to buy a few books and so on and to go on vacation. I love to travel in Europe. I've been to England about a dozen times and Norway four times. Italy several times. Only once to France. We won't go into that. It's beautiful, wonderful, wonderful country but I just, the other places drew me more. Of course, Ireland and Wales, Scotland. That, I think, has to be my favorite, because of the history and the history of my books, that I own, relate to all of these towns and all of these people. The adventures I have had at Cambridge and at Stockholm and Edinburgh, you know, with book people and so on. I think that's the essence of it all.

KP: Well, the books might be a good place to end today.

LH: Yeah. Okay.

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

Reviewed by Dennis Duarte 6/13/00
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 6/21/00
Reviewed by Sean D. Harvey 6/27/00
Edited by Leonard Hansen 6/13/02