

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH BERNARD KANNEN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and

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TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Neal Hammerschlag: This begins an interview with Bernard Kannen on November 16, 2001 in Brick Township with Neil Hammerschlag and ...

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

NH: Mr. Kannen, would you like to begin by telling us about your parents?

SH: Start with your father, please.

Bernard Kannen: Yes, my father and mother were both immigrants from Russia. My father was, he came over at about seventeen or eighteen years old, and my mother somewhere around there. ... He actually came over, was brought over, for the purpose of marrying someone, and he put thumbs down on that when he got here, and met my mother and they got married ...

SH: What part of Russia did he come from?

BK: He came from Minsk. Now, Minsk was near Poland. His love in life was [being] a singer, a classical singer, and he sort of got private lessons at the Warsaw Conservatory, because, unfortunately, in those days, Jewish people had a tough time getting in. ... When he came here, he started out as a house painter, and I'm told that his greatest thing about his painting was singing, which he did while he was painting. Nobody ever said anything good about the painting. But, anyway, he met my mother, and there were some relatives down the shore and they came down the shore and opened up a candy store. ... I have two older sisters. They had all three of us down here. We settled in Belmar, and that's where I grew up. He also had a contract with the post office. He used to pick up sacks of mail. That's the way they delivered the mail in those days, on trains in these tremendous sacks. Unfortunately, he developed a heart condition and passed away when I was ten years old, but my memories of him are mainly of his singing. He directed a chorus, and he would sing at home. He had a wonderful voice and really had a secret desire to go back to Europe to establish a career. He never got the opportunity to do that. He was forty-four when he passed away. He went through the Depression. I don't remember, but my sisters tell me one of our houses was foreclosed on. We must have lived at six different places in Belmar. In any event, my two sisters didn't have the opportunity to go to college, and I was sort of the fair-haired boy, in a sense, the apple of my mother's eye. My mother had a dress shop, and my older sister worked in the dress shop with her. My younger sister was an unusual condition. She got married very young, at about seventeen or eighteen, and shortly afterwards, she contracted polio while she was pregnant. It was highly unusual in those days for a woman, especially a pregnant woman, to have polio. It was called infantile paralysis in those days, as a matter-of-fact. Unfortunately, the baby was a stillbirth. ... The interesting thing about that was that she was taken to Jersey City, this is, I'm sure, before your time, but a Sister Kenny was the great guru of polio. The treatment consisted of hot packs, and she was very famous at that time and she treated my sister. My sister sort of recovered. She just had weak stomach muscles from the polio, but otherwise she was okay. Anyway, so I grew up and went to Asbury High, as did everybody in those days. A distant second choice was Manasquan in those days. Asbury High School, in those days, was made up of children from Asbury, Bradley, Belmar, Deal, Ocean Township, Interlaken. It was quite a mixture. It was a great mixture of kids, and it was one of the top-rated schools in the state because of the mixture of students. They

probably had maybe, I'd have to guess, seventy-five to eighty percent going to college, whereas it might just be the opposite these days, unfortunately. In school, I was very active. I was on the track team [and] I became captain of the track team.

SH: What did you do on the track team?

BK: I ran the quarter-mile, believe it or not. I look down here at my stomach and say, "I ran the quarter-mile?" ... Well, we did very well. Our relay team came in second in two or three of the state championship races, and we did very well. I was editor of the school paper, and I started singing. I had a little trio [and] we sang, so I was quite busy. ... I went to high school from '42 to '46.

SH: Before we start that, I'd like to back up a little bit and talk about your mother's family and her story of how she came over.

BK: My mother came over and had five brothers and sisters here. Who came first, I don't know. I'm a little vague on whether they, I know they didn't all come together, but [they came over] within a close proximity. ... My childhood was spent going to New York, to any one of my aunts and uncles, which was a big thing for me. They were really a warm group, a warm family.

SH: Where had they come from in Europe?

BK: Well, they all came, oh, Pinsk, Minsk and Pinsk, easy to remember. They were all in business, you know, all struggling. No one was, no one made it big, let's put it that way. Everybody just got through, but you never had the feeling, maybe this is true of all kids in the Depression, in fact, I know it is from all the kids I've spoken to, nobody ever had the feeling that you were poor. You didn't know any better. ... Besides, my father had a candy store, and candy and ice cream was usually available.

SH: What about travel and family vacations?

BK: The only traveling we did was in New York and New Jersey. I never was even in Pennsylvania until high school. It might have been a class trip to Pennsylvania or something like that, but, otherwise, it was New York, where I had cousins who loved to go to the theaters. The movies in those days had stage shows, and you'd go see Sinatra, or you'd go to Radio City, and they had these incredible shows. They had the movies in those days, but they also had stage shows. They had the Rockettes in those days. A lawyer, who I knew a few years ago, was married to the oldest living Rockette, I mean, active Rockette. She was amazing. She just wouldn't quit. But, in any event, I got to see a whole group of things. One of my cousins, from my father's side, was a ballet dancer in the Metropolitan Ballet, and I got to the ballet, which I still like to this day, [along with] opera and music, in general. I started piano lessons, and I was pretty good. Then when my father died, the whole family was disrupted, and I, shortly thereafter, stopped taking lessons. But, anyway, I always loved music. ... My cousins used to take me all over, when I was a little kid.

SH: What about politics? Was your family involved with politics?

BK: Not involved, but they were the typical strong, liberal Democrats here, and I was thinking about that just a little while before you came. Roosevelt was the tremendous hero of the family. He was “the god” and so there was never any question about the politics, you know. [We were a] poor family during the Depression, and here’s this guy who has come along as the great savior, really, and so we were Democrats and it’s lasted to this day. ... The sister with polio passed away, but my other sister is in her eighties now. She has a pretty bad heart situation, but she watches CNN all day and she’ll rant and rage. She’s still got that fight in her to this day about politics. So the family wasn’t active; they were just supportive.

SH: What about world events, what was going on in Europe? Did your family keep in contact with their relatives?

BK: Yes. Right through to about ‘39 or ‘40, we were getting letters from Poland, and we got a batch of letters and then all of a sudden it stopped. ... I guess my family was sending stuff over, but for obvious reasons, it stopped, and [they were] never heard from again. So I don’t know too much about them, except that my father’s family was not a horribly poor family. I think that they did quite well, business-wise, but I don’t know what it was. I don’t know what they did. But, anyway, they were lost in the war.

SH: Were there any Zionists in your family?

BK: Any what?

SH: Zionists.

BK: Well, let’s see. ... Israel wasn’t formed until ’48, so my father, you know, he passed away almost ten years before, and we were certainly extremely supportive of Israel, of the State of Israel. Now, [were we] active Zionists? I don’t know. I mean, I don’t know, they probably gave money. I mean, let’s put it this way, there was nothing anti-Zionist about it. You know, everybody in the family, the relatives were very supportive of Israel. There were some distant relatives who happened to be extremely wealthy, and I think that they were able to contribute a lot.

SH: Obviously, your families came to this country to avoid anti-Semitism. Do you remember them having to go through any anti-Semitism here in this country?

BK: No. There was some, when I grew up, there was a subtle form of anti-Semitism. I wasn’t terribly affected by it, but the Jewish kids tended to cluster together. One of my close friends, I was going to say his name, but I think he’s still around. I haven’t seen him since grammar school. ... His family wasn’t crazy about me associating, him associating with me. It didn’t bother him. There was that, but overt anti-Semitism, I’m not aware of it. There was the subtle, as I say, the subtle acceptance. There were certain groups that formed, and in high school, I would say my closest friends were all Jewish. I had good friends who weren’t. They were on the track team and the newspaper and everything, but my close, social friends, I should say, were the Jewish kids, but I don’t consider that anti-Semitism. That’s just sort of the way it happened.

SH: How observant was your family?

BK: What?

SH: How observant were they?

BK: Not [observant]. Interestingly enough, one of the things my father was was cantor, but he wasn't observant. Our family was not particularly observant. When I say "not observant," it wasn't a situation of not observing the important holidays. We did, but there were not, all we had was an Orthodox temple in Belmar. That's all there was in those days. I don't know if you know what a *minyan* is. Okay, unfortunately, I lived right across the street.

NH: Did they come knocking at your door?

BK: Absolutely, absolutely, and I spent a lot of time in the cellar hiding. [laughter] So we weren't a particularly observant family, but we had our share.

NH: I was just wondering what kinds of ideas you and your friends had about Pearl Harbor, being in grammar school. How much did you know about what was going on?

BK: Well, in '39, actually, oh, '41, what am I saying, '39, the war started, but in '41, I guess I was in the eighth grade, and, you know, we were all shocked. I guess I was listening to a Giant game on the radio, when the announcement came over about Pearl Harbor. We were shocked, like the rest of the nation. ... One of my problems was in high school, when I was fourteen to eighteen, it was, you know, [from] '42 to '46, it was the height of the war, and I was a big kid. I was tall. I was six-foot-two then, I'm six-foot-two now, probably shrunk a little bit, about six-two, and some people couldn't understand, "How come you're not in the service?" They all thought I was like seventeen, eighteen years old, and I was only fourteen or fifteen. That was the downside. The upside was that the seventeen and eighteen-year-olds were all in the service, so the poor women had very slim pickings, and I was there to be picked. [laughter] My brother-in-law had a pharmacy, I still call it a drug store, had a pharmacy, and he had a soda fountain and I was the soda jerk in the drug store. ... When I was twelve years old, I was working fourteen to fifteen hours a day, seven days a week. I really worked. I never worked as hard since, and I guess that affected the way I brought up my kids. I never wanted them to work that hard. ... We really worked, and I started working there when I was twelve, in that drugstore, right up to about my freshman or sophomore year in high school, or maybe junior year.

SH: I was going to ask what you did in the summers, and now I know.

BK: Yes, well, I did that, and then some summers, I worked in, I'm trying to peg when I did what. I worked in a grocery store one summer. I guess it might have been after my junior year, something like that, in high school, and [in] college, I drove a truck. It was a Bond Bread truck. I was a member of the Teamsters during the summer. ... Actually, I worked harder when I was twelve than I did when I was thirteen or fourteen or fifteen, because then I started to realize there was another life out there. ... In the summertime, all these kids were coming down from North

Jersey, so I started hanging around with some of the kids on the beach during the summertime when I could get off.

SH: What about Boy Scouts? Did you ever think of joining the Boy Scouts?

BK: ... I think I joined the Cub Scouts, but somehow, I never stuck with it.

SH: Were there any other organizations that you belonged to before college?

BK: Before college, not that I could think of. Our life was pretty much centered around high school activities.

SH: I wondered how the war affected those kinds of opportunities for young men like you. What did you do as far as the war effort was concerned?

BK: That brings up a thought. I guess we were in seventh or eighth grade in manual training. I don't know if you've ever heard [of that]. Do they still use that expression?

SH: Explain for the tape, please.

BK: Manual training was shop, okay, and what we were doing was making these wooden models of all types of planes, which they could use for training, for identification, for the guys in the service. ... I've always felt that I might have, God knows how many American lives I might have lost, because my dexterity was probably the worst in the world, and there's no plane, no one could recognize [my models]. Like the P-39, I'll never forget it. That was my big project, and not only didn't it make the numbers, it didn't make the letter. Also, now that I think about it, we used, I was in a group that used to patrol the beach on bicycle[s]. You know, we were blacked out in those days, and Belmar is right along the ocean, and there were blackouts all the time ... We were told to ride down along the beach on the boardwalk to spot German spies. Now, actually, we did see boats being sunk, a couple, I think twice, yes, yes.

SH: Tell us about that.

BK: Well, German submarines, they sank the boats.

SH: Was there any sort of rescue effort from Belmar?

BK: No, no. No, not that I recall. The one big thing that has nothing to do with the war was we saw the *Hindenburg* fly over Belmar, let's say, five minutes before it crashed. It was on its way to Lakehurst. We saw it, went inside, happened to have the radio on, and heard about it. In fact, I think we were listening, the family was listening to the landing and then that famous description of it that's still in the archives that they play every once in a while, that, "Oh, my God, my God." I don't know if you've heard it. ... The other exciting thing that has nothing to do with the war, and I guess it took place before the war, [was] the *Morro Castle*. That was a ship, a large ship in those days, one of the largest, [and it] was a passenger ship. It started on fire and burned and just came almost to shore, right off Asbury Park, but, I mean, if you were on the

beach in Belmar, you could see it, this enormous ship that was just ruined. But, anyway, as far as the war, that was the other thing, the models, those wonderful models I made, the patrolling the beach, and, otherwise, life just went on.

SH: As students, did you keep up with the war?

BK: Oh, sure. In high school, very much so, very much so.

SH: Talk about the blackouts, if you would please. We have had descriptions of cars with their lights dimmed and shades on all the lights at night. Were there any other forms of safety precautions?

BK: Not that I can recall, not that I can recall. This is just a vague memory that I have of years later, [when], obviously, some Germans did land somewhere along, I think, the Jersey Shore, but I don't know where that was and I really didn't know about it at that time ... There were the other things, the shortages, the rations stamps, and all that, but as a young guy, you know, it didn't affect me. I wasn't bothered by it.

NH: Had the war not ended, were you prepared to go into the service? Did your friends discuss joining the service?

BK: Well, we all thought that we would probably be drafted, and when we went to college, the draft was still on, when we started at Rutgers. In those days, it was really tough to get into college, because all the veterans, '46, all the veterans were coming back. They did have the draft, and we thought there was a good shot at being drafted, but being in college, and then joining ROTC, we weren't drafted, though we thought there was a shot at it, but it didn't happen.

SH: What about Rutgers? Why Rutgers?

BK: Because they took me. ... I guess I only applied to Rutgers. A friend of mine, one of my close friends, was also applying to Indiana, and I was going to apply there, but I didn't bother. ... I applied to Rutgers and I got a state scholarship, which in those days, tuition was really high then, it was fifty dollars a semester or one hundred dollars a semester, so you got yourself 200 dollars [and] you got your tuition paid. That's what the state scholarship was, and believe me, it was meaningful. So my two best friends and I, off we went to Rutgers.

SH: What were their names? Do you remember?

BK: Yes, Art Bleemer and Jerry Michelson. They lived in Bradley, and I met them right in the beginning of high school ... We were just together on Sunday celebrating the forty-eighth wedding anniversary of one of the two, so we've remained very close.

SH: When did know you would go to college?

BK: It was sort of a given. Nobody else in the family went to college, but, you know, I did fairly well in high school, and somehow I figured I would go to college and my family figured I

would go to college, so I went to college. There was nothing else. In other words, there was no business to go into, like the opportunities that some kids have, “Well, I’m gonna go into my dad’s business.” There was just nothing else that was an alternative.

SH: Your extended family, what do you remember of how the war affected them?

BK: Well, my closest cousin, who was about ten years older than me and somehow we were very close, and he just passed away last year, as a matter-of-fact, he was drafted, or went in, in 1939 [and] he didn’t get out until like ‘46. ... We corresponded during the whole war, and he went through the African Campaign, the Italy Campaign and he was in the artillery. He and I were very close. ... I had various other cousins who were in one service or another, a cousin in the Navy, about five or six in the Army. I had a number of first cousins who were in the service. I was really, together with one other cousin, the youngest of all the cousins. My younger sister was eight years older than me, and so she and my older sister, really, there was a whole group of cousins about that age.

SH: I wondered if you had corresponded with any of your friends, older friends, or cousins.

BK: You mean to this day?

SH: No, no, no.

BK: Back then? During the war, the one I did was this one I mentioned, the one who went through all these campaigns. He would write to me; I would write to him.

SH: Did you keep any of the letters?

BK: No, no, I didn’t. It would have been interesting to read those letters now, because I don’t remember them being particularly censored, and he would tell me about the campaigns and the fighting. He was right in it, no question about it, and he developed a, almost to the year he died, he was going to reunions. There was a bond, when you serve with guys for five or six years, you develop a bond with them that never ends, and he did.

SH: ... Were there any discussions within your family about World War I?

BK: No, my family came over just before World War I. Now, I guess it was to escape the czars or something, because there were pogroms back in those days. ... No, actually, yes, I guess it was just, it was in the middle of 1915, 1916, I forget exactly when they came in, but there was never any discussion. They were not directly affected by it.

SH: Was your father subject to the draft here in World War I?

BK: Oh, here? That’s an interesting question. I’m not even sure what year he became a citizen. I don’t think he got here until close to 1917. I’ve been trying to trace his landing through an Ellis Island site, which, and I haven’t been able to do it, so I’m not exactly sure what year he got here, but it was somewhere around 1917. My sister was nine years older than me, so I was born

in, she was born about 1919, I was born in 1928, so ... he must have come over about 1917. But, no, I've never heard any stories about World War I, let's put it that way.

SH: Okay, onto Rutgers.

NH: You majored in history. Was that planned, or did you just kind of fall into it?

BK: No, as a matter-of-fact ... I was really naïve ... My best subject in high school, strangely enough, was math, and so, well, [it was] only by looking at my high school yearbook that I realized that my ambition was to be an accountant ... and I just took up one year of math at Rutgers, but I realized that wasn't what I wanted to do. ... I guess, because I was interested in, for my family background, history and political science, that's what I majored in and sort of centered on history, ultimately, by the time I graduated.

NH: When did you decide you wanted to be a lawyer?

BK: When? Probably in my junior year or after my junior year of college. I really didn't know what I wanted to do. I was just having a good time.

SH: When you came to campus, did you just come in as a freshman? Did you visit beforehand?

BK: I don't think I saw the campus until I went, and it was unbelievable. It was the first large class. That class that started in '46 was probably fifty-fifty, maybe, veterans and high school grads, or maybe even more veterans. It was tough to get in the schools all over the country, because the veterans with the GI Bill were pouring in, and so the three of us went there ... As a matter-of-fact, the first place I lived in was a private home that had two rooms that they rented out to students, so I was there and there was a guy who had just gotten out of the Navy in the other room.

SH: Do you remember his name?

BK: Yes, George Landis. ... I didn't meet him for the first three or four weeks, because I would have my milk and cookies and go to bed at nine o'clock, and he would be sleeping all day and getting up at nine o'clock and going out and doing whatever he did, so we never saw each other. I said, "Where the hell is this guy?" Maybe after two or three weeks, we met and we became very, very good friends. He was a wonderful piano player, a jazz piano player, primarily, and he would just, the coeds would flock to him like flypaper. I mean, he would sit down and start playing the piano, and there were women that I looked upon from afar and said, "Wow, would I like to meet her and date her," and he just casually sits down on the piano, and before I knew it, he would be walking out with one them, and it drove me crazy.

SH: Where did he play?

BK: Well, he played, he would do gigs, primarily ...

NH: For money, or just for fun?

BK: For money, for money. He had the GI Bill and he'd do gigs and he was like a science major. He ultimately became a teacher. ... He passed away, unfortunately, reasonably young, maybe around fifteen years ago from a brain tumor, but he always was trying to do something in music. I mean, he wrote a musical that ... didn't catch on, or wasn't good enough, but he was just wonderful. So that was the first place I lived.

SH: Were these gigs in fraternity houses?

BK: No. Then the second year I moved in with my two friends and a whole group of guys on Somerset Street right across from Queen's, and we formed a club, all the guys in the house. ... I would say it was at least half, if not two-thirds, veterans, and then we affiliated at the end of the year with ZBT. We started the ZBT, Zeta Beta Tau, Chapter at Rutgers.

NH: Were you all Jewish?

BK: Yes.

SH: What was the club called before it became ZBT?

BK: I knew you were going to ask me that.

SH: Sorry.

BK: I can't remember. I may remember later on. Yes, it's the Paragon Club.

SH: That's okay.

BK: ... We decided to affiliate with a fraternity, so we formed the ZBT Chapter, and we, the following year, we were able to buy a house on Union Street, right, 26 Union Street. ... I understand they've had a checkered career over the years, but they're back now, so I understand. It's not a Jewish, is it a Jewish fraternity now?

NH: Yes.

BK: It is. That's interesting.

NH: It's nationally Jewish.

BK: Well, nationally, I know, but, I mean, it was not exclusively [Jewish]. I know that they had some African-Americans, you know, within recent years and ...

NH: I'm not exactly sure, but I think it's mostly Jewish.

BK: Is it? Well, okay. Well, it certainly was then. There was no question about fraternities in those days. They were separated. Now, the non-Jewish fraternities, I think, were separated, and

those who could be a Deke sort of fit the mold, and [there were] those who fitted different molds. ... Tau Delta [Phi], Sammy and ZBT were the three Jewish [fraternities], and Phi Ep, [which] became part of ZBT in later years, but there were four Jewish fraternities. Anyway, we formed our own, so we didn't have to go through the hazing or anything ... There wasn't as much of that in those days, because the veterans weren't going to go through that.

SH: As a freshman on Rutgers College campus, was there any sort of initiation in '46?

BK: Well, there were very, very limited vestiges of the way Rutgers was. ... I'm sure that in World War II, for the fellows who went in World War II, Rutgers was small, two or three thousand people, and they wore beanies and there was compulsory chapel on Sunday. There was actually chapel on Sunday in our freshman year. It wasn't compulsory attendance, but there was still a tradition of that. ... There was this tremendous change, where they had built Quonset huts, and that's where some of the students lived. It was an incredible explosion there because of the veterans. That's when Rutgers really became a big university.

SH: Was there any sort of a dress code?

BK: No, no, there wasn't, not when I started. Now, there probably was in the earlier years before I, maybe in the early '40s or in the late '30s, but not [when I was there].

SH: Did you ever go to chapel?

BK: Well, I joined the Glee Club, and we would sing in chapel. ... As a matter-of-fact, to make some extra money, now that I think about it, I would, I was in a little group that, we would sing in church. They needed a choir, so I made some bucks doing that.

SH: Which church?

BK: I can't remember. I can't remember. In fact, I hadn't thought about it until this minute ...

NH: What types of social events were there?

BK: Well, the social events were primarily around the club, which turned into a fraternity, and a lot of beer and house parties. ... Of course, you know, NJC, as it was called then, was on the other side of town. As you've probably learned through this project, the restrictions on these girls were murderous. I think it [the curfew] was either nine or ten o'clock during the week, eleven o'clock on Friday, and I'm not sure if they could stay out until twelve on Saturday, and you couldn't enter the parlor of any of the houses on the campus, but house parties, they, you know, you'd get them over sometimes.

NH: As a casual observer, could you totally tell who had fought in the war and who had just come to Rutgers from high school?

BK: Well, there were some guys that were obvious. There were some of the members of our fraternity that really had, you know, been through the mill in the war, and there were guys that

were [older]. ... When I say significantly older, they just seemed that way to us, because when you're nineteen years old, somebody who is twenty-four seems like, "Wow, he's really old." I mean, there were some guys you could say you knew were veterans. Other guys, no.

SH: Did they talk about the war to the younger men like you?

BK: Did they? Not particularly. Nobody carried the war on their shoulders, on their sleeves, I should say. You know, there were guys who went through various tough things, but nobody seemed to be, at least the guys that got to college, or weren't wounded, you know, particularly damaged by it, by the experience. In fact, I found, in general, because that's an overall statement, that it was one of the great experiences in my life, but I would say those fellows that I met from World War II in the fraternity, particularly, I don't remember feeling that any of them were particularly scarred.

SH: Were there lots of activities on campus, not just within the fraternity, in which you participated?

BK: Well, I, of course, the Glee Club became a real important part of my life, right to this day, and Soup [Walter] ...

SH: Tell us about your experiences.

BK: Well, you know, Soup, obviously, was a fabled institution, still is a fabled institution, for all Glee Club members. ... As recently as last year, they had this wonderful, the Glee Club concert was dedicated to him, where they had photographs of him that they were showing while the singing was going on. It was a very, very nice service. ... Well, you know Soup was so special. I'm sure you've heard this from other alumni who were in the Glee Club, but he had a single-minded devotion to the Glee Club. I don't think he had any type of social life outside of the Glee Club. He had a great sense of humor. He had a phenomenal memory. I think until maybe the last years of his life, he could probably, if he saw a Glee Club member from forty years before, he could remember his name. He used to, at the end of a concert, just sort of as a kick, for which he was famous, he would do a cartwheel after the concert. He had a good sense of humor, and he was just a wonderful, wonderful conductor. We all loved him. For two years, we went, like a sports team, we went up to a place called Lake Minewaska in New York for like pre-season training. That was the one time that we were trying to promote a romance. There was a hostess there and he took her out canoeing, and the Glee Club saw it and we all ran to this edge of the water and all serenaded them as they were canoeing out in the lake. That was the only time that I saw him have any outside social life. Professor McKinney was still alive. I don't know if you've ever heard his name. I'm sure you have. The continuity there was unbelievable, because he was the head of the Music Department and the head of the club for maybe thirty to forty years. Then Soup took over and was the head of it for all those years. So in a span of about eighty years, you only had two guys that were running the whole thing. ... Prof McKinney was a wonderful man, too.

SH: What about other administrators at Rutgers? Did you have any contact with any of them?

BK: Well, not close contact. Well, Dean Crosby was very close to the Glee Club, Howard Crosby, and not necessarily personal contact. You know, it's funny, I was a member of the Scarlet Key, and I don't remember what the heck I did, except I had a nice blazer and I knew we were supposed to be representatives of the school. Do you remember what it was?

SH: You welcomed people, as they'd come in.

BK: Welcomed, that's exactly it, right. Okay, I was a member of the Scarlet Key, and I did that ...

SH: Did you get the chance to welcome any dignitaries?

BK: I haven't got the vaguest recollection of that. I remember I was a member, but it must have been a bad experience somewhere, because I really blanked that out. [laughter] But, anyway, I was a member of that. Really, my activities were the Glee Club, which took up a lot of time, you know, we rehearsed two nights a week and there was a concert every other week, weekend, and whatever I did in the Scarlet Key, and then the fraternity, and I was in intramural sports. ... I was asked by the track coach to join the track team, but I just didn't feel like it. ... I loved intramural football and basketball, so we did a lot of playing.

SH: Did you participate in the *Targum* or the *Scarlet Letter*?

BK: No, I wasn't active and didn't join.

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

NH: This continues an interview with Bernard Kannen. You were telling us about intramural sports.

BK: Really, it was nothing more than that. We had a good intramural football team, I remember that. It was competitive with other fraternities. We did very well. We had some good ballplayers. ... So my activities were pretty much circumscribed by the Glee Club, the social life in the fraternity, and the Scarlet Key, whatever I did there, and the intramural sports.

SH: Who were your favorite professors?

BK: B-U [Burns] and Prof. George. I don't know if you've ever heard of them.

SH: Yes, and you need to be clear here.

BK: What?

SH: Be clear which one you're talking about, B-U or B-Y.

BK: Well, B-U Burns was one of the most phenomenal professors that I've ever had. ... We used his textbook. He had a history book. It was for World History, and he was just a brilliant

professor. ... George, he had a southern accent. He was also a brilliant guy, and I think he was a good, solid liberal. I remember one of his expressions with his good, southern accent was, "Them that has gets and them that ain't gets robbed?" That's what I remember him saying. To this day, I use it, that expression. ... Then, Professor Winkler was a history professor. I don't know if you've heard of him, wonderful professor also. I'm not sure, he might have given me a C, though, but, anyway, he was still good. ... He was the guy who helped me to go to the University of Michigan Law School.

SH: Really, why?

BK: Well, I applied, interestingly enough, I decided in my junior year that I was going to go to law school, and I really didn't think I could get in anywhere, I mean, because law school then was just as tough as getting into undergraduate schools because the same veterans were now going to law school. So, believe it or not, I applied to twenty-one law schools. In those days, an application was only five to ten dollars. I don't know what it is now, but I'm sure it's considerably more. How much?

NH: Sixty to eighty dollars.

BK: Sixty to eighty dollars, so you don't apply to twenty-one. I actually wanted to go to Yale for some [reason], and I didn't get in. ... I got in the others, and I boiled it down to Stanford, Virginia and Michigan. ... What happened was, it was the first year of the LSATs, and I did very well on them, because my grades were, you know, not great, not bad, but not great, you know, I was a B student. ... Winkler, evidently, knew something about Michigan, and he said, "That's just the school for you," and, "Why not?" So that's that.

SH: Did you apply in your senior year?

BK: Well, I guess, yes. I guess at the end of my junior year, [or] in the beginning of my senior year. God, I applied to every school, I applied to GW, I applied to Georgetown, California in Berkeley and UCLA, and, you know, I applied to, as I said, "The hell with it. I will apply to all of them." Now, Rutgers, in those days, had a program, [in which] you could go to law school, which I briefly considered, after your second year of college, so you could, in five years, you could have college and law school, but I decided I was having too good of a time then in college

SH: First honest answer I've heard.

BK: ... I applied to Rutgers, but, in any event, I really wanted to get away. I'd never been away in my whole life, and I wanted to get out of the East. So that's why I was applying all over the place.

NH: Once you graduated from Michigan, did you know you wanted to come back East?

BK: Well, no, I didn't know what I was going to be doing. I sort of gravitated back here, because, I don't know why. To tell you the truth, it was the last place I thought I'd come back to, come back to the shore, but that's what happened. But, anyway, you know, I've often

thought, “What would have happened if I had chosen another law school? How would my life have been different?” You know, it probably would have been the same. But, nonetheless, I applied to them and decided to go to Michigan. ... Professor Winkler, getting back to that, he was the guy who, the professor who really strongly suggested I go there.

SH: The flip side of the question would be was there a professor that you felt did not fit the professor category, or your favorite professor category?

BK: No. The professors I remember most distinctly were the two Burnses, Winkler, McCormick, Richard McCormick, who I had for New Jersey history, also a wonderful professor, except that when you talk about a dress code, I think I sort of turned him off. I would come in, in the morning, really looking pretty crummy, and he couldn't even read my writing and each [day he'd say], “Come on, put it together.” I remember him well, and I respected him that he was a great professor. ... I took Greek history with Professor Charanis. Is that name familiar?

SH: What are your Charanis stories?

BK: My Charanis stories were definitely about a C. I know that's the one C I know I got in history. ... What bothered me was that I had a cousin who was going to Rutgers at the same time, who was a scientist. He's a physicist. He went to MIT after Rutgers. He is a physicist with NASA and is quite internationally fam[ous]. But, anyway, it bothered me that he was getting an A with Charanis, and I, as the history major, was getting a C with him. That's about the only thing I remember about him. He was a good professor, but I just wasn't cracking the books in his class. ... That class I remember, and also geology, in my freshman year, which was at eight o'clock in the morning, and I hated that class. There was another class I would stagger into in the morning, not from a hangover, but it was just too early for me, because I was one of these guys from high school who went to bed at nine or ten o'clock and got up at eight-thirty or nine o'clock in the morning. ... Geology I had a problem with. Another professor I liked, only because he used me as an example, was my Spanish professor, Professor Amaral. Now, I don't know how long he stayed at Rutgers after I was there, but he was a wonderful professor ... I got two Ds, one a semester of geology and one a semester of Spanish. But the second semester I got a B in Spanish, and he said to the class, “If he can get a B, any of you can get a B.”

SH: The university was back on semesters, by the time you went in '46.

BK: Yes, yes.

NH: Did you take Spanish throughout your Rutgers years?

BK: No. I just took one year of Spanish. ... It stood me in good stead in Korea, which is jumping ahead. ... One of the things I was doing was giving infantry weapons and tactics instructions to Colombians and South Americans, in addition to others, so my Spanish actually became pretty good. I was actually able to give a class in Spanish, when I was teaching these guys how to disassemble a rifle, whatever. But I was not a great Spanish student in college, but I remember that incident when he said that to the class, that if I could get a B, anybody could.

SH: What did you do between semesters? I think we briefly touched on that.

BK: Okay, for two summers, I drove this truck, but the second summer, I had a tremendous crash in my truck, and so I only worked half the summer. The crash was terrible. I wasn't hurt that badly, and it turned out, I was hurt badly enough, I couldn't work for the rest of the summer, and it was the greatest summer I had, half a summer I had, because I couldn't work. For once, my conscience was clear. I couldn't work. All I could do was go out ... with the guys, and, remember, drinking in those days was eighteen years old, and so I had a great time that half of a summer. I was a cop for one summer, a summer cop in Belmar, and I did that and I had this crazy, little post along the river. I don't know if you've ever been to Belmar, but the back of Belmar has a river, Shark River. In front of Belmar is the ocean, [in] back [of it] is the river, and there's an inlet on one side that leads into the river. ... There was a little beach by the river, and my beat was directing the traffic so kids could cross the street.

NH: The only authority there was directing traffic. [laughter]

BK: I'll tell you, there's no one who was less trained to be a cop than I was. I didn't know what the hell I was doing. I didn't know how to give a ticket. I gave one ticket that summer and I didn't know how to do it, or what went on, but, anyway, I was a cop there. ... The one wonderful thing that I had was, and I remember this so well, because it was a highlight of my life up to that time, it was a real rainy day, and nobody was going to the beach. I went up to the main street, which was very busy, and I started directing traffic, which created one of the great traffic jams of all time. [laughter] Again, I didn't know what I was doing, but I wanted to do it and I did that for a while, and that sort of satisfied the need in my life. ... The other one was walking into the movies, you know, as a cop in my uniform, and standing in the back of the movies for free, which made up for the time when I was about eight or nine years old, where I went into the back of the movie house and got two halves of ticket stubs and Scotch-taped them together to try to get into the movies. ... Of course, when the guy took the ticket and tried to tear it, it was Scotch-taped, and he tossed me out. So this was my revenge, when I walked into those movies, without paying, in uniform. So, anyway, so that was my police experience. Fortunately, I ... didn't have to go after any criminals, or I would have either hurt myself or some non-criminal that happened to be around. But, anyway, so that was one of the things I did.

SH: ROTC at Rutgers was still mandatory when you went there.

BK: I guess it was the freshman, yes, I guess it was the freshman [year].

NH: Did you stay in ROTC for two years?

BK: No, I was in for the four years.

SH: So you were chosen for Advanced ROTC.

BK: Well, I don't know, maybe you had to be chosen for it. Not too many guys were taking infantry, which is what I ended up in, mainly because I was too dumb ... By the time I decided

to go in Advanced, that was all that was left, so I said, “Why not? There’ll never be another war. There’ll never be another war.” So I went into infantry ROTC, and I spent four years in ROTC.

SH: Do you remember who taught military science at that point?

BK: No. I don’t really have much recollection of the training, because none of us, I would say really, ninety percent of us, didn’t pay too much attention to it. We were there, we did it, but, you know, I just remember marching ... We went to Maryland one summer for two weeks for summer camp in ROTC, I remember that. I got poison ivy; I remember that part of it.

SH: Was the military ball still a tradition at that point?

BK: The military ball, I went to the military ball and had a date. Yes, somewhere I have a photograph of myself at the military ball with a date. It was a big deal in those days. That’s true. It was the night of a Glee Club concert, or I forget what it was, but I had to transfer from the tails, I guess, they still wear tails for concerts, from the tails to my uniform. But, anyway, yes, I did the things that you do, that you did in ROTC, but we really, we thought we’d finish the four years and that would be it.

SH: Did you have a car on campus?

BK: No. Very few guys did. There were some guys who did, but ... in the fraternity, if there were three cars in the fraternity, it was a lot, three or four cars.

SH: When did you get your first car?

BK: I bought a car the summer I graduated, I guess. ... It cost me two to three hundred dollars, I think. ... Yes, that’s when I had my first car.

SH: Tell us about graduation.

BK: Well, the biggest thing I remember about graduation, I was known for being forgetful my whole life, my whole childhood, and I forgot my, what was it that I forgot, my ROTC jacket, my uniform. I forget how we dealt with that, to tell you the truth, but I managed to get both my degree and I managed to get my commission, nonetheless. I can’t remember who spoke at the graduation. It was the first big one. I remember it took place at the stadium, at the Rutgers Stadium, the then Rutgers Stadium. One of the things I was always proud of at Rutgers, in the days that one wasn’t necessarily proud, that not everyone was proud of him, was Paul Robeson. In fact, I wrote my senior thesis in high school on him and interviewed, I remember, Earl Reed Silvers. Have you heard the name? ... Well, I remember going up and talking to him, interviewing him, about Paul Robeson ... Well, he was just great. It was only in those years that he became disillusioned with the country and went to Russia. During the time, being affiliated with the Communists was really a terrible thing, but, you know, before that, I loved his voice, his singing. I remember, to this day, his record that he made that we used to listen to. Anyway, so I was very proud of him.

SH: He came back to campus for a concert.

BK: What?

SH: Did he not come back to campus for a concert?

BK: ... I'm trying to remember. I have no specific memory of that. He may very well have, he may very well have, but I don't specifically remember that.

SH: You would have written the paper in high school. Were there Paul Robeson stories being told on campus when you were there?

BK: Not particularly, no. I mean, he was still a, I don't think he was seen in a bad light until later on, but, I mean, he was still a big figure in this country, as far as his acting was concerned. His acting was so wonderful, as well as his voice ... Great athletic teams at Rutgers, by the way, in those years, '46 to '50. Frank Burns was the quarterback. He became a coach later, a wonderful coach. Nobody has had a record, unfortunately, in football like Frank Burns did.

SH: Did you attend the football games?

BK: Oh, yes. I was a big sports fan. In those days, the students really got out for the games. We attended all the football and the basketball games, [which had] great guys, guys you'd maybe run into them, Bucky Hatchett, who became a big alumni supporter, [and] Hank Pryor ... [were] some of the ballplayers, Herm Hering. Do any of those names sound familiar to you? Well, they were great athletes. To this day, I think that Bucky Hatchett probably was one of the best athletes in the country, and if he had gone out for the decathlon, if he had trained for it, I'll bet he would have been one of the greatest in the United States. ... It was wonderful, because we even beat Princeton, and in those days, we'd play them every year and, you know, lose just consistently to them.

SH: One of the greatest recollections of many of the alumni we've interviewed was when Rutgers beat Princeton in 1938.

BK: Yes, Rutgers has had some good athletic teams, but not lately, not lately. I am a season subscriber to football and I share season tickets for basketball, and it's just wearing. Unfortunately, one of my close colleagues ... is a Boston College grad. In fact, he played football there. He had a football scholarship at Boston College. I wasn't going to go to the game tomorrow, but before the season started, he said, "Well, we're going to go see BC/Rutgers," and so I have to go. ... It's going to be bad. I think really a good money-making proposition would be to take the odds that Las Vegas has on these games. They've only got them favored by like twenty-five to twenty-six points, something like that.

NH: That's low these days for Rutgers.

BK: Yes, yes. I mean, there's no question about it, but what Schiano will eventually do is, I'm really concerned about it. I really don't know, because this season has really been the worst.

You know, every time you think there's a bottom with Rutgers football, it turns out that's not really the bottom.

NH: His whole theory is to stay in New Jersey, to recruit from New Jersey.

BK: Well, right, except for Florida. He goes to Florida, and he's gotten some good ballplayers from Florida, but, yes, I mean, he'd like to keep the New Jersey players. ... He's evidently a very charismatic guy. I've never really met him to talk to him, but, evidently, he really is, and he's convinced a lot of people that he's going to turn the program around. But this year has been really tough to take ...

SH: Let's go back and talk about graduation.

BK: Well, we got out, we graduated. ... Graduation in those days was a little later than it is now.

SH: I think it was in June.

BK: It was in June, and I got my commission and I said, "Well, that's it," you know, "there's never going to be another war, so I don't have to worry about it," and the Korean War broke out around four days later. It was, "Wow." So I had a tremendous dilemma, because I always knew I was going to Michigan and I was going that fall. ... All summer I kept waiting to see if I was going to be called in, and I wasn't. So I decided, "Well, I'm going to start at Michigan and let the chips fall where they may," and so I did and the chips fell where they may. In November, I got orders to report. The upside of that was I got the whole Michigan football season in, so three years later at law school, I had four years of Michigan football. ... Michigan football is a little [different than Rutgers football]. I don't know if you've ever been out there to Ann Arbor. Well, in those days, the stadium only held 101,000. They've increased it to 106,000. I mean, it is really a sight and ... it was always sold out. ... Football day there was something to behold, and since, I've gone to a few reunions ever since, same thing. But, in any event, so I went there and ... not taking the chance, I said, "I might as well start, instead of just sitting around waiting for the shoe to fall." ... I got the orders in November, and I was supposed to report in November. In fact, I left Michigan, sort of leaving a note at the dean's office, "By the way, I'm leaving," and that was it, [and] I just took off. But then there was a delay, and I didn't have to report until January 1, and so I had a good time. I was home.

NH: Where did you report?

BK: I reported to a place called Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky. I remember we drove there. A doctor, who was also being called in at the same time, he had to report to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, so on New Year's Day, the two of us took off. He had a car, [and] we drove out. He dropped me off at Camp Breckinridge.

SH: How did you know him?

BK: He was a shore guy. His father delivered me, as a matter-of-fact, so I knew him somewhat.

SH: So he was part of the “doctor draft” at that point.

BK: Yes, he was called in. He must have been sent to med school through some military program ...

SH: Had he been a Rutgers man also?

BK: No, no. ... I really don’t know much about where he went to school or anything.

SH: So you came from Michigan, back to Belmar, and then to Kentucky.

BK: Yes, I came back to Belmar, and I spent those couple of months there. I had a great time, because, you know, I was sort of a hero, going off to war. I was the first guy called in from our group, from the whole fraternity. ... Off we went in January and came into Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, where they were giving infantry basic training. That was what was being done there. ... I’ll never forget, the first day, full day, that I was there, it just so happened that I was assigned to assist some first lieutenant or captain on like a fifteen-mile hike, and, I mean, there was no one in worse shape than I was at this point. I really hadn’t been doing too much, and he kept sending me with, I don’t know, maybe a couple of hundred guys or whatever, from the front, he said, “Go check up on the rear to see if there are any stragglers.” So we’re on this tremendous hike, which was at the end of that particular unit’s [training]. That was the end of their training, and I remember having to run from the front to the back of the thing, which was, it seemed like it was a mile long, and it wasn’t, but, then I’d run back up and say, “Yeah, no stragglers.” But, anyway, that was my initiation, and then for the next six or seven months, I was giving basic training. Now, you have to understand that in ROTC, as I’ve indicated before, we weren’t that into it. Some guys were, [but] I wasn’t that into it, and all of a sudden, I’m giving basic training and I’m starting to teach this stuff that I know nothing about, on both weapons and tactics. ... I ran a machine gun range, and I’d never fired a machine gun before, and I’m running this range. ... Gradually, with the help of some terrific sergeants, [I learned] the smart thing to do was to rely on the sergeants there, who really knew what they were doing, you know. I gradually learned everything I had to learn, and I was doing this stuff, and everything from mortars, machine guns, rifle ranges, [to] BAR, Browning Automatic Rifles, and they went through the whole gamut of the weapons that we instructed in, and also some tactics. ... The highlight of that experience was one day [when] I was running a mortar range. We had the ammo, the mortar ammo, [which] was from World War II, and there must have been fifteen guys on the line, fifteen or twenty guys. What you’d normally do was give them each about six or eight rounds, and you would fire to zero-in. Your first mortar, you would see where that landed. You’d try to approximate how far it would get, and then if it went too far, the second one, you would shorten the range, and then the third one, theoretically, you’d be on target. ... So it took you three to zero-in, and then you fired for effect, which is like three or four more. But I don’t know what got into me, I guess, me and one of the sergeants. We were talking about it. We had boxes of ammunition, of mortar shells. We must have had around 500 of them, so we said, “To hell with it, let’s get rid of them.” So we passed them all out to the guys, so for fire for effect, instead of three rounds for effect, they each had around twenty-five rounds for effect. What I didn’t know was that in a different range, there was a special session for some visiting generals for a different

type of weapon. ... All of a sudden, we were firing for effect. They thought World War II had restarted with all this stuff pouring into the range. ... I didn't know anything, until all of a sudden, I happened to turn around and I saw a helmet come up with two stars on it. A general was coming up to find out what the hell was going on. ... I tried to explain, but he, and I didn't get punished for it, but I was advised never to do this again. But, anyway, that was at Camp Breckinridge. The other thing about Camp Breckinridge was, there were two things about it. One, almost all the guys were from the South. The officers were from the South, VMI, VPI, which is now the hated Virginia Tech, because they kill us by so much. Southern schools [had] wonderful soldiers. The South has still, I think, this great tradition of great soldiers, from the Civil War on. ... So I was with all these guys and I really became good friends with them, and that's who I hung out with most of the time. ... We would go out of town, like, for instance, the one incident I remember, we went to St. Louis, and we had to get back on Sunday. We went for the weekend. It was probably 150 to 200 miles away. ... We spent just about all our money ... in St. Louis. We thought we could cash a check, but it was Sunday, and no one would take a check from us. So, on the way back, I remember, we stopped at a diner and each had about a quarter. We each had an American cheese sandwich and a cup of coffee, and that was it. That was all the money we had. What we forgot was that around fifteen miles from the base, and it was about two o'clock in the morning, or three o'clock in the morning, by this time, and at six o'clock, we had to be back to start training, and we came to a toll, a tollgate. ... It was a dime, and we didn't have a dime. We were three officers and we didn't have dime between us for the toll. So I went up to the toll both, and I looked in my wallet. I had stamps. I had some three-cents stamps, or two-cent stamps, and I said, "Would you take five two-cent stamps and let us across?" He said, "If things are really that bad, you go ahead." We got back just in time. None of us went to sleep. We just got back in time to get in our uniform and do our thing. ... The other thing about Camp Breckinridge was that it had been the home of the 101st Airborne, and the 101st Airborne was one of the great storied outfits of World War II ... [At] Bastogne ... their commander was the one who said, "Nuts," when they were asked about surrendering. ... To our embarrassment, we still had the "screaming eagle" patch, all these guys who had just come out of college, the only difference being that in the 101st Airborne, when it was there, they had, above the patch it said, "Airborne." ... We had the "screaming eagle," which was what all the people saw.

[tape paused]

BK: Well, anyway, it stood us in stead with the rest of the world, in that, especially with women, I must say. When they saw the eagle, "Wow, here's a hero from World War II." I think the way we played it, [we said], "I don't want to talk about it." But, yes, it was embarrassing to have that patch, because, you know, they were such a great unit, a great part of our military history, and we were sort of cashing in on it a little bit. But, anyway, so that's what I did there. ... At that time, there's still the Cold War, and there were a few of the officers that were being sent to Germany and some to Korea. So I assured myself of going to Korea by taking German lessons. I decided, "Well, I'm going to take German lessons. Let's see what happens," and sure enough, what happened is, as usually happened in the military, you were sent to Korea. So I got my orders for Korea in, I guess, it was late summer of '51. ... First, they were sending us to a school at Fort Benning, Georgia. ... I hate to say this, as typical of the military, but we went to the school, and what they taught us was, what the school was for was [to teach us] how to give basic

training. Now, this is after eight months of giving basic training and becoming pretty much of an expert at it, and then [after] getting orders for Korea, they were giving you some course on how to give basic training. So none of us paid any attention to that, because there was nothing that they were teaching us that we didn't know. ... The only good thing about that was I met an alumnus, maybe you've run into him, Bud Teare. Have you?

SH: I tried to convince him to give an interview. In fact, I still have his card in my Rolodex.

BK: You know, it's interesting, just to digress for a moment. I haven't seen him since then, and it was at our fiftieth reunion, I heard his name mentioned and I really tried to locate him and I couldn't. Now, maybe he didn't come at the last minute, because I couldn't locate him, although his name was on the list. But, anyway, Bud had a friend who was a nurse at Warm Springs, Georgia, where Roosevelt would go to recuperate, and so we would go there and we just had a wonderful time, without getting into any gory details about it. ... We would swim in the pool there that Roosevelt's family would swim in only a few years before. I remember I told you that he was my idol as a child, and it was really a great thrill just to say, "Wow, here I am in Warm Springs, Georgia, where Roosevelt was not that long ago." ... The people there, you know, it was not that long before, and they still remembered he was there and they remembered him. So that was quite an experience. But, anyway, so we went through the courses, this absurd course, and then we got our orders. We shipped out. ... I thought we were going directly to Korea, but it turned out, when you went to Korea, you landed in Japan, but I thought, "Okay, boom, Japan, then Korea." ... Then they sent us to what seemed absurd then, but now, certainly, now, it wouldn't seem absurd, a chemical and radiological warfare school for three weeks.

NH: Where?

BK: In Gifu, Japan.

SH: How did you get from Fort Benning to Japan?

BK: Oh, what happened was, I always considered this the way it worked. They flew us to Japan. When we came home, they put us on a slow boat that took twenty-two days, but when they flew us, it took less than twenty-two hours. As a matter-of-fact, one of the guys who was in our group was bumped off. We stopped in the Aleutian Islands, and he was bumped off at some island there, and it turned out he spent two months there before he ... was on another plane. ... We got to this school. Again, we didn't pay too much attention to it. We knew we were all going to Korea and we were all infantry lieutenants, and infantry lieutenants, you know, we just didn't know what was in store for us, let's put it that way. So we pretty much lived it up there. ... Then an interesting thing happened to me, which shaped my whole experience there. I spent every dime I had, every dime, and I don't know if I wrote home, called home, or got in touch with home, [but I] said, "Send me some money. I'm absolutely broke." They wired it to Kyoto, Japan, which was around forty miles away, and it came like a day before we were to ship out to Korea, our whole group. ... I said, "I'd like to miss the last day and go get this money," and they wouldn't do it. ... They said, "We'll hold you over for a day. You finish the school, and then the next day, you can go to Kyoto," which is what I did. So everybody shipped out, and I got my money and then shipped over to Korea. The reason that shaped my whole experience was this.

Well, number one, when we landed, we landed in Pusan, Korea, and like seventy or eighty of us landed on this boat. It was on Thanksgiving, as matter-of-fact, by this time, because I remember we had Thanksgiving dinner on the boat from Japan to Korea.

SH: Was it a military transport?

BK: Well, it was just strictly military people. It was almost like a ferry, I guess, you know, not that big of a ship. ... There were like eighty duffel bags. We piled them up and then went into get our orders, and we came out and there were seventy-nine duffel bags there and one was missing. It was mine. So there it was. Everything that I had was in that duffel bag. I just had what was on my back. ... I had these orders to go up to Taegu, which was about halfway up from where I would be assigned to the line, whatever company and platoon I'd be assigned to, and when I got to Taegu, a requisition came in. They needed two infantry officers to go to this unit to train UN troops that were coming from other countries, in US weapons and tactics.

NH: Where were they being trained?

BK: They were there, back down south, not all the way south, but back down south. ... At that moment, there were only two of us who were infantry officers, so we got sent there. So instead of being sent to the frontline, we were sent to this unit, and I spent the whole time in Korea giving infantry weapons and tactics instructions to Thailanders, Colombians, as I mentioned, Ethiopians, some Turks and Greeks, all of whom were sent as, not quite token units, I mean, companies, maybe a couple of companies. So that's what I started doing there.

SH: What were some of the experiences that you had? How did you command someone? You spoke about having Spanish, having taken a little German, but obviously there were no German troops there. How did you communicate?

BK: Well, in some of the cases, some of these groups had an officer or two who spoke some English. In most, I guess, the Spanish ones, I found them easier to [communicate with]. My Spanish got so good that I was able to give the instructions in Spanish. The Thailanders were a tremendous problem, because very few can speak English. Unfortunately, they were very peaceful, and they were the toughest soldiers to train, because they really didn't want to fight. ... Ultimately, they wouldn't put them on the frontline, because they would get slaughtered. They'd go to sleep. They'd be in a forward outpost, and they'd all go to sleep and be found the next day dead. ... We tried our best with them. ... In fact, the Thailand government gave me a medal for my work with them, maybe because it was so hard to really get them to do anything, but it was the Most Noble Order of the Crown of Thailand.

NH: I wanted to ask you about that, because I read about that.

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

NH: This continues an interview with Bernard Kannen. This is tape two, side one.

BK: Well, all right. I was really talking about the Thailand troops. The whole experience was incredible. The guys were ...

SH: Did they come to you one country at a time, or were you training troops from different countries all at once?

BK: No. Sometimes we'd have two, a couple of countries at a time. It was really something, because in some cases, they were wonderful soldiers, like the Ethiopians. It was Haile Sellassie's personal guards, and these guys were among the most feared by the North Koreans, of all, because, I mean, they were absolutely fearless and liked nothing better than good hand-to-hand combat. So they were tough guys and they were great guys. You know, I made good friends with some of the officers that were there. ... They were just fine soldiers and gentlemen, and it was a pleasure, as were all of the groups, the Thailanders, the Colombians, anybody we dealt with. It was just a really good experience. That was when my guitar playing started to sharpen up, too, with the Colombians, the Spanish guitar. They taught me how to play.

NH: Did you spend time with them outside of the training?

BK: Well, there was no place to go outside of our unit, except the officer's club, which we frequented. It had a very good liquor allocation there, because we were supposed to have twenty officers and we only had about six, but we got enough booze for twenty officers, so we would never run short. As a matter-of-fact, one of the more shameful parts of that, one of the guys who was stationed with us was a spotter. He would fly ... something like a Piper Cub over the enemy. He'd fly up to the frontlines and spot enemy positions, but when he'd fly out, he'd always take a case of booze with him. ... The booze wasn't as available on the frontlines, and he would sell it, which we had nothing to do with. We just knew he did it and didn't like it, but that's what he did.

NH: I'm sure the troops appreciated it.

BK: But they liked it. I mean, at least they were getting something up there.

SH: Tell us what the living conditions were like. Can you describe the camp?

BK: We had Quonset huts that were not bad, and as a matter-of-fact, we were all, we had, we were able to arrange for little houseboys to keep our uniforms pressed and our shoes shined. ... There were a lot of just unique, to me, unique experiences. I did get up to the frontlines. I would go up to the frontlines. I went up for, I forget how long it was, to just inspect and see how our guys were doing, the guys we had trained, and they were doing okay. ... That was quite an experience.

SH: How were they housed?

BK: The troops, or us?

SH: Both. Were they separated by country, or were you integrated?

BK: Well, no, we weren't integrated. ... We had our own, and their officers had separate quarters, and, I guess, they were in tents, the troops, now that I think about it. Yes, the troops were in tents. I guess, they might have had Quonset huts for their officers, but we had our own area.

SH: So you were equally equipped and housed.

BK: Yes, we were, the officers were. ... Well, we had, there were maybe like ten officers, about ten of us, plus around twenty non-coms, non-commissioned officers, anywhere from privates to sergeants, and, you know, it was no big deal as far as roughing it. In the wintertime, Korea could really get cold, in the winter. That was a little rougher, but, you know, none of us had any complaints about it.

SH: Were you well supplied?

BK: Yes, yes. I managed to get some stuff after my duffel bag [was lost]. We were well supplied, well supplied.

SH: Did you have any interaction with the Koreans, besides the houseboys?

BK: Yes, I had some assistants who were Koreans. As a matter-of-fact, one of my close friends was this incredibly adept, as opposed to inept, Korean gentleman, who would assist me in my instructions, and he was able to make anything. You know, if I needed a visual aid, he managed to be able to put it together. ... We became quite friendly. He invited me to his home. One of the most tragic incidents was [when] his wife became pregnant, and she developed a, what is the poison?

SH: Toxemia?

BK: Yes, toxemia, and I tried to get her to a hospital, and by the time, you know, I commandeered a vehicle, by the time she got there, she died. ... One of the terrible things about it was that he wanted a Catholic burial, and we couldn't find a church, as I remember it. ... We had her in the back, and he's in the back with her, crying, and I'm driving around. We must have driven around seventy or eighty miles, until we found a place that would take her and give her a proper burial. But, anyway, so he and several others were wonderful to work with. They were really good.

NH: Did you pick up any Korean from them?

BK: No, just a few words. We used to have them as, now that I think about it, we used to have them as guards. At night, we'd have them patrol. If you were the officer of the day, you had to patrol the perimeter at nighttime. Yes, like twice a night, you'd have to walk around the perimeter of our unit. ... I remember now, there would be Korean guards, and they'd almost always be asleep. It was one of the really, it was a way you could get killed, because you had to be very careful how you woke them, or else they wake up shooting. But for the most part, they

were good workers ... One of the sad problems was the Koreans, when we'd run a range, the Korean people would go out to get the metal, and sometimes they were picking up the unexploded shells and they'd explode, and they'd kill themselves. What we had to do, we would go out and pick up the shells ourselves and would try to clear the area. But, anyway, the Korean people were good people. I worked with, my closest friend there was a first lieutenant ... I became a first lieutenant [and] he became a captain, while we were there. ... He had been in the Second World War, and he was an orphan. ... He was regular Army, and he later became the commandant, the commander, of Spandau, where Rudolf Hess was. He was commanding this place where there was only one prisoner, in Germany. He became an industrialist and married a German girl. He was married to a German girl, at the time, and he became an industrialist in Germany. He did very well. He wrote a couple of books, which I have. But, anyway, working, the guys I worked with were terrific guys. He was the best soldier I ever met, absolutely the best.

SH: What about the integration, at that point, of American forces?

BK: I guess at that point, wasn't it Truman?

SH: In '47, Truman made integration official.

BK: Yes, but ... we weren't particularly integrated. There were no African-American officers, certainly, in our group. ... I guess, the whole time I was in the service, I can't remember, particularly, I can't remember, at Camp Breckinridge, if we had, if there were any there. It was certainly not a particularly well-integrated service, at that point.

SH: Were there other incidences that you recall?

BK: Well, [there was] one incident that made *Stars and Stripes*. *Stars and Stripes* did a feature on us, and they featured this one incident that we did. What we would do at the end of their training, we told them that we, I remember we did this for the Colombians, in particular, we told them that we were going to demonstrate a new weapon, an atomic bullet. ... What we did was we took a hundred, it's amazing the money we spent, the American government, we took maybe a hundred barrels of oil. I forget what we put out there, but we had it wired and we had one of our guys fire a tracer, so you could see the bullet go into this, and [we had] a guy with a plunger. So as soon as the tracer got to there, he'd push the plunger, and this thing would explode. We told them, "It's an atomic bullet," and we made them swear that they wouldn't tell, that it was a big secret, that they couldn't tell anybody about this new weapon. ... Unfortunately, their officers bought into it completely, and after, he got up, the commander of that particular group, he got up and made them stand up and swear that they would not say anything and that they would be court-martialed if they talked about it. He gave this big speech, and we're saying, "My God, what have we created here?" ... We told him the next day, and he was a good friend. In fact, he became the president of Colombia for two days, or something like that. Back then, it was at that time when there was a president every other day in Colombia and South America. But in any event, he wouldn't talk to us. He wouldn't talk to us for days. It took about, I would say, maybe a week to soften him up to where we were good friends again. He was so embarrassed. We were embarrassed. ... Then they mentioned that incident in *Star and Stripes*.

... Just in general, the working with the people and my little trip to the frontlines was a highlight for me, especially since I didn't get hurt.

NH: How long were you there?

BK: Only about maybe ten days, or two weeks. I was trying to get a taste of it, and I went to a forward observation post that was calling in artillery to what I thought were targets and probably killed around fifty trees, at least. That was another couple hundred-thousand-dollars-worth of ammunition that I managed to get rid of for the US Army.

SH: There's a pattern developing here. [laughter]

BK: ... I got the feeling that a lot of guys would verify that it just wasn't that important. You just did your thing.

SH: What about medical treatment?

BK: That was good. That was good. ... They had formed an Air Force base nearby, and they had some good doctors there, and we had a doctor, too. I guess we had one doctor, that I was quite friendly with, assigned to us, and he later, turns out, he was a graduate of the University of Michigan Med School, and he went back to Michigan, when I went to law school.

SH: Did that same medical unit treat the other countries that were being trained?

BK: That's a good question. They must have. I don't remember in particular, but they must have, yes.

SH: Who was your commanding officer?

BK: Well, we had a, we had two, and I don't remember much about the first one. He was sort of just a commanding officer. The second one was unfortunate, and it actually led to another situation there. He was, unfortunately, he was an alcoholic, and this was maybe a month and a half, or two months, before I was due to be rotated back, and he insulted some brass who had better connections than he did. ... It led to this big uproar that resulted in a decision that our unit would be disbanded. Now, I thought I was going to be rotated. Everybody was picking these choice assignments, you know. By this time, we all had pretty good connections. We knew, you know, knew a lot of people everywhere, but I didn't bother too much, because I assumed that my rotation was going to take place. It was suggested that I write and ask, "Could I be rotated a month earlier, a month and a half earlier?" ... It turned out that nothing came through. So I didn't have much picking, but I picked, as a matter-of-fact, the Seventh Division, where Colombians were assigned, because it was a good division, and I figured, "I might as well be with these guys." ... On my way up there, we had to stop at the same place where we started from, where I was assigned back to this unit, but the orders came through that I could be rotated. So I never got up to the Seventh Division, which, it turned out, fought the last, big battle of the Korean War. So I missed it. For better or for worst, I missed it. I was on my way home on the *Private Martinez*. I'll never forget. We had our choice. There was the *General* somebody or the

Private somebody, the two boats, and we really had our choice, but the *Private* somebody was leaving around three days earlier than the *General*. Well, in about a day and a half, the *General* something sailed by us, you know, like lightning, and meanwhile, we burst a boiler, which was good and bad. It was good, in that we had to stop in Hawaii for repairs. I was able to spend a few days there, but it took us twenty-two days to get home, as opposed to the flight over that took [twenty-two hours].

SH: Were you coming straight from Korea, or did you have to go back to Japan?

BK: No, we went back to Japan. We went to Sasebo, which is a port in Japan, right in the lower tip of Japan, across from Korea, and that's where the boat was. This was in September, and I just wrote a letter to Michigan and I said, "I'm coming back. Have a room for me." ... I got back, let's say September 9, and I was back in school September 10 or 11 ... As a matter-of-fact, I got back [and] my sister picked me up. She had tickets to the opera. We went to the opera, of all things. But then, either that next day, or the day after, I was off to Michigan, and they did have a room for me.

NH: How did you get back to Michigan?

BK: Good question. Did I get my old car back? I might have. What happened with the car that I bought? My uncle borrowed it. You know, I gave it to him for a couple of years. I think I took the car back, or he gave me the car back, and I drove out there. I'm not sure, but I got back, which was absolutely great. It couldn't have worked out more perfectly. I had to start over. Those two months there were lost, because, you know, I didn't finish any courses, but I was really about the first guy to come back from the Korean War. In fact, when I was being discharged, one of my close friends, when I got back, we were processed through Kilmer, I guess it was.

SH: Did you come back through the Panama Canal, or did you fly from the West Coast back East?

BK: I don't know if you had to go through the canal to get back. We didn't go through the Panama Canal. I know we didn't. ... We landed in Seattle and flew back from Seattle.

SH: I just wondered how they were bringing the East Coast guys back.

BK: ... When I got back, I had to go through Kilmer to get officially discharged, and there was my closest friend entering Kilmer, being processed to go in.

NH: One of your closest friends from Rutgers?

BK: From Rutgers, yes, from high school and Rutgers, one of the guys who I had ...

NH: Did you know he was going to be there?

BK: No, no, we just saw each other. [I said], "What are you doing here?" He says, "Oh, I'm going in." I said, "Well, I'm getting out." I went back, and so I was one of the first guys to get out, to get back. ... In Ann Arbor, it wasn't a dry town, but you could only have beer. I belonged to the VFW. I joined the VFW, so I was a big guy in law school, because at the VFW, they served all kinds of booze, and I was the one who had the membership and I could bring guests, so that worked out well. Also, it was a great line if you had a date, "Well, I just got back from Korea two weeks ago." I played that for all it was worth. [laughter] ... I still had the crew cut. So there I was back, and it was a great year, because ... I just wasn't fazed by law school. ... You know, in law school, you're pretty clutched, but I just wasn't clutched at all. My roommate, he was right out of college, and he would study for hours and hours a night. I wouldn't, and because I was so relaxed, I did quite well, really pretty good. ... It was just a good experience there.

SH: Could you compare that experience, coming into law school as a veteran, to the veterans that you saw coming into Rutgers?

BK: I think it was probably very similar. You know, there was just sort of a different attitude. You know, you just weren't as uptight about a new experience, and I think the guys that came into Rutgers were that way, and that's the way I felt in law school. Unfortunately, that's when I first started [having] the hearing [problems]. All those weapons instructions had taken its toll on my hearing. At first, it just started with tinnitus, but, gradually, over the years, it got worse and worse, so I have this service-connected disability, unfortunately, which my wife bemoans constantly.

SH: Did you stay in the Reserves?

BK: No. It was a decision to make, and I thought about it and I said, "Gee, I thought it was the war that would end all wars during the Second World War," and then I went through Korea ... Well, it was something I thought about, you know, because I didn't hate the military at all. Really, it was one of the defining experiences in my life, but I just decided not to stay in. ... As it turned out, interestingly enough, some of the guys, there were a few guys who stayed in and were called in for the Berlin crises that occurred afterwards.

SH: That would have been my next question.

BK: Yes, yes. It was funny that it was done so casually when we were at Kilmer. It was sort of, "Well, sign this, sign that." ... I was a little taken aback by that, you know. They didn't let me think about it, or this and that, so I said, "No." So that was really the end of my military experience because of that decision. I didn't stay on.

SH: Now, as far as your disability, did you have to go back later?

BK: What happened was I went to the VA hospital in Detroit, because there was no question that it was a problem. ... I went there, and they examined me and they said, "Yes, you have a loss of hearing, non-compensable." They didn't feel it was serious enough to be compensable, but it was service-connected. ... It's interesting, because what I didn't realize, that it, as a

service-connected disability, I could get hearing aids, as well as other things, from the VA. ... I didn't have to start wearing hearing aids until maybe twelve or thirteen years ago, something like that, but I was buying them for, you know, a couple thousand bucks. ... Then, I guess, one night, we were at a dinner, and I'm talking to this couple that had a guy who had a service-connected disability, and he said, "Why don't you get your hearing aids from the VA?" I said, "Well, I don't think I can." He said, "Go try." I went to the VA, and, "Of course, you can," and so I've been getting them from them ever since, and I get my prescriptions from them, which is great. ... As a matter-of-fact, at about two-thirty or three o'clock today, I have an appointment at the VA. ... They have to see me every six months to renew the prescriptions. So I'm actually going there today. So my military experience is going right to the minute of this interview, almost, because this afternoon, later, I'll be going over there.

SH: Did the GI Bill help you pay for law school?

BK: Absolutely. The GI Bill helped me in law school. Now, the GI Bill changed between World War II and the Korean War. It wasn't quite as good, from the standpoint of the money you got, but it certainly was good ... I got a, I forget what they call it, a scholarship with a moral obligation to repay, and they had this thing at Michigan. I really didn't have that much money backing me up, but I had no problems between the GI Bill and the money that I didn't have to pay, [which], eventually, years later, [I] paid it back.

SH: Before we start talking about your career, I'd like to ask a couple of questions that go back a little bit. First, you had talked about your family being very much in favor of President Roosevelt. Can you talk about the impact that his death had on you? You would have been in high school.

BK: Yes, well, I was shocked and saddened, really ... I'm sure that my mother cried when he died, and, you know, we were all terribly saddened by it. There's one interesting thing that [happened], as a good, old, dyed-in-the-wool Democrat. On the boat coming home, on this twenty-two-day trip, it was the ... election, Eisenhower against Stevenson. ... We had a secret ballot among the officers, who they would vote for, and I think there was like fifty or sixty officers among the 2,000 on the ship, or maybe a hundred. Well, let's say there were sixty. The vote was fifty-nine to one for Eisenhower, and guess who voted for Adlai Stevenson?

SH: I'm sure they didn't know.

BK: What?

SH: I'm sure they didn't know.

BK: Well, I didn't broadcast it. ... The interesting thing is that when I look back on him, he was a brilliant man, and, you know, greatly admired. I'm not too sure he would have been a great president or a good president. I'm not sure his personality fit that office, and I think Eisenhower turned out to be a good one.

SH: How do you think Truman rose to the occasion?

BK: Well, fantastically, fantastically. The greatest thing about Truman was his decisiveness and lack of artifice. I mean, the guy, he came up through the political ranks, the Pendergast machine, in Missouri. You know, here was a guy who could have been considered, and probably was considered, almost a political hack and just rose to the occasion and made a decision. ... You just never felt that there was one ounce of phoniness about him, and he made some courageous decisions.

SH: How did you feel, Truman being your commander-in-chief, about the problems with MacArthur?

BK: Well, a lot of us felt that he did absolutely the right thing, that MacArthur really overstepped his bounds tremendously. So, I mean, I'm sure there were some regular Army, and a lot of regular Army officers who went through West Point, probably, might even have been trained by him, [and] I'm sure there were a lot of them that felt that, you know, very supportive of him, but, you know, he just way overstepped his bounds and deserved to be dismissed.

SH: We'd talked briefly about the black-marketing career of the spotter with the military booze allotment. Did you have any other experiences with the black market?

BK: No, not at all, not at all. It was just that one, little thing that this guy had going on the side. But, no, there was never any attempt by, at least in the group I was in, to take advantage of what we had in any way to make money, or to do anything that was not, no catch-22.

SH: When you were called up for Korea, did you ever try to stay in the judge advocate's office, considering you were interested in law?

BK: No, I didn't. You know, I ended up in the infantry, as an infantry lieutenant, and I'll tell you, you know, as a kid who came from a very small town, certainly no military background in my family, I felt, I just liked the experience of it. There is a tendency among guys who were in the services that as long as you're getting out, you know, relatively unscathed to just look at the great times and forget about the bad times, and I think that you may find with many of the men that you've talked to that that's the way it is. They think of it as a very positive experience ... Did you run into many men who just said it was terrible and they hated it, that type?

SH: There are some. There are some who really romanticize it, and there are others who just seemed to be quite frank in the experiences that they went through, how the experiences impacted the men they are today.

BK: Yes. ... Look, if I had become a platoon leader, which is what I fully expected to become, and had been shot, severely wounded, which a lot of infantry platoon leaders were, you know, I'm sure I would have had a different viewpoint on it, you know, depending how badly wounded I was. ... I fully expected to be [a platoon leader]. That's what I expected to do, and it's interesting, because psychologically, at least I was, and the fellows I was with, all the fellows I trained with, we were just prepared to do this. This was what you were trained to do and you were psychologically prepared to do it. It's amazing, you know, when I think back, I can't

believe that I was, but I know that I was, and so I consider myself, obviously, very fortunate, because I had a relatively unique experience, as it turned out, and a good one.

SH: You joked about the atomic bullet, but what about the dropping of the atom bombs? What did you think about the dropping of the atomic bombs, when you were in high school?

BK: Well, you know, the atom bomb was what, '45, right? I mean, I was almost out of, oh, no, almost out of high school, that's right. I think, in general, there was no revulsion against it. You know, there's a big debate now as to whether this instrument of such mass destruction should be used on civilians. But, at that time, I can say that all of us were glad it was done and glad that it brought an end to the war.

SH: Was there any thought or second thoughts about using atomic weapons in the Korean War? Did you have discussions about that?

BK: No, no, I don't think that was ever contemplated. If it was, it might have been talked about in the highest levels, but I don't think that an atomic bomb was [a possibility]. There was no place to drop it, you know. It was pretty rugged country there, and you wouldn't want to drop it, just, maybe if when, at the time, when they thought there might be something with China, you know.

SH: That's what I meant.

BK: Yes, maybe it was talked about, but not by us, not by any of the people that I associated with. Maybe on a highest levels it was talked about and dismissed, the idea.

SH: Jump ahead and talk to us a little bit about how you met the first Mrs. Kannen and about your life after that.

BK: Well, okay. I graduated [from] Michigan, and I really wasn't sure what I wanted to do, so I thought I'd come home temporarily, and I temporarily took a job with a law firm. ... It turns out that temporary job turned out to be my job in Asbury Park, you know, which is amazing to me. I said, "Boy, one thing I'll never do is come back to the shore," and that's just where I landed up ...

NH: What type of law was it?

BK: It was very general practice. At that time, there were only, there were two partners, and they wanted an associate, and that was me.

SH: You said you were kind of taking it as a temporary job. What were you thinking about?

BK: I wasn't sure. I was constantly getting bulletins about job opportunities from the law school, from their placement office ...

NH: In Michigan?

BK: From Michigan, yes. No, no, not in Michigan. Michigan was pretty nationally known, you know, and had a good reputation, so they were all over, but more in the Midwest and Far West than the East, and I think that was the thing that, I don't know, and there wasn't anything that really attracted me. Could we take a break?

[tape paused]

BK: In any event, there I was in Asbury Park and, really, not a hundred percent happy with life. I wasn't going with anyone in particular, but then a friend of mine introduced me to, as a blind date, to the woman I married, who was a graduate of Montclair, and she was a teacher up at Wayne. We went together, hit it off, got married and had three children, and she stopped teaching, after she had the first child. ... I decided, after a couple of years with the law firm, that somehow I would [not advance]. They had three sons who were coming up as lawyers, and I think they had first dibs. In any event, I wasn't that happy there. I didn't think I was going to be going anywhere there. I wasn't going to be a partner. There was, at that time, another lawyer, who represented the Brick Board of Education, said, "Why don't you go down to Brick? Take a look down there. That's really a burgeoning town." ... I had hardly even heard of it. ... People from Monmouth County hardly knew anything about Ocean County, but I took a ride down. There were about 16,000 people, and there were only like three lawyers, so I decided to do it, at the urging of a friend of mine and my wife, and rented an office for fifty dollars a month [and] started a practice. ... I joined the Democratic Club, which got me through the first year, because in '61, they had a hurricane, and ... they had what they called disaster loans for people who lost houses along the ocean front. ... At that time, who was president? Kennedy [was president], and so he appointed some Democratic lawyers to close these loans, so I was one of the couple of lawyers who were appointed. That really saw me through my first year, and getting fifty dollars a closing, I mean, that was really big-time money in those days. I was a sole practitioner for a number of years. I had a partnership for a short time, that busted up, and continued as a sole practitioner in Brick. Brick went from 16,000 to, it's about 75,000 now.

NH: About three or four lawyers?

BK: Yes, sure. [laughter] No, no, the lawyers quickly caught up with the population. But things went well here.

SH: Have you stayed involved in politics?

BK: Yes. I was always, well, I got very involved in various committees. I was involved, I became president of the Democratic Club, and then I was involved with the Chamber of Commerce and the Kiwanis, and all the things you do in a small town.

SH: Did you move down here the first year?

BK: I'm sorry.

SH: Did you move down to Brick the first year?

BK: Yes. I bought a house for, yes, 12,000 bucks it cost us, and I was able to swing it with a big mortgage.

SH: Did you use the GI Bill to get a mortgage?

BK: The first, yes, I guess, I did get a GI Mortgage at that time. ... Yes, yes, I did. I'll never forget, because when I built this house, and I sold that house, I sold it for 19,000 dollars, and I thought I was stealing money from the people, 19,000 dollars for a house. This house with the lot cost me 35,000 dollars to build, a little different. But, in any event, so I was very active community-wise. I belonged to a million organizations, the symphony orchestra here, or in Toms River, and the Ocean County Mental Health Association. I became involved in the local organizations, and so I did all the things that a young lawyer does to get around. As I say, I was somewhat active politically, never ran for anything, but, you know, was active in a supportive role.

SH: Are your children living around here?

BK: No. My oldest son is a cellist, and he lives in Westchester County. He's married with a young son. My daughter is a lawyer, and she's in California. She was smart. She said, "I'm not going to live anywhere where it's cold." Interestingly enough, how she became a lawyer is sort of interesting, to me, anyway. ... The two boys were the ones that always were the philosophic ones and the ones that liked to discuss the issues of the day. My daughter was concerned more with her friends and social life, and she went to the Cornell Hotel School, which is really a good one, and she chose as her first job a hotel in California. That's how she got there. ... Then one day, she didn't like that job, she left, and she became a director of personnel at a large manufacturing company, and one day, she called up and said, "By the way, Dad, I'm going to law school." It was the last thing I would have thought that she would have ever done. She went to law school, made law review [and] got a job with one of the biggest firms in California.

NH: Where in California is she?

BK: Well, she went to the University of San Diego, and her first job was in San Diego. She went to Colorado for a while, took the Bar there, and it was about, right after she passed the Bar there, a couple of people, old friends, called and said, "Let's form a law firm back in California, Orange County," and that's what she did and that's what she's doing. She's coming in tomorrow.

SH: And your younger son?

BK: Oh, okay. Now, my younger son had a more difficult time in getting going. ... It's sort of a funny story. Maybe I'll edit this out, ultimately ... He is a very bright kid, but wanted to march to his own drummer. I think the third kid in the family, they seem to like to do that, and he did. We started hauling him around, when it came to college time, and we were taking him to Amherst, to Tufts, to all the little, we thought of smaller schools, to all those wonderful New England schools, Williams. We made him wear a blazer, which drove him out of his mind. I

said, "What are you going to do about the earring?" He said, "I'm wearing it." He had a little, scratchy, little beard, and he wouldn't shave it off, and, you know, he was driving us nuts, absolutely nuts, and nothing turned him on. Then we went to a school, Hamilton College, which is in Upper New York State, which is the epitome of what he couldn't stand, but we got there, it was a beautiful day, and then this gorgeous co-ed comes around and said, "I'm going to take you around and show you the campus." They came back, [and] he said, "Dad, I'm going to Hamilton." We knew that, you know, he didn't like the other schools ...

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

NH: This continues an interview with Bernard Kannen. This is tape two, side B.

BK: Anyway, so he started there, and two weeks later we got a call, "Dad, this is Bob. I've left school. I can't tell you where I am, but I'm okay. Bye." It turned out he was hitchhiking home. He came home, and then he started in, he enrolled in Ocean County College, and then he went to summer school at Harvard and then he went to the summer school in UCLA, and he finally found Bard College. We took him up to Bard College. He fell in love with it and went there and didn't want to leave even. He could have graduated in February, because of the odd times that he had missed, but he wanted to stay until June, and he graduated there. He's now a social worker in Vermont, doing okay, doing very well, doing very well. He's quite a kid, but I'll never forget getting the motor started there.

SH: I think that's very typical of the third child.

BK: Well, okay.

SH: All right. Would you like to continue with your career? Tell us a little bit about where you are now.

BK: Oh, okay. Well, what happened was I had decided, at some point during the practice, that I would love to become a member of the judiciary. ... During the course of around a six or seven-year period, there were several openings, and I didn't get them, but my name would always be in the paper, "Among those being considered are Bernard Kannen," and the others. ... For one reason or another, I didn't get it, and finally, my turn, my time came up, and I did get it. You know, it's a political thing. Meanwhile, I was the judge in Brick Township and in Berkley Township in South Toms River, so I was municipal judge for around twelve or thirteen years, before I went into the Superior Court. Finally, my time came up in 1987, where even then, it was a little bit agonizing, because I was really the guy that was supposed to get it, but, meanwhile, there was a change towards the end of the term of a prosecutor, and he had no place to go at the end of his term, so he was appointed, and I was named for a position that wasn't even open yet. They said, "But you're being appointed to fill So-and-So's position. He's retiring in July," and this was back in like January or February. So the last seven or eight months of my practice ... I was appointed to a judge, as a judge, waiting for a judge to retire. Assassination was brought to mind, but I decided I'd wait it out. So I went on the bench in 1987, and it, to me, was the perfect thing for me, as far as enjoying it. I feel that I've been a competent judge. I went into the family [division] first, and there were just two of us working in family, at that time.

One was Judge (Fall?), who, as it turned out to be, was really considered one of the best judges in the state. In certain polls, he was considered like in the top three in the whole state. ... It was just a wonderful experience working with him, because even though family was the most difficult assignment of all the areas of the judiciary, because of, well, the pain and suffering involved, it was just very satisfying to be able to resolve matters there. But it was difficult. You landed up working the longest hours, if you were conscientious at it. When you get into family, everybody becomes conscientious. You have to. ... I was there for two years, and then I was assigned to civil, civil area, and that's jury trials, and that's what I did. That was wonderful, too. The judges that I worked with were terrific. It's a very collegial group in Ocean County, a very wonderful group of judges. The head judge, the assignment judge, the whole time, was Judge Serpentelli, and I'd known him for a long time. He had practiced in Brick Township, and then he went on the bench and he became the assignment judge, who is in charge of all the other judges in the area, in the county. It was terrific working with him. ... All the judges, we would have, there was a lot of collegiality from the standpoint of we would have dinners together and parties together. Then at seventy, you have to retire in New Jersey, compulsory, and so I had to retire at seventy. I had retired three years ago, but then I was asked to come back on recall, and that's what I've been doing ever since. [I've] not [been] working full-time, which I definitely would not want to do, but [I've been] working, maybe, anywhere from one to three days a week. That's what I've been doing in the civil area.

NH: How exactly did you go about getting your name considered for a judgeship?

BK: That's an interesting question. The way it works in the New Jersey, really, not completely, but for the most part, the county party, it's a governor's appointment. In New Jersey, becoming a judge is by appointment, not by election, and the governor appoints judges. But, of course, how does the governor know whom to appoint? He turns to the county to make appointments, or to give him names. Now, in New Jersey, they, you have an even number of Democrats and Republicans, so there's what is known as a Democratic opening or Republican opening. So even if there's a Republican governor, if it's a Democratic opening, he'll ask the Democratic Party, "Who do you suggest, or who do you want?" That's the simplest way of putting it. ... They submit a name, and then you go through, the County Bar has to approve you, and then the State Bar has to approve you, and then you meet with the governor's counsel, and he interviews you, and then the governor appoints you, like I was appointed by Tom Kean. You know, he was a Republican governor at that time. So that, you know, and how does it happen? Well, you know, if you've worked, if you've done your bit in politics, then your name gets known in the party. That's essentially how it works. Now, the governor ... has around fifteen or twenty appointments that they can make without being affiliated with the county. State appointments, they're called. So he can appoint anybody in the state to any one of those openings, and where they get assigned is the question. But usually, if you're appointed through the county, that's where you'll serve, not always, but most of the time.

SH: Great. Well, I thank you very much. If there are any questions that we've forgotten to ask you, please add anything you'd like.

BK: No, I think we've covered it. There's nothing left in my mind to talk about. Well, no, I would like to mention the fact that this, because I'm very proud of them. After my wife passed

away, I met Anne, and she has three children, and I'm very proud of them. Her oldest son is a Harvard graduate, Harvard Law School grad, and he lives in North Jersey. Her daughter was a talent director for "Nickelodeon." Now she's retired, raising one child in the midst of having another one. The younger son is an editor of *Playbill* magazine [and is] also teaching now. He decided he would like to try teaching in the New York School System, [which is] being a little masochistic. He's finding that out. ... I've been very, very fortunate that after my wife passed away, which was very suddenly, that [I met Anne]. ... I knew her husband. He was a lawyer, and her husband had passed away five years before that. Anyway, her brother suggested her to me, and I met her and was very fortunate to have someone very compatible.

NH: How long have you been married?

BK: Seven years ago, Thanksgiving. I can't tell you the day, but I know I was married on Thanksgiving Day. So if you ask me, "What's your anniversary date?" I don't know. So whenever it's Thanksgiving, that's my anniversary date. So next week, which reminds me, it's a good way to end, I haven't gotten anything for her anniversary yet, but there's still time.

SH: Again, our thanks.

BK: It's been my pleasure. It really has.

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Reviewed by Kathryn Tracy 7/22/02

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 7/26/02

Reviewed by Bernard Kannen 6/03