RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH NATHAN HINDES

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Nathan Hindes on November 11, 2011, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth …

Trevor Hotalen: … Trevor Hotalen …

Evan Hackler: … Evan Hackler …

SI: … Also sitting in is …

Caryn Miller: … Caryn Miller.

SI: Caryn and Mr. Hindes, thank you very much for coming in today. To begin, could you tell us where and when you were born?

Nathan Hindes: I was born on January 13, 1922, in South River, six miles from here.

SI: You have a lot of local history you are going to share with us today.

NH: Yes.

SI: What were your parents' names, for the record?

NH: William Hindes and Rose Hindes.

SI: Was that your father's birth name or his Hebrew name that you wrote on the pre-interview survey?

NH: Well, it was interesting, because he came over from what was then Austria-Hungary and he actually was going to be inducted into the Army at the time; I think he was age fifteen. He figured that was a death sentence if he ever went into the Army. That was just before the First World War. So, he actually ran away from home, got on a ship, somehow, and came over here, all alone, didn't know anybody. I don't know, he used to tell me stories. He told me he went to--he had one name--he went to that name and he knocked on the door, told him who he was. He said they closed the door and they wouldn't talk to him. So, he left, he got a job and became a sewing machine operator. He used to tell me stories about [how] he would have lunch, buy a beer for a nickel, and then, lunch was free. When he married my mother, he was making fifteen dollars a week and that was enough to live on in those days.

SI: Do you know where he came from in Austria-Hungary?

NH: No, I don't really know the town. He really hated his growing up. They were a very poor, very poor family and, in fact, he was a twin and the way I understood it was that his parents couldn't afford to keep the kids they had and he lived with other relatives. So, his growing up wasn't very good and he had very little schooling, although he seemed to be pretty smart to me. He could write very well, he knew math and I don't think he ever got to high school, anything like that.

SI: Were the stories that he would tell you about his life in Hungary or mostly from after he came here?

NH: I gather his life there was just a poor life in these countries, just growing up. He didn't want to talk about it. He hated the idea of his life there, I think, and he was just happy to get away.

SI: When he came to the US, did he come into New York?

NH: He came into New York.

SI: Was that where the person whose name he had lived?

NH: Yes, but didn't matter. He made his own way, got a job. He became a sewing machine operator, and then, he was a very hard worker--they made him a foreman. Then, in those days, just as we send our work overseas, New York became a little too expensive. Those were sweatshop days, by the way. There were no unions. They sent him to South River to start a factory, because the labor was cheaper, a lot of Russians and Polish people in the town. He started a factory there with another man for the company he worked for in New York. The businesses in those days, the businesses in New York were the manufacturers, then, they set up factories in the outlying districts. He ran this factory with this other manager, and then, after a year or two, I don't know how long, they decided they could do this on their own, they didn't need to work for somebody else. So, they opened up their own factory and that's how he became an owner.

SI: Do you remember the name of the company that he worked for?

NH: Yes, South River Waist and Dress Company. In those days, you made waists, which were blouses--they called them waists--and dresses.

SI: Was that his company or the first company he worked for?

NH: No, that was his company. That was the name that he and his partner gave it and that was the company's name when I came in, took it over. I changed it to South River Dress Company, because nobody even knew what waists were. [laughter]

SI: What was the name of the company in New York that sent him out here?

NH: Oh, there are many companies. I worked for a company called (David Warren?). We were contractors. The way the industry worked--was and it still works that way today, except they send the work overseas--the garment center in New York, if you walk into one of the buildings, like 1400 Broadway, every floor may have one or two or three manufacturers. They buy the material, they design the dresses--when I say design, in many cases, they buy them in stores, copy them--then, they send the work out to other factories and they do the work.

SI: I do not think I said that clearly earlier. I wanted to know the name of the company that sent your father out to South River.

NH: I have no idea. [laughter]

SI: What you just described was how your business worked.

NH: Yes. I really don't know much about the business when he was in it originally. I mean, he told me about it, but he never went into any detail, I never really questioned him much about it.

SI: When he was running it in, say, the 1920s and 1930s, do you have a sense of how large the business was?

NH: Actually, they had probably between fifty and a hundred women and, before I got into the business, before the Second World War, they really expanded. He and his partner started a factory. The garment industry was a gigantic industry in this country. Just to give you an idea, when I was in the business, and even before, we had a dress contractors' association in New Jersey, where these were factories that only made dresses, not suits, not coats, anything like that--there were four hundred factories just made dresses in New Jersey and there were that many in other states around. So, this was a gigantic industry and, before I got into it--I forgot where I started. [laughter]

SI: You were just describing the size of the business.

NH: He started a factory in Burlington; they had over two hundred women working there. They had a factory in Lambertville in New Jersey and, at one point, I even worked there. So, they had three factories going at one time. Then, they had a factory in Kingston, I remember. When the Second World War came, these factories were closed up by the government. You had to make garments for the Army. If you couldn't make Army clothing, you were out. So, all these factories, the one in Burlington, I know, was taken over by the Army and they started making coats there and they lost their factories. I don't really know how it worked out, but the factory in South River continued all during the war and it was very successful, because there were no cars being made, there were no appliances. Nothing was being manufactured, but women could still work in garment factories. So, my dad worked. While I was in the Army and in college, his factory in South River was busy during the whole war.

SI: Before we go much further, can you tell us a little bit about your mother, where she was from and her family background?

NH: My mother's sister came over before she did. She came over from the same area that my dad did. They didn't know each other and she came over, I don't know, around fifteen or sixteen, too. Her sister came over first and she told my mother to come and she did. They lived together and I guess she was introduced to my dad and they got married.

SI: Did she ever tell you any stories about her growing up in Poland?

NH: Very little. Their history in Europe was something they just didn't care about anymore. They didn't talk much about it and, at the time, I never questioned much about it.

SI: She was a seamstress. Was she involved in the family business?

NH: No, no. She was just the old-time housewife. She cooked and cleaned and took care of the family. That was her job and she did it very well.

SI: Her career took place before she got married and had children.

NH: I don't know what she did when she came over. I guess she worked at something. I really don't know what she did. [laughter] I don't know that she ever worked in a factory. She must've done something until she met my dad.

SI: Did either your mother or your father talk about any kind of anti-Semitism or *pogroms*?

NH: Yes. That's one of the reasons they wanted to get out, because the Jews, where they were, were discriminated against. There was a lot of anti-Semitism, yes, and they felt America was the land of their dreams, just to leave that and come over here. Everybody thought that the ground was full of gold and, if you came to America, you were going to make it and everybody would treat you better.

SI: Was it just a general sense or were there any specific incidents that they talked about?

NH: No. There were no specific incidents that I know about.

TH: Do you know if your mother and father were from farming backgrounds in Europe?

NH: I don't even know what their parents did. I think they worked. They never mentioned farming. I think they were just people in a small town. I don't know what their parents worked at, to tell you the truth.

EH: You were born 1922. What was it like growing up during that time period?

NH: I had a very happy--well, I had a partially happy childhood. I had a very happy childhood. I remember, we lived on the street called Whitehead Avenue in South River and I just remember I was outside all the time playing with my friends. I had a very happy childhood, until my parents really had a terrible time, because my sister, who was older than me, was very sick. She had rheumatic fever and she was in the hospital a lot. She died at the age of ten and it was very--you know how losing a child is for parents. That was a terrible thing for them. I had an older brother who was seven years older than me and he was the apple of their eye. Anyway, they lost my sister when she was ten, and then, they had another child, my sister, who is still living. She lives in Plainfield. My brother went to Lafayette and he went to Columbia Law School. He was there for a year and decided he'd like to be a writer. He had done a lot of writing when he was at Lafayette and he gave up law school and he got a job with *The Home News*. He used to write a feature article for *The Home News* every single week, the Sunday paper. At the age of twenty-

one, he was killed in an automobile accident, and so, my parents lost two children. I was very close to him, too, and so, that was a very traumatic experience. Aside from those experiences, my growing up was okay.

SI: Was there any kind of name change when your family came to the US?

NH: Yes, yes. When my father came over, his name actually was Nussbaum and he said that when he got to the immigration authorities in New York and they asked him for his papers, he didn't have any. So, they said, "Well, then, you have no marriage [documentation] about your parents?" He said, "I don't know." So, they said, "What was your mother's name?" He said, "Hindes." "That's your name." So, they gave him that name.

SI: Were there any other family members, on either side, that came over to New York?

NH: Actually, before the Second World War, my father brought over his sister and husband and family from Hungary. They had a very large, successful furniture store in Budapest, but the Germans were taking over. They had to get out. So, he brought them over and actually saved them.

SI: Did you know of any family members that were left in Europe? Did your parents have any ties with them?

NH: No, I really don't. My parents really never contacted anybody, as far as I know, once they moved over here. They just left. I think my mother used to write to her parents, occasionally, but I was just a little boy and I just wasn't interested and they never talked about it.

SI: Was it Whitehead Road that you grew up on?

NH: Whitehead Avenue.

SI: What was that neighborhood like when you were growing up in the 1920s and early 1930s?

NH: Well, it was interesting. I can remember so much of my childhood--last week is much more difficult. [laughter]

SI: Keep talking--this recording can go for hundreds of hours. [laughter]

NH: Well, I remember that the iceman used to come around and deliver ice for our icebox. I remember when they paved the street. My father had the first car, I guess in around '27, was a Ford; I guess they called it a "Tin Lizzie" at the time, with the original forty. He bought that car. He was in business at the time already and he had a successful factory. So, we had a good [life]. We weren't wealthy at all--we were just a good, middle-class family. We lived well, although I think my father, as an owner of the factory, I think he was drawing, like, a hundred dollars a week and that was a good salary in those days. When my brother went to Lafayette, he worked partly to pay his tuition, because my father, really, although he had a factory, he couldn't afford to pay everything for him to live there. So, I remember, he worked as a waiter in the fraternity

that he belonged to, so that he wouldn't have to pay dues. He used to hitchhike to Easton. We used to drive him to Somerville and get on the road and we'd drop him off and wait while he hitchhiked and got a ride, which a lot of people did in those days. [laughter]

TH: What fraternity was your brother a part of?

NH: It was called (Taurus?). I still have their little cup on my desk. It was (Taurus?) Fraternity. It was just a name they gave it. I guess it was a private fraternity, but I remember visiting. They had a house and a number of members.

SI: Would you say that your neighbors on Whitehead Avenue were a mixture of people? Was there a particular community represented there?

NH: A lot of Russian immigrants, Polish. There was a section of town that was mostly Hungarian, but, where we lived, they were mostly Russians and Polish and there was some anti-Semitism. I remember, in kindergarten, I already was called a "Christ killer;" things stick in your mind.

SI: Were there other examples of friction between the different communities?

NH: Not really. Actually, there were a lot of factories and there were, I believe, around forty garment factories, in the small town of South River. Most of the owners were either Jewish or Italian and the workers were mainly Russians, Hungarians--we had a lot of Hungarians in my father's factory--and Polish. My dad, with very little education, spoke all the languages. He spoke Russian, he spoke Polish, he spoke Hungarian. Whatever language his workers spoke, he learned to speak it. He just picked it up, and he could swear in those languages, too. [laughter]

SI: At home, did your parents speak English?

NH: When I was growing up, they spoke a lot of Yiddish and I never really spoke it. I understood it, but they also spoke a lot of English.

SI: I wondered if there were any other languages that were you exposed to from this mixture of languages. Did you pick up anything?

NH: Well, when I worked in the factory, which was much later, all the women spoke English.

SI: What about when you were in the school, growing up with all these Russians and Poles?

NH: Everybody spoke English, but the women in the factories, a lot of them spoke other languages and my dad, he understood them and could speak to them.

SI: Were there any Old World traditions that were kept up in your family or religious traditions?

NH: Well, we were Jewish and they were sort of religious and sort of not religious. They belonged. My mother kept a kosher home because it's the thing to do in those days, but it really

wasn't much of anything. My brother and I, we, of course, went to services, but we weren't very religious and our parents never pushed it at all. They did what they did and we could do whatever we wanted.

SI: Was your family involved in the community?

NH: They were charitable and, I don't know, there wasn't much community to be involved in.

SI: With your father being a businessman, was he involved in any civic groups, the chamber of commerce or anything like that?

NH: I don't think so. I don't even know--I don't think they had a chamber of commerce in the town--but I remember Joe Mark was the president of the bank and I know he was very friendly with him. He used to borrow money from the bank all the time to make his payroll and he knew everybody, small town.

EH: Were families around you affected by the Depression? Did you notice?

NH: Oh, yes, the Depression was very bad. Let's see, I was about ten years old; 1929, I was seven years old. I was very aware that things were very tough. Business was not good and, before, I don't know what year it happened, but the factories were not organized and we had sweatshops in those days. Labor was very--the workers were paid very little. The way it worked was, the manufacturer paid the contractor, who actually worked for the manufacturer. You got the dresses in, you got the materials--it was either cut or you had to cut it, with the patterns--and you made it. They paid you by the dress. They paid you so much to make the dress; maybe you got a dollar to make the dress. You had to pay your workers. Well, depending on what the manufacturer paid you, that's how you paid the worker. They were paid very little and they went on strike and I remember those strike days were very bad. There were shootings and, finally, the union, the ILGWU was formed--that's the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union--and the union became very powerful. They settled everything and, actually, that was the best thing that happened. The unions straightened out the industry. The workers started making, maybe not a great wage, but a more decent wage. The industry was controlled. They had a thirty-five-hour week, they had to pay overtime and the industry became regulated. Actually, the unions coming in was the best thing that happened to the industry. Even as an owner myself, I liked having the union, because they understood our problems, we could deal with them and we could work things out.

SI: How did your father feel about the unionization of the workforce? Did you ever discuss that with him or did he ever say anything about it?

NH: It was a very tough business. It was a penny business, because, actually, although you owned the factory, you were working for people in New York who paid you, strictly labor, for your labor and you paid your people. You had to negotiate with them on everything. So, what happened was, when I got into it, they had an office in New York where the manufacturers brought the dresses, our industry, into the union office. The manufacturer and the union representative would take that particular dress and decide what price we should be paid for that

dress, so that the union people we were paying could be paid a living wage. It worked fairly well. When a dress came in, I got a sheet and that sheet told me what every part of the dress was set at, what I was going to get for it and what I could pay the worker. It was a little complicated, but it worked. It's hard to explain, but it worked out.

SI: About how old were you when the strikes happened?

NH: I don't know, I guess I must have been eight or nine years old, I don't remember exactly. I guess it was in the early '30s.

SI: Was it just your father's factory that went on strike?

NH: Oh, no, the whole industry--it was the whole town, it was in New York, it was all over. It was a big strike and I'm sure it's in the newspapers someplace, in the archives.

SI: Do you remember actually going out and seeing picket lines and that sort of thing?

NH: I remember riots, yes, had to stay home.

SI: What about other ways the Great Depression may have affected your life? Do you remember changes in your life as a result?

NH: Well, it didn't change my life. I mean, we always had enough to eat. Actually, when my brother went to college, he was Class of '37, so, that was the Depression. Those are the Depression years and that's when he actually had to work--my father wasn't doing that well--to get through college. So, things were tough then, but I can't say that I ever suffered in any way.

SI: In these early years, what sort of things would you do for entertainment or fun?

NH: We just went out and played. We played all kinds of games. We were always running around. Hide-and-seek, we played it. You know what nip is? We used to carve little pieces of wood with two little pointy ends--no, they've got to be pointy--and you take a stick and you'd hit the end. The thing would fly up and you'd have a game where you see who can make it fly the furthest. It's called nip. [laughter] I don't know, I was always outside playing. I mean, I had an interesting life and, when I went to grammar school, school wasn't difficult.

SI: What were your favorite subjects in school?

NH: Not going to school, [laughter] like typical kids, waiting for Friday. School was okay and I did okay in school.

SI: Which schools did you go to in South River?

NH: I went to Willett School in South River. I don't think it's being used as a school anymore, and then, I went to South River High School. Actually, I was valedictorian of my class in high school. I was in debating. I was on the debating team. In my junior year, we came in second in

the state in debating. When I went to college at Rutgers, I found out that I wasn't as smart as I thought, that the school I went to, the kids weren't that smart, because when I got to Rutgers, all these other kids were really smart. My education was okay, but I was not in a school where I was challenged. When I got to Rutgers, I started being challenged. [laughter]

SI: When you were in high school, what did you think of the quality of the teachers?

NH: When I was there, I thought everything was fine. I thought the teachers were good. As I look back, they probably could've been better.

SI: What year did you graduate?

NH: I graduated in 1940.

SI: In those years, the late 1930s into the early 1940s, what did you know about what was happening in the world?

NH: I knew a lot. My brother was so smart, such a great guy. When I was ten years old, he said to me, "This is what I want you to do." He said, "I want you to read *The New York Times* every day." He said, "You don't have to believe everything you read." He says, "Fifty percent of it is right," he says, "but just read it." I began reading *The New York Times* at the age of ten and I haven't stopped. I remember, in the fifth grade, we had to give a little talk every Friday. So, noontime, I would come home; we'd go home for lunch. I was just a block away from the school. There was no lunch in the school; everybody went home for lunch or brought their lunch. I'd go home, I'd pick out some article in *The New York Times*, then, I'd talk about it when I got back to school at that class that we had to give a little talk. She was the best teacher I ever had. [laughter] I still remember her name, Mrs. Lynch.

SI: You were aware of Hitler taking power in Germany and Mussolini in Italy.

NH: I was very aware of everything. I knew everything that's going on. I realized what Hitler was doing, I knew about the camps. I mean, we knew Jews were being taken away in this country. Everybody seemed to ignore it, but we knew it.

SI: You are talking about long before World War II.

NH: Oh, yes, starting in--we knew *Kristallnacht.* I mean, as Jews, we were very worried, very upset about what was going on. It was just we were living it. [Editor's Note: On the night of November 9-10, 1938, SA stormtroopers and German civilians, with the cooperation of the Nazi regime, carried out a series of attacks against Jewish communities throughout Germany and Austria in which they killed ninety-one people, rounded up and incarcerated over thirty thousand men in concentration camps and destroyed many synagogues and Jewish homes and businesses, an event that became known as *Kristallnacht*.]

SI: Did your family become involved in any groups that were trying to alleviate that situation, like HIAS [the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society]?

NH: I think they belonged to the Jewish organizations that were helping. I know my father gave money, was charitable, and people came. It's not only that, people used to come around to the factory just asking for money, telling you their problems, some organizations. He would always give them money. Then, when I was in the factory, I always gave money to people who came. There were people always coming around asking for money.

SI: You had family members that your father brought over.

NH: Yes.

SI: Did they tell you anything about the situation as it was developing when they escaped?

NH: Yes, they thought that they would be taken away to camps and they thought they'd be killed. They had a very lucrative furniture store, I think the biggest store in Budapest. They left it. They didn't get anything for it, they left it. They came over here, they were poor. My father gave his sister a job in one of his factories and her husband got some other job. They had children and we were in contact with them for a long time. In fact, they lived in New Brunswick for a while. Then, they moved away to Philadelphia, and then, they died, I guess. Over the years, I've lost contact with their children. I just don't know what happened to them.

EH: What was New Brunswick like during that time?

NH: New Brunswick was *the* town. Everything was here, shopping. If you wanted to shop, you came to New Brunswick. It was always my dream to live in New Brunswick. New Brunswick had Rutgers, it had all the stores--it was the center of everything. I used to hitchhike to New Brunswick. We used to go to the movies here. I used to hitchhike just to walk around. Rutgers Football was in Neilson Field, which is right over here, and I used to stand by the fence and look through the hole to watch the games when I was a kid. We did all kinds of stuff. [laughter]

SI: I know there was one night in particular during the week where a lot of people would come into New Brunswick to do their shopping. Would you come in then?

NH: Oh, yes, Saturday night was shopping night, down on around Dennis Street, in that area. My wife's father, his name was Herman Klein, he had a butcher store there and there were a lot of grocery stores there. I know my parents used to go into New Brunswick Saturday night and do all their shopping.

SI: I know that there is a very strong Jewish community here, but, also, within that, a very strong Hungarian Jewish community.

NH: Yes.

SI: Did you have any ties with that community or was there a similar type of community in South River?

NH: Yes, there was a Jewish community in South River. There was a synagogue there and a Jewish community center. It was a very close-knit community. When I visit the cemetery--I don't know if you've seen *Our Town*, the [1938 Thornton Wilder] play. You ever seen *Our Town*, it was a play on Broadway? Anyway, it's worth seeing. It's a great play. When I go to visit the cemetery, it's like visiting my town, because I know everybody there, every name. You just knew everybody.

TH: Were you drawn to Rutgers by the New Brunswick community as well as the school or was it a mix?

NH: Well, what happened was, it was interesting, in those days, the high schools didn't help the students find their way, figure out what they were good for. At that time, the man who taught me debating in high school, he was a lawyer, but lawyers couldn't make any money in the Depression, so, they tried to get other jobs. He became a teacher and he was also a friend of the family. He was one of my brother's best friends, and so, although I was drawn to something like law, I realized lawyers couldn't make a living. So, when you got out of high school, "What am I going to do?" I didn't want to go into my father's business, because it was a nerve-wracking business, I could see. He would have dinner at night, and then, go back to the factory to finish up. The trucks would come in from New York at around six or seven o'clock, or even later, delivering materials to be made into dresses. He would go in after dinner to see what they brought in, what styles they had and get it prepared for the next day. It was a very hard life for him. So, I didn't want to go into his business. So, I asked various people what I should do and a number of people said to me that Rutgers has a ceramics engineering course, which is a good industry to get into, where you probably could get a job, because getting a job, just like now, that was your aim, "How can I get a job when I get out of college?" So, well, I figured, "I'll go and take ceramics." So, I got into Rutgers and I started taking ceramics courses and chemistry and everything else involved. I realized, the first year, some of the kids there were dropping out, that I should drop out, but I figured, "What am I going to drop out and do?" I just didn't know. So, I stuck with it, and then, the war was going on at this time. I was Class of '44, the war started in '41. The Japanese bombed us in '41. So, everybody went into the Army. There was a draft. Everything in this country stopped, like nothing we have seen in any other war. This was a complete war economy. You didn't make anything that wasn't for the war. Everybody was involved in it and everybody went into the Army, unless you didn't pass the exam. So, I was at Rutgers at the time and ROTC was here and they picked me to become an officer in the ROTC. When I took the exam, they failed me because of my eyes. You can't believe that these things go on, how they were strict in those days, but my eyes weren't that good. I was wearing glasses. I mean, my eyes are fine, really, and so, they failed me on my eyes, and then, I couldn't get into the officer training school, which is what I wanted. So, that meant that I was going to be drafted. So, in my third year of college, when I was about to be drafted, the Army was so full of recruits, they couldn't handle it. So, they gave people opportunities to do other things. So, if I enlisted in the Army, in the Signal Corps, I could go to radio school at night in my junior year, finish my junior year, and then, I'd go into the Army after my junior year and that's what happened. At the end of my junior year, I went into the Army. I was in the Signal Corps and I was trained over here at Fort Monmouth and I was at Camp Crowder.

SI: Before you get deeper into your time in the service, I want to ask a few questions about Rutgers. You were here from September 1940 to the last six months of 1941. What was that pre-war year like at Rutgers? What was the college like then, before World War II changed it?

NH: It was real college life, just like now, with Rutgers teams, basketball, football, everybody was interested in it. I joined Tau Delta Phi. I was a commuter. We lived so close. My father would give me--we only had one car--my father would give me the car and I'd drive to Rutgers. Then, when I came back in the afternoon, I'd go down to the factory and pick him up. Even though I was a commuter, I was sort of involved. It was the war years, so, I was busy. The lab work, in ceramics, I had a lab every single day, a three-hour lab. I had classes in the morning and, for four days a week in the afternoon, at one to four, it was a ceramics lab or a chemistry lab. So, it was really a full day, and then, I had to go home and do homework. So, they were tough courses.

SI: Did you have to work while you were at Rutgers or during the summers?

NH: I worked in the summers. I worked in my dad's factory in the summer.

SI: What did you do then?

NH: I screwed around. [laughter] I helped out. I'd come in at ten o'clock in the morning. My dad was--my parents were just unbelievably loving. I mean, they lost two children, so, my sister and I, we were their world and they couldn't have done enough for us, anything. They never said no on anything and we never asked. I mean, when I was in grade school, a lot of kids would get two cents for candy. I really didn't want to ask my father for two cents. I thought he couldn't afford it. You were so aware of what your parents were doing and how things were and I was aware of how hard my father worked and how wonderful they really were. I mean, my mother was a typical housewife who just cared about her family; never ate enough for her. [laughter]

SI: When you came to Rutgers, did you find that a lot of your classmates were from similar backgrounds?

NH: Pretty much, yes. I didn't know much about most of their backgrounds, their families. I knew the kids and I had a lot of friends.

SI: Was there any kind of social stratification?

NH: No, not really.

SI: In the year before Pearl Harbor, was there a sense on campus that America might get involved in the war? Was there much talk about the war in Europe?

NH: We hoped they'd get into the war. We, as Jews, hoped we'd get into the war because we saw what Hitler was doing. We thought it was a catastrophe and we couldn't see how we could stay out. In those days, we had a lot of people who didn't care and did not want any part of the war. I could understand it. The German-American *Bund* was very powerful in those days and

they were for Hitler. It's a free country. There was a lot of anti-Semitism in the country at the time. There was a man called Father Coughlin--you may or may not have heard of him--who used to have radio programs and a lot of hateful things said about Jews. [Editor's Note: The German-American *Bund*, a pro-Nazi group based on the earlier Friends of New Germany, operated from 1936 until December 1941, when it was outlawed. Father Charles Coughlin, a Roman Catholic priest, was a Depression Era radio broadcaster whose shows that dealt more with politics than religion and frequently advocated anti-Semitic and anti-Roosevelt views.]

SI: I am reminded of one Jewish alumnus who graduated in 1941, I believe. He said that there were fraternity houses actually defaced with *swastikas*. Do you remember anything like that on the campus?

NH: I don't remember that. I don't doubt that it happened, but I don't recall anything like that on campus. I don't remember anti-Semitism on campus. I saw nothing like that.

SI: What was life in the fraternity house like?

NH: Typical fraternity, bunch of crazy guys. [laughter] I remember the initiation--God, they were sadists. I mean, one night, I remember, they wrapped us up like mummies, drove us out someplace ten miles away. I had no idea where I was and I was hitchhiking a ride, two o'clock in the morning, trying to get back, people looking at me, whizzing by me. [laughter] I think I walked most of the way back. I think somebody finally picked me up. I mean, they had all kinds of hazing. It was stupid. After that, I really looked at some of them, some of the guys, differently. I never took any part in any hazing after that, any of the years. The hazing week, I didn't bother going to the fraternity, because I thought it was stupid. [laughter]

SI: Tell us about the day Pearl Harbor was attacked. You were a commuter; were you at home then?

NH: Yes, I remember the day. It was Sunday and I had just gone down, I think, to the deli to get something for dinner, and, as I walked out, somebody said something about America being bombed. It was a terrible day and I remember vividly President Roosevelt making his speech the next day, with everybody listening to it on the radio. Even though we wanted to get into the war, we really didn't want to be in a war and we didn't know what was going to happen. The whole country became mobilized. It was a very scary time, because Hitler was winning the war, no question about it. We knew it was going to be very tough, but we never had any doubt, at any time, that we weren't going to win, never even came into our minds that he would win eventually, because we knew it couldn't happen. It couldn't be allowed, because, if he did win, he would take over the whole world.

SI: Did the school make an effort to keep students in school? What was the school telling you, to leave or not leave?

NH: The school wasn't telling us anything, as I recall. I know nothing with the school. I mean, we went to classes, that was all.

SI: How quickly did you start to see a mass exodus of students from the campus into the service?

NH: Actually, there wasn't a mass exodus, as I recall. I don't recall that at all. Most of the guys I was with were in school and stayed in school. At various times, I guess, people left. I left the end of my junior year. I don't really know what happened to most of them. I went back to one reunion, my tenth reunion. I only met one person that I knew and, really, except for one person I'm still friendly with from college, there were a couple others, I guess, but most of them have died, but I'm still friendly with one person who I met at college and we're still very good friends.

EH: Did you always have it in your mind that you were going to enlist or did the attack on Pearl Harbor sort of push you toward that?

NH: Oh, I knew I was going to be drafted, no question. Everybody was going to be drafted. I knew I was going in the Army, it was just a question of what service I go into, whether it was the infantry or something else. I didn't know anything about any of the services until I saw this bulletin that I could enlist and get in the Signal Corps. So, I just took the opportunity. Actually, when I was in the Army--I don't know if you want me to go this far ahead, but, when I keep thinking of things--when I went into the Army and I was at Camp Crowder, we had six weeks of basic training and it was tough training. At the end of my training, the Army was inundated with people and I guess they didn't know how to handle them all. So, they started this program called ASTP, which you may have heard of. It was for college students to go back to school temporarily while the Army got itself straightened out. You were still in the Army, but you went to some schools. [Editor's Note: The Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), established in 1942, was an officer training program that serviced over two hundred thousand enlisted men in several specialties, including engineering, medicine and dentistry, psychology and foreign languages, at 227 colleges and universities. The majority of ASTP cadets were reassigned in the Spring of 1944, before completing the program, to meet manpower needs in other units, particularly in infantry, airborne and armored divisions destined for frontline combat.] So, they sent me to--I went to Nebraska first, University of Nebraska, and then, once I got there, they said, "No, you're not supposed to be here." They sent me to the University of Pittsburgh and I was in a tough science course there, taking physics and all kinds of stuff, because I had been taking science courses here, of course. I was only there for about six months and I contracted a very serious case of the flu and the flu in those days was very serious and I was in the hospital for a couple of weeks. When I got out, they said, "You've missed too much work, and so, we're going to have to send you back to your unit," and they said, "You're being sent to Little Silver." I thought Little Silver was in New Mexico; turns out Little Silver is in New Jersey. So, I was sent to Fort Monmouth in Little Silver, which was great for me--I was right near home--and I went to radio school. What we were learning was, we were learning how to set up--they really were so far ahead in thinking, their thinking was ahead--they were thinking about the war in Europe, that when we went over there and all this fighting went on, there would be no phone lines. They'd all be down. There'd be a lot of bombing. What were they going to do? How were they going to communicate? So, they were developing a radio system for the phones, which is the forerunner, of course, of the cellphone. The Army developed this. So, we learned--first, we learned [Morse] code, of course, that was right in the beginning, and then, we never used it again--but we set up teams of six. We set them up in parts of New Jersey with these

antennas and we would try and communicate with other teams with these newly developed radio sets that they had. The idea was, you'd set up a team here in this city and a team in another city, you'd set up radio communication. Those teams would have lines running from their radios to the outgoing military organization in the area. So, in this method, you had radio communication and, also, land lines and that's what we were developing. So, that's the program I was in, and so, I was here for a year-and-a-half in this program, learning it, and then, we were sent overseas. Actually, since I was here a year-and-a-half, the war was going very well for us and, when we went over, we went over to Liverpool, at a staging area. Just when we went over, we were supposed to go right into Germany--into France, that is, we were still in France, we were supposed to go right into France, start setting up these teams--and that's when Dunkirk happened. Well, Dunkirk was with Germany, as you may remember, or maybe not, [laughter] we were winning the war and Germany made this last big push …

SI: The Battle of the Bulge? [Editor's Note: The Battle of the Bulge, also known as the Von Rundstedt Offensive or Ardennes Offensive, was the failed German attempt to break through the Allied lines in the Ardennes Forest in Luxembourg and Belgium launched on December 16, 1944, and which lasted into late January 1945.]

NH: The Battle of the Bulge. So, while the Battle of the Bulge was going on, they held us in Liverpool for three months. During that three-month period, we were guarding the ships coming over, bringing all this materiel. When you hear about the ships coming over and being sunk, you can't imagine how much equipment was on each one of these Liberty ships. It was unbelievable the amount they could get into these ships. When a ship went down, I mean, it went down with tanks, clothing, equipment. We were producing so much stuff here, sending it over there, not only sending it to our troops and to the English, we were helping the English, we were sending stuff to the Russians. Our manufacturing capacity here was unbelievable, the way we were building things, airplanes, building a ship a day. We just did a fantastic job of transforming our country into a war economy. Anyway, we were guarding the ships because people were stealing stuff off the ships, including our soldiers. I mean, leather jackets, they were at a premium. [laughter] Anyway, we spent three months there, and then, we were sent over into France and started setting up stations.

SI: Before we get into Europe, we want to ask about your time in the States, your training.

EH: When you first got to Camp Crowder, was it a large culture shock, being from the Northeast and going to the South. Was life very different there in the camp?

NH: Well, being coddled all my life by my parents, being a Rutgers student, suddenly, you're in the Army and you're doing twenty-mile marches, it was tough, but you had to do it. You learned it and you did it. I remember coming back from some of these marches and I'd go into the KP [PX, post exchange] and I'd buy a gallon of milk and a gallon of Coke. First, I'd drink a gallon of milk, then, I'd drink a gallon of Coke. [laughter] That's how thirsty we were. It was hot, really hot out there, but you had to do what you had to do.

SI: Going back to Evan's question, was there the North-South thing there, a conflict between Northerners and Southerners?

NH: I never saw that at all. In the Army, I never saw any anti-Semitism. I got along with everybody. Nobody ever said anything to me about anything. We were all friends. You worked with the people you were with and my life in the Army, actually, was a very interesting experience and a worthwhile experience, from the point of view of learning about people and getting along, things like that.

SI: What did you learn? Taking Camp Crowder as an example, you were meeting people from all over the country. What did you learn from those people about how to get along, as you said?

NH: Well, you just did. They were your buddies. You were all in it together, the officers were always yelling at you and you just did what you had to do. Every Friday night, we had to scrub the barracks, the floors. I remember, from doing the floors every week, I got some sort of disease on my neck and they gave me some shot that made me very sick. I was in the hospital for a week, I remember, over that, while I was in the Army, but that was nothing. I got over it.

SI: This was basic training for Signal Corps, specifically for Signal Corps.

NH: Yes, that was a Signal Corps training camp.

SI: What would they do in addition to marching and PT?

NH: Oh, we learned how to operate--you had to learn how to take apart a gun and put it together. You had to know how to do that very well, learned how to operate a machine-gun. You went to classes. They had a lot of movies. We went to a lot of movies. Training movies, we loved those and they were very well done. You just went out every day, a lot of physical work, a lot of calisthenics, a lot of marching, a lot of hikes. I don't know, that's what I remember, mostly.

SI: Did you ever get to go on leave in a local town?

NH: Yes, yes. On weekends, we could go into town, yes. I don't think I got much leave. I was there for six weeks, I may have gone into town twice.

SI: How receptive were they to GIs?

NH: We just walked around. There was nothing going on. I don't recall anything being done for soldiers. People were nice, but there was nothing.

SI: You said you had also done radio training in your junior year, while you were still at Rutgers.

NH: Yes, at night.

SI: Would you go over to Fort Monmouth?

NH: No, there were classes right here at Rutgers they set up for people who enlisted and I'd go to radio school here at night.

SI: How many other students do you remember, approximately?

NH: I don't remember exactly. We had a class, I remember. I guess it was twenty or thirty kids.

SI: Was it an Army instructor who came over?

NH: Yes, Army people. We were basically in the Army. Once we were accepted, they were letting us go to school for the year, but we were in the Army.

SI: What did that training entail? Was that where you learned the code?

NH: Yes, we started learning the code and learning about radios and how they operated and we were supposed to learn how to repair radios. So, they started teaching us repairing the radios that we were going to be using, that were going to be used for this telephone communication. We never really learned how to repair them, but they had a system for teaching us. You take out various sections. It was all tubes in those days and that's what we did. I don't remember, really, much about it, except that I did it. [laughter]

SI: Had you been interested in radio at all before that?

NH: No.

SI: I know ham radio was very big then.

NH: When I was growing up, I didn't even have a radio. I had a crystal set. You know what a crystal set is? It's a radio, sort of. It's got a little condenser on it and it's got a little crystal and a little needle on top and you move this needle. You had earphones and you just hit it at a certain spot and you'd get a station. I used to listen to the radio that way when I was a little kid. When I bought my first radio, I don't know how old I was, I think it was a thrill. I bought a little radio, it was fifteen dollars and I saved up for it. We had a radio in the house for the family, but I wanted my own radio for my room. So, first, it was a crystal set, and then, I bought a little radio. I had a small allowance from my father, but I hated to ask him for money and I tried to make-do as much as I could.

SI: Did you have to do any part-time work before you came to college?

NH: The only jobs I ever had, I became a counselor at [camp]. Let's see, I went to Boy Scout camp, and then, when I got older, I got a job as a counselor at some camp. Camp (Tagola?), that was the name--how's that? [laughter] I was a counselor for one or two years. I was a canoeing counselor, I remember, waterfront counselor. That was the job I had, and then, later, when I was in college, I worked for my dad.

SI: You were in the Boy Scouts.

NH: Yes.

SI: How long were you in the Boy Scouts?

NH: Well, in those days, everybody was in the Boy Scouts. You just joined the Boy Scouts, all your friends were in the Boy Scouts. You learned ropes and all kinds of things and you got up different classes. The Boy Scout camp, I think, was fifteen dollars a week. So, it was a good camp to go to. I enjoyed it. I had a good time.

SI: Do you think anything you learned as a Boy Scout helped you when you got into the military?

NH: No. [laughter]

TH: Do you think being so active when you were younger prepared you physically for the training that you had?

NH: Yes, I was in good shape. I was always playing. I played tennis when I was in high school. I always did something. I had a bike. I always did a lot of biking and tennis, stuff like that.

SI: Before you went into the Army, had you ever had an opportunity to do much traveling or were you pretty much confined to the South River/New Brunswick area?

NH: Pretty much confined. We'd go to New York, the kids. We'd go together. We'd go to the burlesque, stuff like that. Well, my parents would go away in the summer, up to the mountains in New York. That was the place for vacations. They'd go for a week or two, I'd go to that. That was about all.

SI: What was it like traveling across the country during World War II, particularly on these troop trains, which I understand were not very comfortable?

NH: Well, you traveled by train, there was no flying. I don't know, I traveled by train to Camp Crowder, and then, by train to Nebraska, and then, I traveled by train to Pittsburgh.

SI: Was it difficult?

NH: No. They gave you orders, you had your orders and you went and they gave you a ticket. It was very efficient.

SI: The conditions were not bad.

NH: No, the conditions were okay.

SI: How long were you at Pittsburgh?

NH: I wasn't there long at all. I was there in the wintertime and I got sick and, within six months, I was at Camp Crowder. By the way, I wasn't very happy about them sending me out, because I liked being in school there, but it wasn't long after that that ASTP was broken up. They were getting ready to invade France and they broke up ASTP. All the people that I was with in ASTP in Pittsburgh, I don't think it was less than six months, they were all taken out of Pittsburgh and put into the infantry. So, basically, I was lucky that I got into the Signal Corps at the time, because I don't know where I would've gone in the infantry or what would've happened. So, it was really a break for me, accidental break, unique breaks in life.

SI: How long were you at Fort Monmouth before you were shipped overseas?

NH: I was at Fort Monmouth for probably at least a year. I was sent over at the Battle of the Bulge and that was in '43, I guess.

SI: 1944.

NH: So, I was in this country for a year-and-a-half, and then, I was in the Army overseas for a year-and-a-half. I was in for three years.

SI: When you were at Fort Monmouth, were you able to come home often?

NH: Yes, I could get weekends off. Once, I almost got caught. I didn't have a pass and something was going on and I wanted to go home. So, I had a friend in another company who was across the grounds there and I said to him, "If anybody ever asks you, I was visiting you here." When I came back, I remember that day, the Company Commander called me in, he said, "You weren't at roll call this morning." It was Sunday. So, I said, "Well, I thought we could just take off and I was visiting my friend in Company C." So, he looked at me--he knew I was lying, he was such a nice guy--he said, "I'll let you off this time." He said, "Don't let it ever happen again." [laughter] That was it.

EH: While you were training, how was your view of your officers? Did you like them generally? Did you respect them?

NH: Yes, yes. I don't recall any problem ever with any officers. We did what we were told. We knew this was a war we had to win and we felt sorry for the guys who were really doing the tough fighting. Basically, from where [I was], we had it pretty easy. When we got over to France and the war was still going on, the first couple of months I was there, it was not easy. We did a lot of marching to places. I was in Wiesbaden first. Then, we set up our first camp in a town called--we had already gone into Germany, actually, after the Bulge--and we were sent into a town called Kaiserslautern, which was a small German city. There was a tower up on one of the big hills there, outside of town, in the woods. So, we set up a radio station there and we set up our antenna in the tower. We had a tent and we set up a perimeter around us, because the Germans were still out there, killing GIs here and there. We had bells on the wire and we had two-hour shifts every night, where one of us would stand guard. If an animal came along and rang the bell, boy, we were scared. We thought it was something else, [laughter] but we were there for quite a while. At that time, we had our station at Kaiserslautern, there was a station on

the top of the Eiffel Tower that I visited once, and then, we started putting stations all over. Then, I'll get to the end of the war later.

SI: Tell us a little bit about the trip over to Liverpool. You said you were there for three months guarding all these ships coming in, but, obviously, you came over on one of them. What were the conditions like? Was there any kind of U-boat threat when you came over?

NH: Oh, yes. We came over in a convoy. We came over on a ship, I don't know what it was, what kind of ship it was. Liberty ships were only for carrying equipment. These were passenger ships and there were, like, four or five bunks and you were in one of these and you were really together. I don't know, I was on the third or fourth bunk and I guess it took about five or six days to get over. I got seasick almost immediately and I was in that bunk most of the time. I remember somebody coming over to the bunk and saying, "You're on KP tomorrow," and that was the only time I laughed, because I knew I couldn't move. I was so sick and nobody ever said anything and nobody ever came and got me. After about three days, I think, I got up and I did a little walking around and went up on deck, got some air. Then, I gradually got used to it, started eating a little bit, but it was a rough trip. I mean, we were packed in. It must have been a couple of thousand soldiers on that ship.

SI: Do you remember the name of it?

NH: I have no idea what the name of the ship was. [laughter] I don't think I knew then. They marched us on the ship, they marched us off the ship.

SI: Had you been attached to a unit before you left the States or was that after you got to Europe that you were put into a unit?

NH: No, we were attached to a unit that we went over with. That was the 3192nd Signal Corps and we were in one company, Company B or something like that.

SI: How much time did you have with the other members in the unit before you went overseas?

NH: Well, when we were in training, we were with a lot of guys, and then, we were set up in teams of six and I was with five other guys. They were all great guys and they tried each of us out to see what leadership qualities we had. So, when we went out training at these various sites, in the woods up in Morristown, other places, they'd put one of us in charge to set up the team, set up the tents, set up the antennas and try and communicate with the next team. Sometimes, we succeeded and, sometimes, we didn't, and so, then, they tried the next guy. I forget how they set it up afterward, but they picked one of us at the end and it wasn't me to lead the team. We were all corporals, I think, at the time, something like that, and he was a sergeant and we were just buddies. There was no officer on our team.

SI: You stayed with the same five other guys.

NH: I stayed with the same team during the whole time that I was in the Army in Germany, yes, and we were very good friends.

SI: After that initial period where you rotated jobs, did you always have the same type of job?

NH: Well, we all did the same things. I mean, we operated the station and, once you set the station up and you were in communication, there was nothing to do. You just had to monitor it. So, one of the guys would sit there and watch the radio and make sure everything was working and the other guys could do whatever they wanted, just hang out.

SI: For three months, you were guarding these ships in Liverpool. Did they ever give you instructions on what you were to do if you actually caught somebody? Did you actually catch anybody trying to steal?

NH: Not really. If we were guarding, they weren't stealing where we were guarding, but we were guarding because there had been a lot of theft. So, we just did it and we went into the town of Liverpool and we were just there. I guess, I don't remember whether we did any training or not, because we were just waiting. We were waiting for something, so [that] they could ship us over.

SI: Was there a lot of black market activity in the area?

NH: I really don't know. I don't remember any of that; I'm sure there was.

SI: You had a lot of interaction with the English around that area.

NH: Yes. Actually, they were very nice. I remember, I went to some concerts. I remember doing that. I don't remember much else. I remember the fish and chips. They'd put them in this paper, use newspapers to put the chips in. They were great. [laughter]

SI: You said you grew up in a kosher home. Had that been an issue for you at all when you joined the military?

NH: Well, it was semi-kosher. I was never kosher. I mean, my parents even were not kosher and, after a while, my mother gave it up. They ate out and they ate out in other restaurants. It was something that was ingrained. When you're brought up in a religion, I don't know how it is with you guys, but it's just a part of how you're growing up, and then, gradually, you can either stick with it or get out of it and we mostly got out of it.

EH: The men that you were with, were they married at the time? Had they been married before the war?

NH: No, none of the guys were married. We were all young. We were all enlistees. Most of them, I think, had been in college, and then, entered the Signal Corps, but nobody was married.

EH: Was that common at the camp? Were a lot of men married? Were they marrying young before the war?

NH: I really don't know. I guess some people did. I wasn't aware of any. None of the guys I was with were ever married. I don't even know if any of the officers were married. I guess some of them were.

TH: Was there any--I do not want to use the word animosity--but, perhaps, different attitudes towards the different divisions of the military, whether it be the infantry or the Signal Corps?

NH: No, nothing like that. We respected--we really felt for--the infantry. We knew these guys were getting killed, and the Air Force. When we were in Kaiserslautern, this is actually towards the end of the war, we were bombing the hell out of Germany and we used to lay up on our tower and we'd watch the planes come over. When I say planes, I'm saying we'd watch a thousand planes go over, bombing Germany, towards the end of the war, and then, we'd watch them come back. At that time, of course, we had lost a lot of planes when we were in the middle of the war, but, actually, after the Bulge, that was it. After that, we were going and Germany was basically defeated. The Russians were coming from the other side and that was really the end of the war. So, our planes are going over and bombing the hell out of them and never, hardly ever, a plane getting shot down at that time. We'd see them all coming back and they were in formation. You could tell if a plane was missing and we rarely saw a plane missing.

SI: You went to Wiesbaden, then, Kaiserslautern. What was a typical day like when you were there?

NH: Wiesbaden was great. They had a spa there and you could go and use the spa, Turkish baths and massages. They found a large amount, I don't know how many bottles, of champagne. For a while there, we were getting, believe it or not, a bottle of champagne every single day for each guy. We just went in the PX there that had been set up, you got your allotment of a bottle of champagne and we just drank it. We had a great time and that was just, like, a staging area. We were waiting in Wiesbaden to actually go into our first town where we were going to set up our station. That was a staging area. Then, we went to Nancy and that was another French town we were in. We were in Nancy first, that was French, then, we went to Wiesbaden in Germany. Then, we went to Kaiserslautern to set up our station. That's when we really started working. [laughter]

SI: After you set it up, you were mostly monitoring it. What was a typical day like during that phase? What would you do?

NH: Hanging around. Well, we had to go and get our food. Over here, everything was rationed and people couldn't get much meat at all. We, on the other hand, we'd send--we had a jeep and we also had a motorcycle that we had stolen from some German. We used to ride around on the motorcycle, but, then, we heard that some GIs had been decapitated. The Germans had set up wires across roads and some guys were hit right across their neck. So, after that, we set up a big bar on our motorcycles and we were very careful riding around. We didn't ride around much after that. You heard it. I don't know whether it was rumors or whether it happened, but we heard about it. So, we were very careful, but, before that, we all were riding on the motorcycle. We'd go into the area where you picked up food and, God, all this stuff that they couldn't get at home, they were shipping overseas. We got steaks every day. I mean, we got so much steak that

we didn't like meat anymore. [laughter] I mean, we said, "Can't we get something else?" because that's what they had a lot of. They were shipping everything over to the Army. The Army came first.

SI: Did you ever have any interaction with the Germans in the area?

NH: Yes. One thing I remember about Kaiserslautern that stuck out, they had a place where they made beer there. It was the best beer I ever had. As far as interacting with them, I had a lot of interaction after the war, because I was in Germany for about six to nine months after the war. What happened was, when the war was over, you were released from the Army based on a point system, how long you had served overseas. So, we had served very little, so, we stayed quite a bit after the war, doing what we had to do.

SI: After Kaiserslautern, where were you sent next?

NH: Well, after Kaiserslautern, actually, the war ended and we were sent to a staging area and we were supposed to be sent--our unit was supposed to be sent--to Japan. We were going to end the war in Japan. So, now, we're going to do the same thing we had done in Germany. So, our unit was going to be disbanded--not disbanded, but kept--and so, we had a physical, and guess what? I failed the eye test. [laughter] I couldn't believe it. This guy said, "You have bad eyes," and so, because I failed the eye test, they transferred me to another unit. That was the 3186th Signal Corps, which was still doing the same things in Germany, but the one that I was in before was going to be transferred to Japan. So, there was another lucky break and I had no idea when this guy asked me to read the lines that what I couldn't read was that bad. Afterward, he said, "You have very bad eyes." Well, I did have glasses, but I didn't think they were that bad. He said, "They're 20/200 and 20/200 does not pass the test." So, he said, "You're good enough to stay in the Army, but you're not good enough to go to Japan," and that was it. So, they transferred me to this other unit, I met other guys. The war ended and we were sent to Nurnberg [Nuremberg], where the war crimes trials were going on. We set up our team in Nurnberg and that's where I had a lot of contact with the Germans. Actually, Nurnberg, we called it Nuremburg, but the Germans called it Nurnberg, N-U-R-N. When we bombed Nurnberg, they had the old city in the middle, and then, this larger city surrounding it, a very nice city. That center city, which was the old city, which was of no value whatsoever, that was rubble. I mean, all you saw were bricks, nothing that even resembled a building. That was completely devastated, but the surrounding area was bombed, but not that bad. The telephone building, which was very important to us, was still there and we actually took over an apartment house where the Germans were living. We took over the top floor and moved into this apartment, took over, set up our antenna on the roof. So, our station became the radio station for Nuremberg and we communicated with the rest of Germany. We had an occupation army in Germany for quite a period of time, taking over the country. When you talk about things going on that were different after the war, I remember, we used to send our cigarettes with some guys to Berlin and they'd sell them there for large amounts of money. We'd send the money home, but the Army stopped that pretty quick, because they knew we can't do that anymore. [laughter] So, they stopped us from sending money home, because all the guys were sending money home, because they were selling cigarettes. The cigarettes were worth a lot of money to the Germans. Our direction in the building, we got to know all the women. They were mostly women, rarely a man--they were all

in the Army. As far as they were concerned, they didn't know I was Jewish. Actually, I had taken German in high school and I did a lot of interpreting at the time--don't ask me to speak German now, but, then, I could speak German fairly well and I could talk to them. Their attitude was, one, they lost the war because we just had more equipment and we were richer. Two, "It's too bad we lost the war." That was it. [laughter] They felt no guilt about anything, they thought Hitler was great and, to their minds, they just lost the war because we had more stuff, but they never saw anything wrong with the country. They loved it the way it was and Hitler was a great guy as far as they were concerned.

EH: Are you talking about soldiers or civilians?

NH: I only met civilians. I never knew that I had met a German man who was in the Army. I mean, there were occasionally men around who I might have talked to, but I didn't know who they were and I didn't know if they had been in the Army or what. Mostly, we talked to the women in the building and that was about it. While I was there, I used to attend the war crimes trial, because I was free to. We were six guys, we're on our own and we would get furloughs while we're there. I was there for, I don't know, four or five months, I guess, after the war. I got a furlough. They would give us furloughs for one at a time, each of us. So, I got a furlough to Paris and it was great. I went to Paris, stayed for a week, had a great time, went to shows going on. Then, I came back and I saw there was a furlough sitting there for Switzerland and I said, "Who's going?" "Nobody--you want it?" They were screwing all the women while I was away; they didn't want to leave. [laughter] I pick up the furlough, I walked out and I went to Switzerland. I spent a week there, had a great time, and then, we spent our time just hanging out. That was about it.

SI: You told us earlier that you had known quite a bit about what was happening in Germany to the Jews and others killed in the Holocaust. As the news came out about the death camps, how did you find out about it? Did that just add to your feelings or did it change the way you and your comrades thought about the Germans?

NH: I can't say that the soldiers, that we talked to each other a lot about it. On our team, there may have been one other Jewish person, but we never discussed anything. Personally, I felt pretty bad, still do. I mean, it was in the newspapers, we had the Army newspaper, and we were stunned. At the same time, we had known and we were sort of angry, because nothing had been done about it. We couldn't understand why we hadn't bombed the railroad tracks or bombed the areas around it, because we knew, afterward, that our government knew about it, the English knew about it, and so, they were stunned. I guess they knew about it, but they may not have known it was as bad as it was, but we felt pretty bad afterward, yes.

SI: Did you ever go to visit one of the camps?

NH: No, I never did. I never had an opportunity, actually, to visit one, unless you travel over there now to visit and I never have.

SI: I know, at the end of the war, they were organizing trips for GIs to go see these places.

NH: Yes, but that was different, because they were in organized camps, we were not. We were a six-man unit. We really had nobody over us at all. We were an entity onto ourselves and we reported to some outfit--I didn't even know where they were. They were in charge of us, but we were just there and I never met any officers, once we were in Nurnberg, who were in charge of us. [laughter] We just set up like we were told and we were there running our station. That was it.

SI: Did that ever have a negative effect on your unit? Did you have trouble getting things because you did not have that direct connection?

NH: No, no. We got all the food we wanted. Actually, as I recall, there were places in the town we could go to eat, that were set up for GIs. There were a lot of GIs involved with the war crimes trials going on. So, there was like a mess hall that you could go to. I don't recall us cooking at all in Nuremberg. We used to go to the mess tent, which was a couple blocks away, and eat there.

SI: In any of these places where you set up your station, was there ever a problem with the station? Did it ever break down or were there common challenges that you would face?

NH: No, we never really had a problem. We set up our stations, we had communication, it worked, the stations worked, the phone systems worked and it worked all over. We had them all over, in lots of cities. It was a great system and cellphones came out of that. I'm surprised that it took so long, really, after the war, because it was being done then.

EH: Did your unit ever have to report on the trials or were you simply going to watch?

NH: I was just [there as an observer]. I got a ticket to sit in the visitors' area. You could get tickets for that; not often, but, once in a while, I could get one.

EH: What was it like to see that?

NH: It was amazing, it really was amazing. You looked at these guys who were in charge of the Army, in charge of these camps, really, all the top people--they looked like ordinary people and, as far as they were concerned, they weren't guilty of anything. They never felt they did anything wrong. They had followed orders, that's all, follow orders, didn't matter what it was, they followed orders and, therefore, they weren't guilty.

SI: Does anything else stand out about your time in the occupation? You mentioned that the attitude of the Germans was unrepentant. Did that change over time?

NH: What was interesting was, I found the attitude of the guys in the Army--before we got to Nurnberg, while I was in the Army, when we were in France, the French are very independent people and they don't kowtow to you. They were nice. I mean, I found them very nice people, but some of the GIs didn't go for the French. We got to Germany--the Germans couldn't have been nicer. They would do anything for you. They thought we were going to kill them all. So, I mean, the Germans, the GIs got to feel that the Germans weren't so bad, and so, I think a lot of

the GIs got along very well with the Germans. The Germans would do anything for you, had no problem with the Germans whatsoever. Being a Jew, I disliked them, but I think a lot of GIs, after the war was over, they got to know them and they got friendly with them. I don't know, it was just a different attitude. It's just interesting, human nature, the way things are. When you're not fighting them and you're on a friendly basis with them, you don't know what they did and they're different people.

SI: Were you able to keep up good contact with your family at home or any friends? Were you able to write to each other?

NH: Oh, yes, we had mail service. It was at some APO box, in New York or something. I wrote my family and my friends. We got mail regularly. That was no problem. Even when we were out in the field, we went to a unit that had our mail and we picked it up.

SI: Was that important to you? Did that help keep your morale up?

NH: You bet your life. [laughter] You talk about it now, but, when you're there, you're away from home, you're in the Army, it's different.

SI: Particularly after the war, when there was not as much to do, did you start to think about what you wanted to do with your life? Did that change at all?

NH: Yes, changed a lot. While I was in Nurnberg, I had a lot of time on my hands and they were offering college courses. You got credit, and so, I took a course in philosophy with the University of Minnesota, by mail, and I got credit for it. I'll tell you what happened when you ask me later about what happened after the war. [laughter]

TH: I know it was probably illegal, but did you keep any sort of a diary or journal while you were overseas?

NH: It really wasn't illegal and I never did, actually. When you wrote letters home during the war, I suppose there was some sort of censorship, but we never noticed it. Nothing was ever crossed out of a letter that I had received, not that they told me anything of any importance.

SI: When the war ended in Europe, you were in Kaiserslautern.

NH: Yes. During the war, I was in Nancy and Wiesbaden. Well, Wiesbaden, the war was still on, I guess, and Kaiserslautern, war was still on.

SI: You were there on V-E Day.

NH: Oh, yes.

SI: What was that day like?

NH: It was great. It wasn't that great, because we knew the war was over. They were decimated. I mean, we just knew we were winning. We had won. When we went over from England to France, we weren't worried about losing the war anymore. We knew it was a matter of time.

SI: Was there any kind of celebration among even the men in your unit? Probably, being in Germany, there would not be …

NH: We probably got drunk. [laughter] I really don't remember exactly.

SI: What about V-J Day, when the Japanese surrendered?

NH: That was a great day. We were a little upset, I think--well, some of us were--about why they used the second bomb after they used the first. When we heard about seventy thousand, eighty thousand people being killed with the first bomb, we wondered why we had to use the second one. We realized how the Japanese felt about us and that it would've been terrible for us to have to invade them, because they would fight to the last man, but we still felt bad that we had killed so many people. [Editor's Note: Hiroshima was the target of the first atomic raid on August 6, 1945. Nagasaki was attacked on August 9, 1945. V-J Day was declared on August 14, 1945, in the United States and August 15, 1945, in the Pacific.]

EH: You put down that you got a Good Conduct Medal. Would you be able to talk about that a little bit?

NH: Everybody got a Good Conduct Medal. [laughter] I was a good boy, never got into trouble. I did everything I was supposed to do.

EH: You said, on your survey, that you were discharged as a technician, third grade.

NH: Yes, which is three stripes and a "T." So, you were a sergeant, but you're a technical sergeant, because we were in the Signal Corps.

EH: How did the promotion process go?

NH: I forget how I became a corporal. I don't know, at one point, sort of automatically, they made you a corporal when you went overseas, and then, once we're overseas and we're working, it just came through that I was being promoted. Why I was being promoted, I don't know [laughter] and I think three or four of us out of the six were sergeants and I think two were corporals or something like that. Why we were picked, I have no idea.

SI: In all these different places, particularly in Germany--as you told us, you took over an apartment floor once--were you always able to live in a house or an apartment?

NH: Well, that's the only place. Once we left our teams out in the field, in the camps, that was the first time we ever lived in an actual apartment house, I mean, with people, and then, that's

where we stayed. I stayed there until I was called, that my number came up, and I was shipped back home.

SI: At the other places, you would be out in some sort of bivouac.

NH: Yes, we'd be in some camp.

SI: Did you ever have any interaction with any other Allied forces, particularly in Nuremberg, where there were British coming in, French coming in, Russians coming in?

NH: No, not really. That's interesting. I never met anybody else from another country, only our own guys.

SI: Were there many displaced persons in the area? Do you remember seeing them?

NH: I really don't know. Of course, the Germans--well, the only people I had interaction with were the Germans--they were very poor. I mean, the place was bombed out. There were some stores. I remember, there was a jewelry store there that I went into once, just to look. I never bought anything and I don't think he had any jewelry. I think he had mostly silver pots and stuff like that and silverware. That was about it.

TH: You mentioned, not in the interview, that you were in Heidelberg.

NH: Oh, yes, I was in Heidelberg, too. I forgot about that. That was another city I was in, yes. I was in Heidelberg; the university is there. That was one of the places we stopped at. We stopped at so many places on the way, as the war was progressing. When we went over, the Bulge was just over, so, first, we were on the coast, then, we were transferred to Nancy in France. Then, before I got to Kaiserslautern, we went to Mannheim, which is a large Germany city, and then, we went to Heidelberg. We were there for a while, and then, we went to Kaiserslautern. I forget--what did we do in Heidelberg? I don't know. I remember, Heidelberg, I got some sort of a furlough to go someplace. I remember coming back and we were stationed up in the university, up on the hill. I lived in a dormitory room then and I remember calling up, saying, "Pick me up. I'm at the train station," and I remember waiting for hours, and then, calling back, "Oh, we forgot all about you." [laughter] Then, they sent somebody down for me. Things stick in your mind, the little things that happened. It's so interesting, that I remembered putting it down there, and then, discussing here, I forgot about Heidelberg. We probably stopped at other places, too. We moved all over the place.

SI: It sounds like, in general, your military experience was not too military. There was no oppressive military discipline.

NH: I was very lucky. I had an interesting experience in the military and I really have no complaints about it as far as how I was treated, the guys I was with. I just felt sorry for all the guys who were killed and the things that they went through. While we were there, while we were doing what we were doing, while we were training here, we were very aware of what was

going on all the time, read the newspapers, heard on the radio. So, we were fully aware and we felt for everybody and I was very lucky.

SI: Did you have any relatives in the service at the time?

NH: Yes, my cousins were in the Army and I forget what they were in. They were in something. They were overseas. They survived.

SI: Were you trying to keep in touch with them as well?

NH: Yes, I kept in touch with them all these years. One of them just died.

SI: While you were overseas?

NH: No, not while I was overseas. I lost contact with them completely.

SI: How did you make your way back to the US? How did they send you back?

NH: I guess we went by train to the coast and there were ships taking the guys home, going back and forth. I came back to Camp Kilmer, I think, and I was discharged, and then, life started all over again.

SI: What were your first few days and weeks out of the service like? Did you take some time off or did you go right back into studying or working?

NH: I don't recall the month that I came back, but I knew that I wanted to go back to college. I knew that I was in the wrong courses, that that's not what I want to do with my life. I wanted to go into some sort of business or become a lawyer. I knew that I'd made a big mistake my first three years of college. So, I went to see the dean at Rutgers or the registrar, I forget who it was, and we had the GI Bill then. You could go back to school after the Army for as long as you wanted, free. So, I could've stayed in school a long time, if I wanted, but I was, like, I don't know, twenty-five or twenty-four, twenty-five--I was an old man by then. [laughter] That's how you felt. Life had passed you by; you're not a kid anymore. So, I went back and saw him and I said I wanted to switch courses. He said, "Well, we can't give you credit for all those science courses. You have to start again as a freshman." I was stunned. I mean, that wouldn't happen today, because I know about people, past years, who were taking liberal arts courses, and then, went to medical school. Anyway, I sort of argued with him about it and said, "I've got a philosophy course, I've got a history course, I got an English course." He said, "Well, you've got a couple of courses, but, for what you want to do, you've got to take a lot more courses and we can't give you credit for these science courses." So, I said, "Well, I'm not going to start as a freshman," here I am, this old man. So, I said, "Well, I'll finish up as a ceramist." So, I finished up my fourth year and I was very angry about it, that Rutgers had treated me that way. I thought, as a returning veteran, they should've given me some leeway, but this guy, it was one man--who knows if I had talked to somebody else?--he decided and there's nobody else to talk to. So, I finished up in ceramics [engineering] and that's what I did for a while.

SI: How long were you at Rutgers after the war?

NH: One year, I graduated.

SI: Do any of your professors, in either that later period or earlier, stand out in your memory?

NH: I think my chemistry professor. I still remember this inorganic chemistry course we took. We had this lab. I don't know if any of you guys are familiar with chemistry at all in college or you're all liberal arts students, but they gave you something and you had to analyze it. You had to analyze it down to all its chemical ingredients, down to the last little bit. I forget how we did it. You took various chemicals and reagents and you did all kinds of experiments with it to figure out what was in each thing, which they can do today like that, but we had to do it chemically. When you got to the end, you had to come up with an answer of what was the element in each one and, at the end, many times, I really wasn't sure. I would take so many guesses and, nine out of ten times, I was right and I got a terrific grade in that course, I still remember. Mostly, it was because I was guessing right. [laughter]

SI: Was it difficult, after a few years in the military, to get back into the swing of things, studies, and so on?

NH: I really don't remember. I know I did it and I took the courses I had to take, I graduated. I don't remember much about it. I know I was not happy about it at the time.

SI: You commuted again.

NH: And I commuted, yes. I didn't know anybody. I mean, I was Class of '44 originally. Now, I was Class of '47. I knew all the people in '44 and I could've switched and said, "Look, I want to be in the Class of '44," but I just never bothered. So, I'm listed as Class of '47, but I still consider myself as a Class of '44, because I didn't know anybody in '47. I didn't know any of these people and the guys, they were all coming back from the Army and a lot of them who had not been in the Army were just graduating. So, they had spent three years here at Rutgers and I was [older]. The classes I entered, I didn't know anybody in the classes. I don't recall it being a fun year. I just wanted to get done and get a job. That was the time, at the end of the war, "What am I going to do now? Start going out with girls and get a job."

SI: Did you get a sense of how the veterans changed Rutgers, for example, how they changed the classroom experience, if they altered it all?

NH: Not really. I didn't notice any change at all. We came back to school and it was just the way it was, like nothing happened.

TH: Did you go back to the fraternity at all?

NH: No. I went back. I mean, I met the guys there. I didn't know many of them, but I didn't interact much at all. I don't think I ever spent any time there. I mean, I visited, that's about all.

TH: With all the veterans coming back to Rutgers, what was it like interacting with the younger students that were coming into college?

NH: Well, the only people you interacted with were people in your senior class, actually. So, I really don't remember. It's a long time ago. You're talking about sixty years, a lot longer. You're going to live sixty years and think you're an old man, but you know what? Sixty years is not an old man. Now, I'm an old man, but you know what? I don't feel like an old man, I feel just like I always did. I'm the same person. People look at you like you're an old man and you don't know much, you don't remember much, but you personally don't feel that way at all. I just went for a long bike ride yesterday with my wife. She still skis.

SI: You are as young as you feel.

NH: Exactly.

SI: Did Rutgers make any effort, particularly in the Ceramics Engineering Department, to help place you into a job?

NH: Yes, they did. I don't recall how I got my first job or whether they placed me. It was a factory in Trenton that made figurines and they were really very beautiful figurines for lamps. People used to like to buy lamps and there were little figures on them. As a ceramist, what I was doing was laboratory work, doing analysis of the various things we used, making sure that the colors came out correctly, things like that. Of course, I didn't know very much. The people there who were doing this had experience, but it was a decent job. Within a year of being there, they went out of business, because almost immediately, believe it or not, stuff started coming over here from other countries and they couldn't compete and they went out of business. They were too expensive, and then, I got a job in a factory that made rock wool for insulation in South Plainfield. You'd take all this stuff from the steel plants--I forget what they called it--anyway, all this stuff that was left over after they got the iron out. They'd sent it to us and we would melt it, blow it into a glass fiber. They don't use it anymore. Now, they actually use glass fiber; this was not glass fiber. Oh, slag, it was called slag. We made rock wool out of slag and we'd put paper on it and that's what they used in the houses. So, two hours in the morning, we'd make it for CertainTeed, then, two hours, make it for Sears Roebuck. It was making the same stuff for ten different companies, which is typical. A lot of stuff is made that way today in plants. You think you're getting something special, but you're getting the same thing that you get in any other store. So, I worked there for a while, and then, I got a job in a plant in Sayreville. They were making building tile. They don't make it anymore. They used it for constructing buildings in those days. You've probably never seen one; it's a big tile, this big, made out of clay and you fired it and we put it on. It went through kilns, tunnels. I was the ceramist there. I forget what my job was there, something, [laughter] and, anyway, that was going out, because that type of tile was no longer being used in construction. They went out of business, and then, I figured--and I was married by then--then, it was a question of either going back to school and learning something else [or not], because I figured I wasn't getting anywhere in ceramics. I mean, I already had three jobs, all three companies were getting me nowhere in life and I wanted to get somewhere. So, I figured, "Well, I'll try my father's company for a year and see what it's like." So, I went into the dress business, something I said I'd never do, and I only lasted thirty-five years.

[laughter] So, once you're in it, you're stuck. So, that's what I did. Then, while I was in the business, I was always looking for something else and I did invest with somebody who started a Howard Johnson Restaurant in North Plainfield, on Route 22. You may have been past that. The restaurant is no longer there, but the motor lodge is still there. This dentist, who lived across the street from me in New Brunswick, wanted to do something besides dentistry. Actually, his name was Joel (Fertig?) and he was the school dentist. He used to sit on the sidelines at Rutgers with the football team. That's what he liked to do. Anyway, he started this restaurant, Howard Johnson, got a lot of investors, mostly people he knew, dentists, nurses, things like that. It was just a small Howard Johnson and it was not making money--it was losing money. Anyway, I got to know them and we got to talking and they said they were having a hard time. I said, "I wouldn't mind investing in it and see what's going on," and they said, "Well, we've got ten other investors--would you like to buy them out?" I said, "Sure." [laughter] So, for a nominal sum, just what they put in it, which wasn't much, I bought all the other ten investors out. So, there was just four of us left, and so, we had this Howard Johnson Restaurant. So, as soon as I got into it, we found out that the manager kept telling us that the tapes were breaking. We had an accountant who was checking the books. These were people who were on other jobs, so, we were not there, and so, we trusted the manager. Of course, he kept saying that the tapes were breaking. We knew something was going wrong. Within two weeks of the time that I bought these people out, the manager quit. The following week, we made a thousand dollars. He was stealing a thousand dollars a week. That was the money the place was making--he was stealing it. So, another investor came in, he got scared, he quit. Well, from that time on, that restaurant did great and I was very lucky that I got into it and we really did great. We put on two additions. We had a nice restaurant. That's when Howard Johnson was the restaurant people liked to go to. Their ice cream was very popular, and then, we owned the land next to it and we didn't have a lot of money, so, we got a builder to build us a motor lodge. We gave him the land, and then, as collateral, he built it and leased it and leased the motor lodge to us. So, we had a restaurant and motor lodge. We were absentee management and we had a meeting once a week. I'd go out once or twice a week to check on things. We had a great business. It was operating and I was in the dress business. So, I was very lucky that I was in two things and I was doing quite well.

SI: Was it difficult to make the transition from something like being a Ceramic Engineer to running a business?

NH: Not at all, once I got into business with my father and he taught me the tricks and how to run it. First thing he said to me when I came in, he says, "Son, listen carefully--they lie to you, so, you lie to them." [laughter] What he was talking about was the people we worked for. The manufacturer would send you a dress and he'd say he's going to send you the work and a dress, a sample. You would look at the dress and he would say, "I can pay you ten dollars for making this dress," and I would figure up the dress and I would say, "It doesn't figure at ten dollars. I need at least twelve," and we'd argue back and forth. Sometimes, he would come in with a price, like fourteen or fifteen dollars, and I wouldn't say a word. I'd figure it up and I'd say, "That's a fair price." Sometimes, it was a bad price and he'd say, "Look, I've got to get it at this price. I'll make it up to you some other time," so that what my dad said was true. They were squeezing me, and so, I had to squeeze them the same way. So, many times, he'd say, "What do you need for this dress?" and I'd add two bucks on more than I needed, because if he had room, I'd like to take it and, if I could get it, I would. So, it was every dress, you had to set a price and you might

have two or three styles every week you made. I was producing anywhere from one hundred to five hundred dresses a day, depending on how difficult it was. The way you made money in the business was, if a dress hit, when the girls got it at first and I gave them a price that I was going to pay them for what they were doing, everything was piecework. The people who were paid by the hour were the people who did the final work on the dress, like trimming the threads off and getting it ready for shipping, but the operators who manufactured it and the pressers who pressed it, they were paid by the work that they did, by the dress. So, actually, based on the sheet that the union gave us and based on what they paid me, I would give them the price for what I could pay them. Most of the time, they were very unhappy with it and I'd say, "Look, give it a chance and we'll see how we do." The first time they made it, they might do very poorly and not make out, but, if we got a style that ran, if it went out to the stores and the manufacturer got reorders on it, we might run through the alphabet on it, from A to Z, and then, run through the alphabet again. Well, by the time we got up to "D," "E" and "F," they could make that dress in their sleep. They were making money, because it was all a matter of getting used to it, getting to learn how to do it. The only problem that I had was quality. Quality was everything and I had to make sure that what they did was done right, because they were on piecework, so, they made it as fast as they could. I wanted it made as good as it can be made. So, actually, when I was in that factory, as the final dresses came out to be shipped back to the manufacturer--and it was shipped ready to go right into the store, we had the labels on it, [if] it was going to Sears, it had a Sears hanging tag, everything--I would hang the dress up and, as I looked at it, I would give it the final look to make sure it was right and, if anything wasn't right, take it right back to the operator. When they saw me come back with it, they knew something had to be fixed. It had to be perfect. So, you got a reputation with the manufacturer of turning out quality. If the dresses came in, they had examiners, they picked ten dresses out and their examiner would check them. If they found things wrong, they'd send the whole shipment back, five hundred dresses, and that was bad. Then, you'd get these dresses back and you're still working and you've got to have your examiners go over every dress, see what they found. There would be papers on the dresses, what they found wrong, a stitch was missing or a button wasn't hanging on right. You had to go through the whole damn five hundred. It was a very aggravating business. It was tough and, at the end of the day, four o'clock, I ran out and went to play tennis. [laughter]

SI: Over those thirty-five years, how did the business grow?

NH: It never grew, it just stayed the same. It survived. I had some good years and I had some terrible years. It was very seasonal. We had two seasons--women bought dresses for the fall and for the summer. So, in the wintertime, you made the dresses for the summer. In the summer, you made them for the fall, and then, by November, things were dead. So, many times, November, December, I closed the factory. The women went on unemployment insurance, and then, in January, I might open up again. It was very seasonal and, some years, we had runs on a style. Where I could turn out five hundred dresses a day, I could make money. If I was turning out a hundred dresses a day, I was losing money. That's the way it went.

SI: In 1987, did you ultimately sell the business?

NH: Yes. What happened, eventually, my dad had died by this time and I had been running the business for quite a while. What happened is, the business started going overseas and factories

started going out of business. In South River, they were going out of business all the time. I was working for a very good company at the time and the man who used to come out and check on things said to me, "Look, I'm telling you right now, we've already started importing from the Philippines. We can get it made three times cheaper than here, flying it back over here." He said, "Your days are numbered. I would advise you to get out as soon as you can." So, I hung on for the next year. They would send us work for things they needed immediately, but most of the stuff they were doing was starting to go overseas and the garment industry collapsed. I finally sold my plant, I sold the business and the building, to a Chinese woman for seventy-five thousand dollars, because I knew I was going to have to close up. The equipment was worth nothing and the building was an old building and I guess I sold it in the '60s or '70s and, at that time, I got seventy-five thousand dollars for it. I figured that was found money. She lasted, I think, two years. What's interesting was, I was the last factory in South River to close up and that was the only factory in town that still worked. She was a very smart woman. She made very expensive dresses and she did well, I think, for the first year or so, but, then, I don't know, after two years, she closed. The factory, as of last year, was still there. I stopped in and there were some, I guess they were Spanish, maybe they were from Puerto Rico, I'm not sure. They were making T-shirts. They had a computer and they were designing their own fabric. I mean, this guy is very smart and he was doing things that I didn't understand at all and they were very automated. He had about six or seven women working there. I think it was his family and that's what they were doing. The place was still open. I haven't been there since then. The building's still there.

SI: Living in South River for all that time, what were some of the other major changes that you saw in the town over that span? The manufacturing moved out. Were there any other changes in the population?

NH: Well, when you go back to the town now, the town, basically, when you look at it, the Main Street and Ferry Street, the two main business sections, they look pretty much like they did back in the '30s. The businesses have changed, but there's still stores there selling various things and the town hasn't changed. I mean, the town has grown. I know the population has grown and the outskirts, but, when I look at it, it's so similar. New Brunswick has changed and the outlying area. Where we live now, in the Edgebrook section, which is right into the Turnpike, across from there, where there's a big house development, was a golf course. I remember my brother used to caddy there. It was an upscale golf club.

TH: I was curious how you met your wife.

NH: I lived in South River, there were New Brunswick kids, we knew each other and I met her at parties. We just started going together and we started to fall in love and got married--these things happen. [laughter] That's what people did then and you do the same thing now. You go out and you find somebody you're compatible with. Oh, at the time, she was skiing when I met her and I went skiing and I said, "Do I want to marry this girl?" [laughter] but I saw a lot in her, she had a lot on the ball. She'd never been to college. Actually, she'd done some modeling. She's very beautiful and I really liked her a lot. So, we married and she's a story in herself, because she went back to college at forty and she got a doctorate after sixteen years.

SI: I saw that she had studied at a number of institutions and graduated from Douglass.

NH: Yes, she was very successful. She worked in the school system, and then, we had an office in our house where she saw kids who had learning disabilities and she had a very good practice. She just retired this past year.

SI: What is her name, for the record?

NH: Sally.

TH: Did you keep in contact with any of your friends from the war?

NH: That's interesting. We always said we would, but we never did. [laughter] You came home and just sort of forgot about everything. Nobody ever contacted me. I had their names; I guess I never bothered. I was busy starting my new life at Rutgers and I never contacted anybody. We were very friendly, but it was an experience that was then and it was over and that's about how you looked at it. They had their own lives and it was just different. You came back to a new life and it's like it never happened. You started your life all over again.

SI: Would you like to tell us about your family?

NH: I have a great family; [laughter] Caryn's one of the best. I have three children. Paul, my oldest, believe it or not, just turned sixty. He's in commercial real estate. It's very complicated; he's a CPA, but he doesn't use his accounting experience that much. He's with a team, actually, of a couple of people who are very knowledgeable about real estate. They do leases for very large companies, hospitals, universities, where they do buildings, write books like this, the leases, and they get big commissions and they do very well. His daughter, right now, is out in George Washington University in St. Louis, just starting her first year, and he has three kids and they're all brilliant. [laughter] Then, Bob, my second son, he's a physician. He's an infectious disease doctor and he was in practice for a while, and then, he left the practice. He became disgusted with the insurance companies. He used to write letters to them. I remember, he told me he wrote a letter to the president of Metropolitan, because he became so angry, because he wanted to do something and they wouldn't let him. They wouldn't pay for it. So, he became very angry with the insurance companies. He left, he got a job. He worked for Bristol-Myers Squibb for a number of years on drugs, actually, developing a hepatitis C drug, and he did a lot of work in the trials as an infectious disease doctor. He travels all over the world and, just last year, he left them for another company in Princeton and he works for them. They're working on the same drug and their drug happens to be much better than Bristol-Myers and a very successful drug and he made a great switch. Anyway, he's got a great job, really good job. My daughter, Caryn's mother, is also very smart. Anyway, Jane is a great daughter. She's fantastic. Nobody could have a better daughter than her and, between her and Caryn, they take care of our computer problems. She's got a great job at some company that I couldn't even possibly explain it to you; Caryn could.

CM: They do mobile marketing, so, like, text messages, mobile websites, QR codes. That's about as much as I get. [laughter]

NH: Anyway, she works very hard. She calls us almost every night, on her way home from work, seven, eight o'clock, I mean, a tough job. Those are my three kids and I've got great grandchildren, Caryn, her sister's in law school, Paul has three kids, as I said, they're smart, and Bob has two kids, they're also smart. That's it.

SI: Caryn, are there any stories that you heard over the years that should be part of the record?

CM: I don't know--like what?

SI: Things he may have said about his time in the service or at Rutgers.

CM: He told me that where Brower [Commons] is now, that used to be the gym. He would look in the window at the swimming pool. That's about as much as he's told me about Rutgers. He doesn't have a middle name, and neither did his brother, and his brother chose the middle initial "P," so [that] he could be P. P. Hindes. It's exactly what it sounds like--he was trying to be funny. [laughter]

NH: What's interesting is, my parents never gave me a middle name and I should've given me one myself. So, in the Army, if you don't have a middle name, they give you a middle name, NMI, "No Middle Initial." So, when I was in the Army, my name was Nathan N. M. I. Hindes [laughter] and that's the way it was all through the Army.

CM: Also, I've been told, I don't know if you told me this story or if my mom heard this story somewhere, that your father was originally named Yirachmiel.

NH: Yes.

CM: And that when he came over and they asked him his name, he said, "My name is Milly," like a nickname for Yirachmiel, and they thought he said, "Billy," and that's where you get William. At least that's what I've been told, I don't know if it's true.

NH: Well, that sounds pretty authentic. [laughter]

SI: It goes with the rest of the name changing at that point.

CM: Yes, so, you get Yirachmiel Nussbaum and that turns into William Hindes.

NH: We have great get-togethers, too, because we have a house in Vermont. Since my wife's a skier, we wound up there, and so, that's where the family gets together and we really have a great time together.

CM: We all ski. Paul's kids, Evan, Samantha and Jordan, Evan's in her freshman year at Wash. U., as he said, Samantha's a senior in high school and Jordan's in the eighth grade, they all ski.

Jordan also snowboards. Bob's kids, Shayne and Jenna, Shayne's a senior in high school, I think Jenna's--is she a junior or sophomore?

NH: I don't know, junior or sophomore.

CM: One of those, [laughter] and they both ski and, until my sister got injured, she skied and she loved skiing. She loves coming home. She's at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and, yes, we go up in the winter and have a good time, sixteen people in a house together.

SI: It sounds like, when you were first going out with your wife, you were not into skiing.

NH: No. [laughter]

SI: Do you ski now?

NH: No. Well, I had to learn how to ski. Yes, I skied all my life, actually, and, about six years ago, my knees started--I used to jog every day. We had a dog; actually, we didn't have a dog. My son, when he graduated from college, decided that he wanted a dog, and so, what was Chester?

CM: Chester, a golden retriever.

NH: Big dog, nice dog, and my son Paul went down to Florida to get a job and he got a job as a truck driver and he decided, number one, he couldn't take care of the dog and, number two, he didn't want to be a truck driver. So, he came back to school, eventually, became an accountant and a CPA, and he sent the dog to us. So, he said, "Just two weeks, until I get settled, and you'll send him back." Of course, he sent him back by air, we picked him up at the airport, I had him for fifteen years. When I came home from work every day, I had to a jog with him. So, every day, I jogged with the dog and, eventually, between that and that other stuff I did, my knees got very bad and I really could hardly walk. I had two knee replacements about six years ago, which was the best thing I ever did, because I can do everything. Actually, I could've gone back to skiing, but I figured, "I'm not taking any more chances." So, I play golf, we do a lot of biking and I can run, I can do anything. If I hadn't done that, I really would be walking with a walker. So, I mean, the medical profession has really come to all the kinds of different places than it was when I was a kid. My sister would never have died when she was ten years old of rheumatic fever, if they knew then what they know now.

SI: As an alum, you have sent children here, and grandchildren, and your wife is also an alumna. Have you stayed involved with Rutgers as an alum?

NH: I really haven't. We actually attend lectures here, we go to the theater, Rutgers theater, things like that. Rutgers is great for us, because it's got all this. A number of years ago, I decided, when I retired, I really should do something. So, I started taking a couple of courses at Rutgers as an alumnus, which was fun, but I decided I know everything. So, I stopped. [laughter]

SI: You mentioned that, being 1944 and 1947, you were kind of without a class. Do you go back to Class of 1944 reunions?

NH: Yes, I went to the Class of '44 reunion, but I'm listed as '47, and I really never went to another reunion. I have a friend of mine, who I met at Rutgers and am still very friendly with, who was also Class of '44 and he goes back every year. Every year, he asks me to and I never go.

SI: Who is it?

NH: Lloyd Kornblatt.

SI: Okay.

NH: You know Lloyd?

SI: We interviewed him.

CM: He told us that on Monday.

NH: Oh, yes, well, I forgot. That was Monday. [laughter]

SI: Is there anything else you would like to add to the record?

NH: I think you've gone over it pretty completely, the things that I didn't even remember. [laughter]

SI: Thank you very much for coming in, thank you for your service and thank you, Caryn, for bringing in your grandpa.

CM: No problem.

NH: Okay, it was fun, talking about my life. [laughter]

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

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 5/16/2016
Reviewed by Molly Graham 6/21/2016