RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH FRANCIS H. LANG, SR.

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins an interview with Francis H. Lang, Sr., in Oakland, New Jersey, with Sandra Stewart Holyoak and …

Mark Lang: … Mark Lang …

Katherine Armbruster: … and Katherine Armbruster.

SH: Thank you, Mr. Lang, for having us here today. To begin, where and when were you born?

Francis H. Lang, Sr.: I was born in New York City, in the Bronx, on the 17th of September of 1926, and I was brought into the world by a midwife.

SH: At home?

FL: At home.

SH: Let us talk a little bit about your family background, starting with your father. Could you tell me his name and a little bit about his history?

FL: My father's name was Jacob Henry Lang, Jr., and we lived next-door to my grandfather, who was Jacob H. Lang, Sr., and my father and my grandfather built the house that I lived in just before I was born.

SH: Just before.

FL: Yes, and … neither of them were in the construction business. My father was a clerk on Wall Street and my grandfather owned a bicycle shop.

SH: They just decided to build a house.

FL: And just decided to build … my father's house, [laughter] which was very nice.

SH: How long did you live in this house?

FL: Until the city took it in 1938. It was taken in order to get in the extension from the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge to the Merritt Parkway.

SH: You would have been twelve.

FL: I was about twelve, yes.

SH: Did you try to resist or fight that?

FL: No, we couldn't resist that.

SH: Were there other homes lost as well?

FL: There were many, many homes lost--I would say twenty-five or thirty in the area--that were taken for that extension.

SH: Where did the family move then?

FL: My grandmother and grandfather moved to the apartment over their store, because they owned the house and it was convenient at the time, and my mother and father and I moved in with them for a year, year-and-a-half.

SH: Did your father commute to New York, into the city, into Manhattan?

FL: Oh, no, … we all lived in New York City, in the Bronx.

SH: Did he take the subway or trolley in? How did he commute?

FL: Subway. He took the subway downtown to Wall Street for thirty-five or forty years, every day.

SH: What was their store?

FL: Bicycle store. My grandfather had a bicycle shop and he sold baby carriages and he repaired baby carriages and bicycles.

SH: Interesting. Did you ever help him?

FL: He'd have killed me. [laughter] No, Grandpa was the kind of person who had a big bench in the back that was about four feet deep by about six feet wide and he knew where every tool was thrown. So, don't you go around [cleaning up]; he'll take care of messing them up himself. [laughter]

SH: Did your father ever talk about his educational background?

FL: Oh, sure. … My father went to school until seventh grade and, that year, in the summertime, he got a job. At the end of the summer, he wanted to go back to school, but my grandfather wouldn't have any part of it. So, that was the end of his education.

SH: Did your father have a large family?

FL: It was my father and two brothers and my grandmother and grandfather.

SH: What was your mother's name and her background?

FL: Okay, my mother's name was Elizabeth Nessel, N-E-S-S-E-L, and she essentially was the only child in her family. She had a brother who lived for six months, and then, died and, on her sixth birthday, her mother died. … My grandfather subsequently married another lady and my mother went to live with them and, as happened so often, in those days, mama and step-mama didn't get along together. … So, my mother left when she was about thirteen to go to work.

SH: What did she do?

FL: Well, she just cleaned houses for a while and, subsequently, went to work for the Oakite Company in New York City. … They made Oakite, which was … a very strong scrub soap that you used, cleaning stuff, and that's where she stayed until she married my father.

SH: Did her education stop when she left?

FL: Her education stopped when she left.

SH: Okay. How did your parents meet?

FL: No, I don't really know. I don't really know.

SH: Was your father involved at all in World War I? Did he talk about that at all?

FL: No, he was not old enough for it. He was born in 1901, so, he wasn't able to go into the service. His one brother was old enough to have been in the service, but did not go.

SH: Are there any family stories, Mark, that we should ask about?

ML: This is actually new to me, too.

FL: There you go.

SH: When your parents married, the house was built for them. Then, at twelve years old, you moved in with your grandparents. How long did you live over the bicycle shop?

FL: Well, I was born in the house, so, it was from 1920; oh, in the other place? I was in my grandfather's shop about a year-and-a-half. There are some side comments, I guess, I ought to make. The house that I was born in was a two-family and, for the first part of my life, it was my great-grandmother and step-great-grandfather who lived in the house. So, I knew … my great-grandmother, I guess, oh, up until the time I was two. So, I guess I really didn't know her, but I got to meet her. My step-great-grandfather, who was her second husband, … I was eight or nine when he died, so, I got to know him a lot.

SH: Was this your mother or father's parents?

FL: Mother's, mother's grandmother and … step-grandfather.

SH: This would have been your mother's mother.

FL: It was my mother's mother's mother. [laughter]

SH: Okay.

FL: Yes, something like that. I guess … one of the things I ought to say, because it may come up, is that both my grandmother and grandfather on my father's side were born in Germany and came over here, my grandfather in 1992 and my grandmother in 1996.

SH: In the 1800s.

FL: 1896 and 1892, yes.

SH: Did they ever talk about any anti-German feelings towards them during World War I?

FL: No. As a matter-of-fact, my grandfather came over here to get out of going into the German Army. That's why he came, and so, he was more than pleased to be here and … he never had any problems.

SH: Did they belong to any of the German associations?

FL: No. My grandmother would've if she could've, but Grandpa wouldn't allow it. [laughter] When my grandmother went back to see her relatives in Germany, in 1933, he would have no part of it. He stayed home. He said, "That's why I left. I'm not going back," [laughter] and he didn't.

SH: When your grandmother came back, I know you were not very old at that point …

FL: Oh, my grandmother thought that Adolf was the greatest thing since whole wheat bread.

SH: Really?

FL: Really, oh, yes, and I used to have to say to her, once in a while, "Grandma, you can't say those things, you know. These people are American, not German, you know," when she raved about how nice Adolf was. [laughter]

SH: Okay, you answered my question very well, thank you. Did she maintain a lot of the German customs, as far as food?

FL: Yes, German customs, as far as food. She was a very excellent cook and, when she came over here to this country, one of the jobs she did was, [she] cooked for people at a boarding house. She was an exceptional cook, and so, that was always with her, but, really, nothing else. I mean, she was glad to have left home, too--for other reasons, not going into the Army.

[laughter] Grandma Lang was born on a farm in northern Germany and hated it. She trained as an apprentice to a professional baker in Germany. She arrived in New York City as an immigrant when she was eighteen and married at 19.

SH: She was not in danger of being drafted. [laughter]

FL: No, not in those days.

SH: With your great-grandparents living in the house, did your mother continue to work?

FL: Oh, no, when she had me, that was the end of her working, except for being a housewife, which is, as I know now, a good deal of work. [laughter] I mean, you know, you've got to say it like it is.

SH: Was your family Lutheran?

FL: My grandmother was Lutheran, my grandfather was Catholic. He came from southern Germany. In my family, my father was Lutheran and my mother was Catholic, and I was brought up Catholic.

SH: Were you?

FL: [Yes], but I went to my grandmother's church with her quite frequently.

SH: That is an interesting mix. [laughter]

FL: Oh, it is. Yes, they switched. I don't want to pursue that one. [laughter]

SH: We will not do that. Are you an only child?

FL: I'm an only child, thank God.

SH: Nothing wrong with being spoiled, right?

FL: Oh, wonderful, wonderful being spoiled; don't knock it. [laughter]

SH: As a young boy, did you have chores?

FL: Yes, my chore was to sit on my duff.

SH: Okay.

FL: And neither my grandmother or my mother would have liked me putting my hands into what they were doing. So, I didn't and, when I did, I only got in trouble. …

SH: Where did you start school?

FL: I went to school in Public School 71, which was within a mile of where I lived, and I went there until seventh grade, when we had to move down to Grandpa's store. Then, I went to Public School 12 in the Bronx, where I stayed until I got out in 1940-whatever. [laughter]

SH: When you left your grandfather's store, did you move close by, to an apartment or a home?

FL: … My grandfather, in the meantime, had bought another house in the Bronx, which was a two-family house, and we all moved into that house.

SH: Was the neighborhood that you grew up in a diverse mix or was it strictly German or Irish?

FL: It was a quite diverse place, all white, no black, lots of Irish, lots of Italian, almost no Jewish, some French. So, you know, in terms of [being] Anglo-Saxon, it was a good mix.

SH: Were you involved in the church? Were you an acolyte or an altar boy?

FL: No. … You know, like all Catholic children, I went and took my catechism [education in Catholic doctrine] and was confirmed [received the sacrament of Confirmation] and had made Communion, but that was the extent of my involvement.

SH: Did you join the Boy Scouts?

FL: I joined the Boy Scouts in 1938. I had been working to join the Boy Scouts since I was seven. So, I was very much involved in the Boy Scouts; subsequently, spent thirty-two years with the Boy Scouts.

SH: Did you really? [laugher]

FL: Yes, yes.

SH: Do you want to explain how that progressed?

FL: No, you know, it's just, if you're interested in the Boy Scouts, [if] you're very deeply involved, you want to give back, and so, you become a leader. … So, I spent many years as a Scoutmaster in the Bronx, and over here in New Jersey.

SH: Were your children involved with the Boy Scouts as well?

FL: One of them was. I had two boys and a girl. Mark's father was in the Boy Scouts. My daughter was not, although she was in Girl Scouts, [laughter] and the other boy, Mark's uncle, did not want any part of anything which was overseen by somebody else. He wanted to do whatever he wanted by himself, which he did.

SH: As a young boy, growing up, what were some of the things that you remember that you did, whether it be family vacations or how you entertained yourself in the 1930s?

FL: Well, most of the entertainment for us, in those days, was simple things, like stickball, stoopball, boxball. We had a big oak tree, which we had a tire and a long rope attached to that we used to take off on and fly around the tree. We did ice-skating, roller-skating.

SH: Where did you go to ice skate?

FL: I could go into these, what we called "the swamps," across the street from our house. … There were canals in there that we did [skate on], and there was stuff in Pelham Bay Park [a park of over 2,700 acres located in the Bronx] that we ice-skated on. … The Bronx River, we skated on.

SH: Did you also go there in the summer to fish and play?

FL: No, most of the time, not. I guess when I was eleven, I went to a religious camp for two weeks and, subsequently, when I became a Boy Scout, I went to the camps for the Bronx County Boy Scouts, but, no, most of it was staying around. My father and mother went on a vacation or two for a week. You know, that's about all they could afford.

SH: Where would you go?

FL: Up around Kingston, New York. Whiteport was the name of the place, little place, and we could fish for bass and pickerel and pike. …

SH: That is where you learned to fish.

FL: That's where I learned to fish, and stopped learning to fish, too. No, that's not quite true. [laughter]

SH: What is the most interesting thing you remember from when you were a young boy? Was it comic books, radio shows? What kept your interest?

FL: I have very catholic tastes, … and I mean by that not religious Catholic, catholic taste, meaning I was into everything I could get into, you know, comic strips, old books. They used to sell magazines about different kinds of planes used during World War II. I read everything I could find on those. …

SH: World War I?

FL: Yes, World War I. I spent a lot of time at libraries.

SH: Were you a good student?

FL: Yes, I was a pretty good student, I guess got out of elementary school with an "A-minus," you know, got out of high school with maybe a "B-plus." Then, I really loused it up in college. [laughter]

SH: When you got out of high school, what year did you graduate? Do you remember?

FL: Yes, 1943, January, February of 1943.

SH: Your school was on a quarter system, so that you could get out early.

FL: It was two semesters a year, two terms a year, from September to January and from February to June. Well, I got out at the end of January.

SH: You were actually bumped ahead.

FL: Yes, I got out of high school in three-and-a-half years.

SH: Okay.

FL: And I cut a half a year out of my elementary school education as well.

SH: Was there any thought that you would go on to college at that point, with World War II ongoing?

FL: They had been insisting--my mother and my grandmother and my aunts had been insisting--on that since I was five. [laughter] I didn't have a chance. I had to go to college. [laughter]

ML: Did you want to go to college?

FL: Did I want to go to college? I was perfectly happy to go to college. "Want," I don't think is the word I would use; I don't think that's active. I enjoyed it, and I enjoyed it so much that I loused up. [laughter]

SH: You were just seventeen.

FL: Yes, yes, and that is part of the problem. As I said, I wasn't grown up, you know, and I went into a program in NYU which was, at that time, to get people into the military as fast as possible. They had a program in which they gave you four terms, or four semester, a year for two-and-a-half years, and then, you were out. Well, that was not my cup of tea, you know. I took the first semester of twelve weeks and flunked two subjects, as I recall, English and physics, took them over again and flunked physics the second time. You know, so, by the time the third semester came around, I knew that I wasn't quite ready for this. [laughter]

SH: I want to back up and talk about your high school years. What was of interest? What did you participate in?

FL: Chemistry was my love. Science was my love, but chemistry was [what] I loved, and I will say, to this day, I got a hundred in one semester and ninety-nine in the second semester, because I loved it so much. … That's where I wanted to go to college. I wanted to be a chemical engineer and I became a chemical engineer.

SH: Good for you. Were there other extracurricular activities--music, drama--that you were a part of?

FL: In college, no, not really.

SH: No, I meant in high school.

FL: In high school? … I had two extracurricular activities in high school. One of them was being on the bicycle squad. Now, you have to know that that squad was started by the school, because everybody who rode their bicycles to school and put them against the fence lost them. Somebody came in and stole them, and so, they started a bicycle squad, where some of us went and took care of the bikes for an hour or two hours, then, somebody … else came on duty, and so on. So, I was in that for two years or something. Oh, yes, it was different in those days. … They still steal bicycles, as I understand it.

SH: Did you ever catch anyone trying to steal a bike? What would you have done if you saw a bike being stolen?

FL: I'd have probably dropped dead on the spot; I don't know. [laughter] No, we never did catch anybody, but the bike stealing stopped, which was, you know, good. The other activity that I was involved in was something which I think was unusual in those days, and that was, I took what at the time was called "Radio English," in which you were training yourself to be an announcer on radio or somebody that acted in shows on radio. You got to know the business, and I was in that for about two years and enjoyed it.

SH: Were you ever on the radio?

FL: Only in the school radio system, yes, never outside.

SH: Did you get to leave class to go and give the news or put on plays?

FL: No, they pretty well timed it so [that] you didn't lose any time anyplace. [laughter]

SH: Was there any thought that you would go to parochial school or was it always going to be public schools?

FL: As far as I know, there was never any thought given to it. If my mother thought about it, she never told me.

SH: What do you remember of the Depression and what you personally remember seeing?

FL: Okay. The thing I remember most, with some pride and fondness, we lived very close to the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, which went through the swamps across the street. … Invariably, during those days, we'd get hobos that would come in and press … the doorbell of my grandmother's house, next-door to us, and they would be hungry and she would feed them. … She did that for several years.

SH: Did they offer to do any kind of work for that food?

FL: Oh, sure, oh, sure, yes. Occasionally, she'd let somebody do a little bit of gardening, but, other than that, no, she never took advantage.

SH: Do you know why they would press her doorbell and not yours?

FL: Because we were the closest one to the railroad.

SH: However, you were living right next-door, right?

FL: We were living next-door, but … the circumstance was that the railroad went through at an angle--I can't describe it in words--and the first house that you came to when you dropped off the railroad--and they went slower at that point and they'd drop off--and the first house that they could get to, who had anybody living in it, was my grandmother's, and so, they pressed her doorbell.

SH: I just thought maybe they somehow knew to not ring your family's door, in the two-family house.

FL: No, I don't think so.

SH: Did you ever talk to any of them? What were you told to do?

FL: Oh, I never had any trouble sitting with them and having a cup of coffee or something like that; no, never really got too much involved.

SH: Are there any other experiences that you can remember from that era?

FL: Oh, I can remember walking with shoes that had holes in the bottom, on the soles. I had some hand-me-down clothes from other people.

SH: Was your father able to keep his job on Wall Street?

FL: My father kept his job through the whole Depression.

SH: Really?

FL: Yes. So, we were very fortunate.

SH: Since there was such a downturn on Wall Street, I wondered if he was able to keep his job.

FL: No, no, I had no problem with him. …

ML: Was your grandfather's bicycle shop affected at all by the Depression?

FL: Not that was noticeable to me. I mean, it could have been, but probably not, because there was always a need for baby carriages, and my grandmother was a very nice person to talk to. So, she got along very well with people. If it hadn't been for her, my grandfather wouldn't have had a store. I mean, you know, he'd say to people, "Where did you get the bike?" and they'd say something like, "Well, I got that at Macy's," and he'd say to them, "Take it back to Macy's to get fixed," and he meant it. He wouldn't fix it for them, so, he lost the business. When other bicycle places in New York started renting bikes, so that you could go for a ride, my grandpa, he wasn't going to rent bikes to anybody. …

SH: However, your grandmother's personality …

FL: He was a Prussian; that should answer a lot of questions. [laughter] He was a Prussian.

SH: However, your grandmother's personality was such that people would forgive him.

FL: Oh, yes, oh, yes.

SH: Was your family politically involved?

FL: No.

SH: What did they think of Franklin Roosevelt?

FL: They were Republicans, so, they didn't think much of Franklin Roosevelt.

SH: Now, your father …

FL: Except for my one uncle. I must say this, to be fair to him. As a matter-of-fact, Uncle Harold was the CPA that the Second Democratic Committee chose to do all of their books during the war, when the second thing was going on. So, he liked the Democrats, but he was the only one in the house and he had to shut his mouth about it. [laughter]

SH: Was your family's home where everybody gathered for the holidays?

FL: Yes. Well, they were there mostly all the time anyway, except for Thanksgiving, which was usually taken care of by my one aunt, my … youngest uncle's wife, and she took care of that, but

my grandmother had what in German is known as a *kaffeeklatsch*, two or three times a week, for which she did all the baking, and so, they were always there.

SH: What do you remember about how the house would be decorated for Christmas?

FL: Normal American decorations, pine trees with lots of icicles on them and different kinds of balls.

SH: Where would you get your tree?

FL: The closest corner vendor, and the cheapest. [laughter]

SH: How long before Christmas would you put up your tree?

FL: Day or two maximum.

SH: Did it have lights or did you use candles?

FL: Oh, no, lights.

SH: As a young boy, did you ever get in trouble for playing with matches or doing something you should not do?

FL: No, but that's an interesting story. On one Christmas, I had a quite distant cousin who came … to visit us. … While my mother and father went next-door to my grandmother's house, this young man, who was my age, give or take six months, and I guess we were about five or six, I had a little cap pistol gun, which, if you've ever seen, you know how it works, but instead of using caps, I was using stick matches. … Unfortunately, one of them that we shot off started a fire on the curtains in the kitchen, and so, I took a pound can of coffee and dumped it into the sink, filled it with water and put out the fire. So, I was in real Dutch for getting the fire started, but they loved me for putting the fire out. So, it was kind of a dead heat. [laughter]

SH: How was punishment handled in the school?

FL: I'll tell you two stories. In the first school that I went to, which was PS 71, I had an incident. … We used to go to auditorium, as it was called, every Friday, and one class or another would put on skits or they'd be singing or they'd play records. … I was sitting next to a young man whose name was (Earl Wallace?) and Earl and I were fond of the same young lady, and so, I poked him with my elbow and I said, "She's mine, Earl," and Earl said, "No, she's not. She's mine," and the principal, who was sitting behind us, said, "No, she belongs to me." [laughter] … He took us out of the class and brought us up to his office, which we sat in for several hours, and then, he demoted us to first grade. … So, we went back to first grade, he in one class and I in another, for about two days, when they finally relented and let [us go back], but I'll tell you, I didn't want to tell my mother I was demoted to first grade. [laughter] So, that was, you know, the kind of thing that happened at PS 71. I also had a teacher there whose name was Mrs.

Hammer, H-A-M-M-E-R, who wore spats, [an accessory which covered one's ankle], which is very unusual for a woman. … She was the art teacher … and she was quite good at art, but she would be up at the board, doing something, and she would say, "I'm watching you." You know, looking at the board, she says, "I'm watching you," you know, and she'd pick up a piece of chalk and throw it at you or something, but that's about, you know, the only kind of thing. [laughter] I also had a teacher in fifth grade who had petite mal and, every once in a while, she'd have a fit and, you know, us kids would go running out of the room. She should never have been in that position, but she was. So, that was not punishing, but it was a punishment in itself. Now, the other school, Public School 12, was in the poorer section of town and I was in eighth grade with a lot of young men who were much older than me, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, and I was twelve or twelve-and-a-half. … That was a different school entirely. Among others, [like] the teacher that I talked about in the other school who threw chalk, this teacher would say the same kind of thing, "I'm watching you, young man." … The next thing you knew, you'd get an eraser in your face. She threw erasers and … she was very good at it. On the other hand, one of the teachers, eventually; well, I don't remember. … We, the boys, obviously did something wrong, and so, to punish us, she didn't want to let us go out to lunch, and so, she went out to lunch and locked the door. … All of the boys climbed out the second story window and down the drainpipe. Now, we could have been killed, you know, or whatever, … and we came back at one o'clock and went to school. That was the end of it. Nothing was ever said about it. [laughter] …

SH: As a young man, how aware were you of what was going on in Europe in 1939? You talked about your grandmother coming back after having visited Germany, but, in the school system, were they talking about the invasion of Poland by Hitler in 1939?

FL: Oh, yes, we heard all of that stuff, yes, and I was particularly conscious of it because I knew that I had … relatives who were in the German Army or Air Force.

SH: You did.

FL: And therein lies a story, which I will tell later.

SH: You can tell me now. That is fine.

FL: Okay. When I was in the service and I was in my final job, I was a corpsman, medical corpsman, in Bainbridge Hospital in Maryland, [a US Navy hospital in Bainbridge, Maryland]. … I got word that my cousin, who was an *oberlieutenant* in the [German] Air Force, had been captured and he was in Georgia. … I went to see the commandant of the base, so that I could go down and see my cousin. I shouldn't have done that. I was, essentially, you know, *persona non grata* for a long while, [due to] the very fact that I had somebody who is in the [*Luftwaffe*], but to go near him, oh, no, not allowed.

SH: They did not let you go.

FL: Oh, no, not allowed.

SH: Was it your father's family?

FL: It was my grandmother's. …

SH: Paternal grandmother?

FL: Oh, now, wait a minute, hold on; it was my paternal grandfather's family and it was a cousin of his whose son was in the Air Force.

SH: Had there been communication back and forth?

FL: Oh, they'd written letters, you know, back and forth--not during the war.

SH: Had your family tried to come to the United States before World War II broke out? Had any of them wanted to come to the United States?

FL: The Germans, no. They were perfectly happy where they were.

SH: What part of Germany were they from?

FL: My grandmother's parents … came from a small town between Bremen [in northwest Germany] and Hanover [the capital of Lower Saxony] on the Weser River, and my grandfather was born in--now, you're pushing it. [laughter] He was born in a small town near Stuttgart called (Geisslingen?).

SH: They had left their family there.

FL: Oh, yes, you know. … I've already given you the dates when they came over. So, they'd been gone a long time. [laughter]

SH: Where were you and what do you remember about the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941?

FL: Yes. My mother and father and I were in my uncle's car, driving up the Merritt Parkway [in Fairfield County, Connecticut] and I can remember that. We heard about it the afternoon, I guess, of the 7th.

SH: What was the reaction of your family in the car?

FL: They were completely American, you know, very angry, very angry.

SH: Was the war, prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, discussed in school? How did your family view it?

FL: There was some discussion of it in school, not a lot.

SH: When you went back to school on Monday, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, how did the school and your friends react? You were fourteen.

FL: Yes, thirteen-and-a-half, fourteen. I guess what you'd say [is], you got the normal hue and cry of what was going on, you know. Everybody reacted that way.

SH: Did you know anyone who had been caught up in the draft in 1940, before Pearl Harbor?

FL: Yes, the Assistant Scoutmaster was, came out of the Army, and then, … right after Pearl Harbor, he went back in. So, I do remember that, yes.

SH: Were you aware of any WPA [Works Progress Administration] projects in your area?

FL: Oh, sure, sure. … I remember two things. One, they did a lot of roadwork near us, tearing up the roads and repaving them. The second thing I remember was the very nice situation in which the WPA hired artists of all kinds in those days. … Some of whom they hired were actors and actresses and they put on plays of all kinds in the local park.

SH: Really?

FL: Yes, oh, yes. … That was very much appreciated by people.

SH: Did you know anyone who had gone into the CCC camps, the Civilian Conservation Corps, [a New Deal program]?

FL: No, not personally.

SH: When you went back to school the next day, did anything change in the school? How quickly did rationing go into effect?

FL: Well, you were aware of, I guess, the things that you got involved with. For one, they had a metal drive, particularly for aluminum. Some of it was collected in schools, some of it was collected locally by the police departments. You had military personnel come to demonstrate thermite bombs [incendiary bombs], because you might get bombed at some point.

SH: Really? What did they tell you to do?

FL: Get the hell out of there. [laughter] You know, they'd show you how the stuff would stick to you and you could burn, you know. They didn't do it with human flesh, but they'd set one or two off in … every neighborhood, so that you could see what it actually looked like.

SH: Did they really?

FL: Oh, yes.

SH: The whole neighborhood would come and watch this.

FL: Well, whoever wanted to. [laughter]

SH: Were there any things that you were involved in other than the scrap drives for aluminum? Did your Boy Scout troop get involved?

FL: You know, collecting newspapers and magazines and that kind of stuff, yes, a little bit of that.

ML: Did the Boy Scouts prepare you in any way for possible entry into the military at some point?

FL: No, no, they did not.

SH: They did not come up with any extra calisthenics to get you more physically fit.

FL: No. There was that in high school, but not with the Boy Scouts. What they did in high school is, they had what they called the "Dawn Patrol" and you had to get to the school at six o'clock in the morning. Wherever you lived, you had to get there at six o'clock in the morning, and then, you'd spend two or three hours doing roadwork and calisthenics.

SH: Roadwork meaning running?

FL: Running outside, and then, go inside and do calisthenics for an hour, an hour-and-a-half, yes.

SH: Was this voluntary or was everybody involved?

FL: This was, for some classes, required and, some classes, it was not.

ML: Was yours?

FL: And I don't remember what the requirement was for; I guess the older two classes or the older three classes. The freshmen didn't have to do it. I don't remember about the sophomores, but the juniors and seniors had to take part.

SH: Were there any programs focused on the war?

FL: No, no.

SH: How did rationing affect your family in the first two years?

FL: Occasionally, somebody would have to go without a pair of shoes that they wanted to buy, but, other than that--Grandma complained about not getting enough sugar for her cakes, once in a while--but didn't amount to much.

SH: Did the rubber rationing affect your grandfather's bicycle shop?

FL: No, it did not.

SH: Were you ever aware of any kind of black market activity going on?

FL: No.

SH: Was anyone ever investigated as being part of the German-American *Bund* [an American pro-Nazi organization]?

FL: *Bund*? no, … not to my knowledge.

SH: Did you know anyone who had participated in the *Bund* or German youth groups?

FL: No.

SH: Was there any discrimination against Germans or Italians?

FL: No, not at all, and our neighborhood, at that time, was very Italian. … It was never any problem.

SH: Did you begin to see young men, a little older than you, going off and joining the military?

FL: Oh, yes.

SH: How did you keep up with the war? How did you follow it, or did you?

FL: Followed it in the newspapers, particularly.

SH: Who were some of the figures that you remember really wanting to know more about?

FL: Oh, I can't answer that question. I don't know.

SH: Were George S. Patton, Dwight D. Eisenhower or Franklin Roosevelt figures that you followed?

FL: Well, I was certainly aware of Roosevelt and all of the things that he did, … and getting a lot of negative comments from my Republican family. [laughter] Matter-of-fact, I still have, in my drawer upstairs, someplace--in those years, they used to give out buttons that said, "I'm for Roosevelt," or, "I'm for Truman." … Well, I have one upstairs that says, "We don't want

Eleanor, either." I honestly still have that. [laughter] I figured that'll be worth money someday. [laughter]

SH: You may have just missed your chance.

FL: Yes, yes.

SH: Did you plan to go into the military? Were you thinking that you would wait to be drafted or did you have a plan?

FL: Yes, my plan was to get out of college, because I had done three of these twelve-week terms and was not making out too well, and I felt, "I'd better make a change of pace." [laughter] Now, that was just about the time I turned eighteen, and so, when I went in to sign up for the draft on my eighteenth birthday, I said, "I want to be drafted." Now, I was called what they knew … of in those days as a "voluntary inductee," and the advantage to that was, you usually had some choices of what you might or might not do. So, I was able to go into the Navy, where I knew it was clean, and not into the Army, where I'd have to dig foxholes. [laughter]

SH: Did any of your friends go in at the same time?

FL: No. As a matter-of-fact, the two other people from my draft board that went into the service with me were both forty-one years old and both New York firemen. They had been drafted. … The one went into the Army and one went into the Navy.

SH: Was your family pleased to know that you had gone to the draft board and volunteered?

FL: They knew they couldn't do anything about it, you know. That was it--forget it, Charlie. [laughter]

SH: What about your cousins? Had any of them gone in?

FL: Only had one cousin and he was born when I was seventeen. So, he wasn't anywhere near old enough, [laughter] although I did have a second cousin who was in the Navy with me, my father's cousin, and he was also forty-one when he went in.

SH: You talked about your father faithfully going down to Wall Street. Did he ever talk about how his work changed, or how New York changed, because of the military activities?

FL: No.

SH: Did you see any men in uniform while going to NYU?

FL: No, but, you know, like most colleges [in] those days, there was the ROTC and you always … saw the people from the ROTC, whom we used to call "Turkish Shoulders," because they had purple lapels on their uniforms. [laughter] I became one for a short while. "I are one," oh, God.

SH: You joined the ROTC when you went to NYU.

FL: Yes. … You had a choice of either going into ROTC or taking some other course, which I had no interest in at all. So, I went to ROTC for a year, for that year. That's another reason I was glad to go into the service.

SH: Were there any air raid wardens in your neighborhood? Did you have to blackout your curtains?

FL: Oh, yes, there were air raids [drills] … in my area. As a matter-of-fact, I didn't know it at the time, but my wife's mother was an air raid warden. This was Grandma (Fanelli?); yes, you know, "Go shut out that light," oh, yes.

SH: Did you do anything? Were you a messenger?

FL: I would have been a messenger if it was required, yes.

SH: Did you have a victory garden?

FL: For flowers. [laughter]

SH: Talk about your induction. Where did you report to? You went into New York City to volunteer.

FL: When they called me, I had, I don't know, two days, or something like that, [before] I had to go down to Grand Central Terminal in New York, and they did this once or twice a week. They had what was called, laughingly, at the time, "The Lehigh Valley Black Diamond Express," [an express train which carried passengers to the Finger Lakes and Buffalo], that took us from Downtown New York to Lake Seneca, New York, where the boot camp was. … They called it the Black Diamond Express because all of the coal from the engine used to seep through the windows and get on anything that you had, so that when you got off, you were black. I mean that quite seriously, too. Oh, it was terrible stuff. [laughter] … It was usually an overnight trip, so that you started at eight o'clock at night or nine o'clock at night in Grand Central Terminal and it was only at seven or eight the next morning that you got to Sampson, New York, for your beginning of … your life in the military, oh, God, and that was an experience of itself. …

SH: Do you remember the month and year that you were inducted?

FL: Yes, … I was inducted on the 16th of October in 1943 and I got out of the service on the 6th of July, 1946.

SH: What was it like at Sampson? It was getting close to winter.

FL: What would you like to hear about? The first thing is, you get there in the morning, as I said. They did not give you breakfast as a first chore. What they said was, "Strip," and so, here you have, you know, a couple hundred guys stripped down to the nothing. … They handed you, what did they call them? a bedding tick. This is just … an empty bed, and … you had to go then from there and pick up straw to put in there. So, you filled it with straw. Okay, now, you're hanging this over your shoulder and the first thing you get is a shot in this arm, a shot in that arm. You can't move, you know. You've got it. Then, they inspected everything, every part of your body you can imagine. [laughter] That in itself was worth a thousand laughs, I'll tell you.

SH: It was kind of a shock for a kid from the Bronx.

FL: Oh, yes. You know, when you are not up to this, you have no idea what this stuff is that's going on around you, you know, and, if you're a sensible enough guy, you'll laugh [laughter] and you do what you have to do. … You know, part of this, you're carrying this stuff around, you've been shot, you've been shot in the behind, you've had "short arm" inspection, which means inspection of your private parts. [laughter] … I mean, it was really a circus, and then, they did finally give you breakfast, in the buff.

SH: In the buff.

FL: In the buff. … You know, you still had your stuff with you, you know. You're carrying [your equipment]. … While you were doing this, you had your hair cut. You were now a bald head, you know--what'd they call them, scalp head?--but, you know, they took it down to the bone. There was no hair left, zilch, and so, you had breakfast in your new haircut.

SH: Was everybody that was on that train up to Sampson from New York?

FL: No. … Well, you know, they were there, but they split them up. … We'd had people from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio; it was not all from one place. There were people coming in from various places and the Navy would assign them to this barracks or that barracks. … At the time, Sampson had A-B-C-D-E-F-G, it had seven units, from A to G, and, in each unit, there were ten barracks, each of which had two hundred people in it.

SH: How long were you there and what did you study?

FL: Boot camp was about eight weeks. I was there until the 2nd of January of '44, from October the 16th of '43, about eight weeks. …

SH: Were you taking tests there as well?

FL: You took tests for what things you were adaptable for or not adaptable for. What they liked [to do], you know, usually, if you were somebody who wanted to be a medical man, they'd assign you to shining shoes. [laughter] You know, … needless to say, they didn't do what you wanted, you got what they wanted.

ML: Were you trying to get yourself into a certain program or path?

FL: Yes, there were three things I wanted. I either wanted to be a fire control man or go to sea duty, and I couldn't get either of them. They said, "No, we're going to send you to radio technician's school." That was a radioman to repair radios, not to make radio, you know, messages.

SH: Did you take the Eddy Test, [a Navy classification test used to test enlisted sailors' potential aptitude for working as electronics maintenance technicians]?

FL: Yes, the Eddy Test, let me see; that the one for Officer Candidate School?

SH: Right.

FL: I'm sure I took the test, yes, because I took tests until I was blue.

SH: A lot of people who wound up in radio like that had taken the Eddy Test.

FL: I must have taken it then.

SH: Did you want to be an officer? Was that something that you put in for?

FL: Not especially, no, I didn't. I really didn't think I was up to it--told you, I was a very young boy.

SH: Did you get a leave after this, in January?

FL: When you were finished with boot camp, you got a seven-day pass. … Then, you had to go back to the same place, to what was called the outgoing unit, in which they gave you some more tests and, finally, decided where you were going to go, and that's where you went.

SH: How did you celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas in Sampson?

FL: It was no different than any other day. No, they sang songs on Christmas Day--I'll say that much for them.

SH: Did you find that there were things that you could not master or that you were really good at?

FL: … There wasn't any choice of what test you're going to take. So, you took whatever they gave you and, sometimes, you made out, sometimes, you didn't.

SH: Was it very physically demanding there at Sampson?

FL: Depends on who you are, but, yes, reasonably demanding. You usually got up at five or five-thirty in the morning and each unit had what they called "the grinder." What it was was just a track … on which you ran and that was a half a mile track and you ran two-and-a-half miles every morning in your swimsuit, irrespective of the heat or cold outside, so that the morning I left Sampson on my boot camp end, it was two degrees below zero and I had on my sneakers and my swimsuit. So, that was reasonably demanding, yes, and, you know, there was other stuff you had to do. They had to test you for things that were demanded. You had to jump off a forty or sixty-foot board into the water, and there's a lot of guys who didn't want to and got pushed off and broke an arm or broke a leg or, you know, whatever.

SH: Were there people who just could not take it and were let go?

FL: Oh, there were some. There were some who were let go, on a discharge that read specifically that they were not--I don't remember the word, but they couldn't stay in. Yes, they did get rid of them. There was one in my barracks, very close, who had his stuff very close to mine. … He started off by asking people around him to roll up his clothes and tie them up properly, to store them in his locker. … He'd give them a dollar or two dollars or five dollars to do this, because he had a lot of money, and they got wise to this and they got rid of him.

SH: Really?

FL: We had a guy … in my company who also, apparently, had never had any experience at being clean. … So, you know, people would ask him to please go take a shower, because he smelled so bad, which he didn't do, until, finally, the guys got together and they got one of these; you were each given, when you got into the service, what was called a (kayai?) brush. It's just a square brush with sharp bristles on it. They went in there and they gave him a "(kayai?) bath." So, he was thoroughly clean after that, but he went back to his bad habits and they finally got rid of him, too. …

SH: Was there strict discipline?

FL: You really have to define strict discipline, but, yes, the discipline was pretty good.

ML: Are there any particular people that stick out from boot camp, like drill sergeants?

FL: Oh, I can think of a few of them. One of them was a … young man, was a little older than I was, who came out of Hell's Kitchen in New York. … His last name was (Tambielo?) and (Tambielo?) was a very good gambler, and so, he started a gambling society on Sundays, which he had out behind the barracks. … He had people coming from all over to gamble in his place. [laughter] That's one guy I remember. No, that was another place; I can't talk about that.

SH: Well, you could.

FL: Yes, but, … you know, it's at a different time. It's out of place, because this guy was a farmer who came from West Virginia and he had seven children and nine mules. … He knew

the name of every mule, but he didn't remember the name of his children. I mean, that's the truth. So, I remember him very well.

SH: In boot camp, was there anyone who was illiterate, that you were aware of?

FL: No, no. There were other things in boot camp, you know. … One of the things--I told you about jumping off a diving board, which you had to do--you also had to go forty feet under the water and come up in a diving bell, a little bit at a time. You had to do that. Each person had to get dressed in asbestos clothing and go into a metal room, which was made to look like part of a ship. … Then, they would set fire to some fifty-gallon drums of oil and you had to go in there and put out the fire. So, that, everybody had to do. So, there were a lot of things like that, that were demanded of you, because they were demanded of everybody.

SH: What about swimming? Did you have to know how to swim?

FL: Oh, yes. If you didn't know how to swim, … you were there all the time, learning to swim.

ML: Did you know how to swim already when you went to boot camp?

FL: Oh, yes, certainly was.

SH: Did you learn quickly not to volunteer, or was that something where responsibility was thrust upon you?

FL: No, I never volunteered. I had enough of not being volunteered. Each person had two weeks of service that he had to perform, in addition to his normal chores. … One of those, for example, I was assigned to the mess hall, and the mess hall is a very interesting place. You remember that they're cooking for thousands of people. So, it's [large-scale], you know, but you'd go in in the morning and the chef or the "cookie" would say, "Go in and get me three hundred pounds of potatoes," which is hard enough to drag them and put them on a skid or whatever you had to do, but it was even worse for somebody like me, because I'd go in, I'd turn on the light and the walls of the place would change from brown to white as the cockroaches ran away. I mean, if you don't like cockroaches, you'd hate this. I mean, there were so many cockroaches, you wouldn't believe it, but, after you've been in the service for three or four or five weeks and you find one crawling up over your mess kit and you flick them off with your finger, I mean, you know, you learn. … The kitchen's a big place where they do a lot of things. I can remember the cook saying to me, "Lang, go stir the soup." So, okay, I go stir the soup, and what you stirred it with was an oar from a boat. You know, they're pretty long, stir up--said to the chef, "It's hard to stir." He said, "Stir it," and I brought up a dead kitten. So, he got rid of the kitten and he said, "Stir the soup." That soup was stirred and it was given out, absolutely. … You know, they make stuff and they made vegetables or creamed chicken on toast, that kind of stuff. All of the food was put into what were called terrines, which were twelve inches high, twelve inches wide and about two-and-a-half feet long, you know, holds a lot of food. … If you walked in there early, before people came in to eat, you would find like that much, two inches, of

oil on the top, just floating on the top of these things, and the cook would say, "Lang, go get the oar," you know. [laughter]

SH: Did you lose weight while you were in boot camp?

FL: As a matter-of-fact, I did. Another interesting point, you know, Sampson is a place where [there were] a lot of seagulls. It was loaded with seagulls, all during the week. On Sunday, you never saw them. We always had chicken. Every Sunday, you had chicken, but you never saw the seagulls. Now, I'm not saying it was seagulls, but it was very interesting that the seagulls were gone on Sunday. [laughter]

SH: You never pulled that KP duty.

FL: … So, I didn't particularly care for KP duty, no, … doing three hundred pounds of potatoes, but that's easy. It really is easy. They have a big machine, … which has got a canister on it, which is, say, two-and-a-half feet in diameter. … On the inside, they have put, for want of a better word, I'll say they have embedded metallic chips on the inside of this machine. … So, you put potatoes in there and water and turned it on. Ten minutes later, they're all clean and you do another batch.

SH: I had visions of you sitting there like "Sad Sack," [a World War II-era cartoon character].

FL: Oh, no, they never did, no, no, much too slow, much too slow.

SH: When you came back home, did your family comment on how you had changed after that six weeks? Did you feel you had changed?

FL: Yes, oh, jeez, don't even mention it. When I first got back, which was, I said, in June, I don't know, you know, Grandma was still doing her normal cooking and everybody was after their *kaffeeklatschs* and the same procedures, and I remember …

SH: I think it was in January.

FL: I got out in June, I guess.

SH: No, I was talking about after boot camp, when you came home

FL: Oh, oh, you're talking about that part of getting out, okay. I just had a nice week, seeing all my friends and all my relatives.

SH: You did not notice a difference in yourself.

FL: No, other than the fact that I was wearing a white hat, you know. …

SH: Did you wear your uniform the whole time you were home?

FL: Oh, yes, you had to, oh, yes.

SH: Did you?

FL: At that time, you had to.

SH: Had a lot of your friends joined the military by that time?

FL: No. The one guy, a friend of mine who lived around the corner, is the one I talked about before, who died in May of this year, who had gone in. He went in six months before I did and joined the Marines, but, no, … most of the other people in the crowd that I hung around with were not quite old enough or hadn't been called.

SH: One thing I did not ask you was, in high school, were you involved in anything? Did you enjoy the music of the Big Bands?

FL: No, I was learning how to play the accordion at the time. So, that was my music. [laughter]

SH: Did you master the accordion?

FL: I could play it--I still can--but master it, no, no.

SH: You reported back to Sampson in January. Where did they send you next?

FL: Okay, since I had been appointed to go to radio technician school, the first place they sent me to was a base in Chicago called the Hugh Manley High School. They had taken over a high school to teach this and I was there for, I guess, three weeks. … Then, they said, "Okay, we're going to send you to secondary school and that's in Gulfport, Mississippi."

SH: Talk about Chicago; what was that like?

FL: The Windy City. It was the Windy City.

SH: Where was the school?

FL: School was a little bit [further out], you know. It was still within the area covered by the L, the Loop, it's called. So, it was three or four miles out of downtown.

SH: Where were you housed?

FL: In the high school.

SH: Barracks and school, everything was right there.

FL: Yes. This was the first time and the last time I ever saw it. … The barracks were cots, four high. So, the one on the top was twelve or thirteen feet off the ground, and there were many broken arms from guys who fell out of bed and broke their arm.

SH: You were studying radio repair.

FL: Repairing radios, right, the first part of that, anyway.

SH: Your mess hall and everything was right there in the school.

FL: Right in the school.

SH: Were there any high school students there?

FL: No, just us, just us mice.

SH: Okay. Who was teaching you, civilians or military?

FL: Military.

SH: From there, they sent you to Gulfport. Did you get a leave in-between?

FL: No.

SH: By train then?

FL: Yes. We went by train, which was, I think, eighteen hours, all the way from Chicago down to Gulfport, and the railroad paralleled the Mississippi River for most of that … time and we went through a lot of places that were flooded on the way down.

SH: This would have been some time in February.

FL: Let's see, … call it April, going down there.

SH: You were a little longer in Chicago then.

FL: We were about three months in Chicago.

SH: I am sorry, I thought it was much shorter.

FL: No, January, February and March, I believe.

SH: What did you do for entertainment in Chicago?

FL: Well, there were several things. I went to a lot of bars. [laughter] That was an experience enough to help you grow up, believe me, but, in Chicago, they had an organization called BBR, which stood for Bigger and Better Recreation for Chicago Servicemen. … What they had done was taken over a YMCA in downtown Chicago that had seven floors to it and you could dance or you could play games or you could do puzzles or you could go bowling, you could go swimming. It was all in the same building. So, there was a lot of things you could do down [there] and they always brought in a lot of girls, so that you could dance, and most of the girls in Chicago, at that time, and I suspect today, were Polish. They were very big girls, no, monsters. [laughter] I have to tell you this story, because it's one of my favorite stories. I went out with this girl, I don't even remember her name anymore, but, when the dance was over, I asked, could I take her home? … She said, "Sure," and she lived in--oh, I don't remember the name, her name or the name of the place--but, anyhow, … we took the L, and then, we had to walk a little bit to her house. … I remember saying to myself, "You going to give this girl a kiss or aren't you?" thought to my[self], "Yes, I'm going to try to give her a kiss." … She was cute. So, instead, when we got to her door, this gal was about three inches taller than I was--I mean, she was a big lady--she picked me up by my [shirt], lifted me up, gave me a kiss on the forehead, put me down and said, "Good night," [laughter] and I still remember that. It was an experience.

SH: Did you see her after that?

FL: Yes, I saw her back at the place again, yes. She was a very sweet girl. She really was.

SH: Was the schooling difficult for you, the radio repair?

FL: Not in Chicago, no, no, it was not.

SH: Were the men that were there studying from all over?

FL: Yes.

ML: Did you make any friends there?

FL: Yes, there were two guys who I went on with to the secondary school. One of them came out of Philadelphia, and I'm trying to remember his name, because he was an interesting person, and the other fellow came out of New Hampshire and was interesting because he had a problem. He had a very large, red nose, you know, almost like they used to show you that drinkers had. He wasn't a drinker at all, and he was called "Moose." Everybody called him "Moose" (Kelly?) [laughter] and I still remember him, but he went down with us. The guy from Philadelphia was a very nice person, but he had a problem, too. He used to go along the street and pinch girls in the bottom, and his comment was, "Well, sometimes, I make out very well doing that. Other times, I get slapped in the face." You're getting the dirt and all. [laughter]

SH: Were you a good dancer?

FL: No. I could get along, but I wasn't a good dancer, no.

SH: Did you write home often?

FL: Yes, I did, yes, I did. I was, at that point, going through my poem writing stage, [laughter] and so, two or three times a week, I'd write a poem home to my mother or grandmother or aunt or whoever and tell them what was going on, in addition to the poem--didn't tell them everything, of course.

SH: Was there a lot of censorship of the letters?

FL: Oh, no, no, I was thinking--I was self-censoring--I'm not going to tell my mother I went to the bar, you know, [laughter] got to stay away from that stuff.

SH: What about the USO?

FL: Well, that was the USO, the BBR. That was wonderful, wonderful. They really did a job. In Chicago, at that time, you were able to take all of the public transportation without cost and, if a taxicab was free, he would take you, no cost, to wherever you wanted to go. They were really very good to Chicago servicemen.

SH: How were you treated by the general public?

FL: Very nice people. Oh, yes, they're all very happy to have servicemen around and to do things for them. A lot of times, they'd invite you home for the weekend. You'd get down off the subway; when you got off the subway, there were groups of people there who wanted to take you home for dinner or for the whole weekend, very often.

SH: What about in Sampson? Was there any interaction with the people there?

FL: Sampson is, the camp itself is, three, four, five miles outside of town. So, all you could see was the lake and the vineyards on the other side of the lake. No, it was a place you didn't get out of, [or that] you got out of once during the time you were there.

SH: What did you do that one time?

FL: Went into town and got a good meal and came back. [laughter]

SH: In Chicago, did you go anyplace other than the USO?

FL: Oh, yes. … There was several big movie houses. I must admit, they were very good, because they had a lot of stars and they didn't charge you anything to get in, servicemen. No, so, I'd go in and see--oh, I can't remember all the names anymore--Jo Stafford.

SH: They would be there in person.

FL: … Yes, oh, yes, they had good shows, you know. Each week, they changed. So, … usually, you know, whenever I got into town, that was one of the first places I went to.

SH: Were you keeping up with what was going in the European and Pacific Theaters?

FL: Oh, yes, and you got news at the base, usually, too, put out by various and sundry groups in the service.

SH: Going down to Gulfport, you did not get a leave in-between. You went straight down.

FL: Yes. In Gulfport, I couldn't make it … the first month. I guess I flunked out because … I wasn't smart enough for AC electric. I could do DC electric very fine, but AC electric was something I couldn't master. So, they were going to send me back. So, for one month or two, I was doing service. I was building radio cabinets for other people, including the captain of the place, and various other things that I had to do, that I was required to do to spend my time in good stead for the Navy. … V-E Day occurred.

SH: You were still there in 1945.

FL: Yes. No, no, I've got to remember--yes, '45, I was still there in '45.

SH: Would it be in the summer that you went down to Gulfport?

FL: When did I go down to Gulfport? I went down to Gulfport in April of, … had to be '45.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Start over again, please.

FL: … On V-E Day, everybody in Gulfport, except those who were required for other jobs, had to stand inspection and parade. So, there were, you know, thousands of sailors standing parade that day, and I remember, too, … because it was so hot, that there were many, many people who passed out and had to be taken to the hospital or off to the side or whatever. … That weekend, I had leave in New Orleans.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: I am going to turn this on.

FL: Okay.

SH: I do not want to miss anything.

FL: Okay. One of the things you're missing is that when I went to Great Lakes for reassignment, one of the jobs I had was carrying sides of beef … from the railroad cars in which

they came into the mess halls, and so on. … I carried sides of beef in for three days and a side of beef is quite heavy and it's all stamped, "AAA, Government Inspected," and you'd never recognize beef when you got to the food table, not once. I mean, you wouldn't know what a steak was. … I guess they knew how to do them, but they just didn't do them--no roasts, no steaks, no nothing, not even hamburgers.

SH: You were too far down in the food chain. Somebody was getting the steak, I am sure. [laughter]

FL: Oh, yes, officers' club, probably.

SH: At Gulfport, you talked about the end of the war in Europe and this big inspection.

FL: … There were other sad stories down there. Gulfport, Mississippi, as many parts of Mississippi were, [was] dirt poor. … The thing that sticks in my mind is that there was somebody who lived in a barracks near me and we seemed to be going out the front gate at the same time each weekend if we had liberty, and he'd meet his wife, who was maybe sixteen, who was still carrying a doll. That sticks in my mind.

SH: It would.

FL: There was a lot of that kind of stuff down there, and I'll tell you another thing that's very interesting. You know, they were the same kind of people who wouldn't let blacks, you know, sit in the front of the bus and stuff like that. … There are stories to tell about that, which I won't tell, but the people were very poor and they would give you the shirt off their back. They were the nicest people imaginable, black and white.

SH: The Jim Crow South was very evident in Gulfport.

FL: Oh, indeed, indeed.

SH: Did you ever see any African-American soldiers or sailors?

FL: Oh, sure. I got into trouble by sitting in the front of the bus with one of my favorite friends, who was a black, and they didn't want him to sit there. … I said, "Go ----," and so, they let us sit there.

SH: Did they?

FL: Oh, yes.

SH: In Mississippi?

FL: In Mississippi.

SH: Was he in the military as well?

FL: He was a sailor.

SH: Was he stationed at the same place you were?

FL: Yes. … He was a cook's helper. That's what they had the blacks doing in those days, cook's helpers, any menial job that they could find.

SH: Are there other stories about Gulfport that you would like to share before we go on to your next assignment? Were there other celebrations of the end of the war in Europe? There was the official parade, but did you go out that night to celebrate?

FL: Oh, I did, I did. It's the only time in my career in the service where I saw falling down drunk women sailors, nurses, only time, and it was very unsatisfying.

SH: How separate did the Navy keep the officers from the enlisted?

FL: They had a policy of non-fraternization. Now, you know, what people did personally, I don't know. They could have, obviously, gotten [together] again, did one thing or another, but, yes, the Navy fought against it.

SH: Were the officers in charge of you qualified?

FL: The ones that I had any dealings with were, yes.

SH: You did not run into any "ninety-day wonders" who did not know any more than you did.

FL: No, I never had that problem then. When I got down to Bainbridge, while there were quite a few men officers, most of the people I dealt with were nurses, but they're also officers, you know, starting at, I guess there were some ensigns, but most of them were lieutenants, and there was a couple lieutenant commanders, who were very nice.

SH: When you went back to Chicago for reassignment, how long were there?

FL: My guess is it was about three weeks.

SH: What you were doing was just waiting to be reassigned. Where did they house you?

FL: Barracks.

SH: Where?

FL: Great Lakes Training Center. It was a big place, even bigger than Sampson, huge place.

SH: Had you been sorry you had not done your boot camp in Great Lakes?

FL: No, no, nope.

SH: Was Great Lakes where you made the request to become fire control?

FL: Yes. … They said, "You have three choices," and I said, "I only have two. I want to be a fire controlman or I want to go to sea," and I didn't get either of them, but that wasn't unusual, really wasn't.

SH: You said they were really looking for people to put into the Medical Corps at that point.

FL: At that point, yes.

SH: What was the conversation like about how the war had ended in Europe and, now, the focus was on the Pacific?

FL: No particular conversation about it.

SH: Where did they send you from Great Lakes?

FL: To Bainbridge, Maryland.

SH: That is where you trained.

FL: Where I went to the medical school there, medical technician's school, and then, when I came out of it--again, you know, there were other places that you could go--they said to me, "You're going to stay here. This is where you're assigned to," and that turned out to be very good for me, because I had no duty every other weekend and I just got on the railroad and came home to the Bronx, got to see my friends, my family. That was fine for me.

SH: Had any of your friends started coming back from the war?

FL: No. I was one of the first out, as well as the first in.

SH: What was the training like? Was it very intense? Did you enjoy it? You said you really enjoyed chemistry. Did this training involve the sciences in a way that was attractive to you?

FL: Yes, a little bit. … The war was still on in Japan and they were training you to be a corpsman, to go where it was necessary overseas. So, you had to know how to do, you know, operations by yourself, you had to know how to do all kinds of things by yourself, that I never got to do, because I was there in Bainbridge, but you … [were] training to be an on-the-site [corpsman].

SH: Were they talking about the invasion of Japan at that point?

FL: Oh, sure, oh, sure.

SH: Did you see any of the men that were returning from Europe at all?

FL: No. The guy I keep talking about through this has been this friend of mine that lived around the corner who joined the Marines. Well, while I was in Bainbridge, he came back to be gotten out of the service, and so, he got out of the service at that time.

SH: You said that he was on Iwo.

FL: Iwo, yes, and Saipan.

SH: He came back in 1945.

FL: Yes, he came back. He was ready to be released from the service.

SH: Where were you when you heard about the bombs being dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? [Editor's Note: Hiroshima was the target of the first atomic raid on August 6, 1945. Nagasaki was attacked on August 9, 1945. V-J Day was declared on August 14, 1945, in the United States and August 15, 1945, in the Pacific.]

FL: I think I was home. Was I? No, I guess I was still down in Bainbridge.

SH: You were being trained to do all these different things, but what was your duty after you finished the school in Bainbridge?

FL: I, like most other people, was working on a ward

SH: In the hospital?

FL: … Yes, where I had to do whatever was necessary, and the thing that was necessary most of the time I was there, although I got involved in other things, was giving penicillin shots, and I did a hundred bottoms every three hours. So, I got to be pretty good at giving shots, but I spent a week or two assigned to taking care of two gentlemen who came back who had tuberculosis, and so, I had to, you know, wear gowns and masks and all that kind of stuff. I was taking care of prisoner of war, … sailors who had very serious injuries. They had been, as I say, prisoners of war and I had to take care of them. There were two of them that I took care of for a long, long time.

SH: At Bainbridge, had you been trained to handle people with VD and tuberculosis?

FL: Well, if there was something I hadn't been trained in--the one for tuberculosis, I had two extra days that they trained me to take care of it, because … it was a choice thing, you know. I

wasn't just assigned to take care of them. I was asked, "Do you volunteer?" and I did volunteer for that and I enjoyed it. …

SH: You talked about the prisoners of war. Were these men who had been taken prisoner by the Japanese and were being returned?

FL: Yes.

SH: How did you treat them? What were some of the things that were wrong? Do you remember?

FL: Oh, one who had been broken up inside--all his ribs had been broken, his arms had been broken, he had one leg bad. I had one young man who … they had taken him and done an operation. They took this part of the leg and they had to take a big chunk out of the bone and the flesh and everything, and they covered that over with a plastic window, and he had to be treated in there a couple times a day, to put special [treatment on it].

SH: This was the bone just below the knee.

FL: Yes, it was below the knee and it was cut in the shape of a cup, in effect, on both ends, and about that long.

SH: Did they ever talk about how they had been treated as prisoners of war by the Japanese?

FL: Oh, yes. They were very unhappy about it, to say the least.

ML: Do you have any stories that they told you?

FL: No, no, they kept that pretty much to themselves. No, see, again, I go back to that friend of mine, who is now dead. He was a sergeant on Iwo and had to personally cut down American sailors who had been; … I'm sorry, not sailors, American personnel, who had been killed by the Japanese and who were hung up by their private parts with a claw and hung up into a tree. Well, he was one of the guys who cut some of them down, and then, he killed a Japanese, … one of the Japanese who was known to have done it, and he lost his sergeantship. … You know, they took that kind of thing very seriously. They wanted to get back at the Japanese in any way they could, if they had been associated with fighting the Japanese.

SH: From your experience, there was a real difference between how the Americans perceived the German as an enemy and the Japanese as an enemy. Is that fair to say?

FL: I would say that that's probably true. You didn't hear as much--you didn't hear as many stories or as negative--about the Germans as you did about the Japanese, but, again, part of the problem is, sailors didn't [have as much exposure to fighting the Germans], you know. If you were a soldier, you probably did, but sailors were not very much involved with German sailors. I'm sure there was some of it, you know, but [not as much].

SH: Was the Bainbridge hospital taking in Army personnel as well, or was it strictly Navy personnel?

FL: Strictly Navy.

SH: Are there any other stories that you remember of people who came in and had served in either the European Theater or the Pacific?

FL: No.

SH: Were these prisoners of war that you were taking care of in Bainbridge because that was closer to their home?

FL: I don't know, honestly. I really don't know why they were there in that particular place.

SH: You talked about going home to the Bronx for most of your leaves. Did you ever go around in the Maryland area at all?

FL: Yes, I spent a lot of time going to bookstores in Baltimore, for example. I spent a fair amount of time going to a little town which was right outside of the base called Port Deposit, which is still there, because there was a very nice black lady who was a very good cook. … I'd go down and get a meal every night from her, when I could.

SH: Other than your duty in the hospital, did you have to stand any watches?

FL: No, that was considered your watch, just being on duty.

SH: Was your nickname "Doc?"

FL: No. The only story I remember that, you know, is a little funny is that I went AWOL [absent without leave] one weekend and came up to New York because something was going on. I don't remember what. Oh, yes, it was a friend of mine … who was on a battlewagon [nickname for a battleship] who had come in for the weekend, and my mother called me and told me about it. So, I went over the fence and came home and saw him, and then, I went back, but, when I went back, the only way I could get [in], I couldn't get in the front door, I went through the (Denamures'?), you know, farm, to get in over the fence. … I had to go through the pigsty to do it and go over the fence, and I didn't smell too good when I got back.

ML: Did anybody say anything when you came back?

FL: No.

ML: They did not even notice you were gone.

FL: Well, maybe somebody did, but she was a very sweet girl. …

SH: Was it one of the nurses?

FL: Oh, one of the nurses. I fell in love with the woman, but, you know, I was twenty-one, I think, and she was thirty-one. … She came out of Boston, had a real Bostonian accent, and she was the cutest little thing. Her name was also Frances and Frances always had three or four guys on the hook, come constantly, and, [if] she would have asked me to do anything, I would have done anything she asked me. [laughter] … She knew I was over the fence and she didn't tell. …

SH: When you heard that the bombs had been dropped, did you realize what it was that had happened?

FL: Oh, yes.

SH: You knew that the war was going to end at that point.

FL: [Yes].

SH: What was the reaction when the war ended and the peace treaty was signed? You remembered the reaction on V-E Day. What was V-J Day like?

FL: Euphoria. On the other hand, you know, depending on who you were, to think of a zillion people being killed in one stroke is not exactly fun. You know, you do think about it. As much as you might not like the Japanese, you didn't like that either and, yet, it was something that was, in your mind, my mind, required. Something had to be done, because, if it hadn't been done, it would have gone on and on and on. …

SH: Were you involved in another inspection? Was there an official reaction or an official celebration?

FL: Not the same. It was not the same, no.

SH: How did your duty change once the war was over in September? Had you already started to make plans for what you would do when the war was over?

FL: I just wanted to get out of the service.

SH: You were not thinking of staying in as a career.

FL: No, and I did have the opportunity, because, it's funny, the man happened to be the dentist that my wife used to go to, in the Bronx, and he asked me if I wanted to go to medical school, and I said, you know, "What's required?" "Well, among other things, … after going to four years of medical school, you then had to spend another two years," that would have been six more

years, "in the Navy," and I wanted no part of that. At another time, it would have been good, and I should have done it, but I didn't.

SH: Are there other stories that revolve around Bainbridge Naval Hospital that we should hear?

FL: I'm sitting here trying to think about [it]. Well, I'll tell you one more small story; has to be about me. … For about six months, I was in the business of making tailor-made blues for sailors. You know, it's very easy to make tailor-made blues. … All you were trying to do was tighten it up here and flare it out at the bottom. So, you took a thing that looks like a shape like that, you just cut that out at a seam and you put it on the bottom. Well, I made a lot of money doing that.

SH: How did you get the talent to do that?

FL: I don't know, I guess [from] watching my mother sew. [laughter] So, I did that for a while.

SH: Were yours tailored? [Editor's Note: Mr. Lang shakes his head no.] No?

FL: No.

SH: I hardly can believe that.

ML: How about the time that you spent in the psychiatric ward?

FL: Oh, yes, you remember that. I had forgotten all about that. …

SH: Was that at Bainbridge?

FL: Yes. I was stationed in the lockup ward. This was for problem people that they couldn't …

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Okay, that is important.

FL: There were all kinds of people in there, people with real problems, people with "put-on" problems. There were two stories. One is, … I felt so bad about it, because … one of the corpsmen, he was a first-class medical corpsman and he was the lead nurse, if you will, in operations. He was that good and, one day, he just laid down and went to sleep and he slept for weeks. … They finally got him up, but he was never the same after, just out of it, don't know why. We still don't know what ever happened to him. I know his parents came in to see him a couple times. You could talk to him, but nothing special, you know, and then, he'd go to sleep again, but we had one guy who--I don't know whether he was trying to get out of the service or he really was *loco*--but he was on the far end of a ward. Now, these wards in the Navy were a hundred to 120 feet long and he was toward the back end, where there was a screened porch, also locked up, in this place. … Every night, or early morning, he would get up from his bed and

rush for the front door with his head, to knock himself out, until we got wise and put mattresses, two mattresses, up there, so [that] he couldn't knock himself out, but he did this every night, for as long as I was on the ward, every night.

SH: What was your specific job on the ward?

FL: Well, since I had night duty, this was from about eleven at night until eight in the morning, nothing, other than, you know, "Make sure they're in bed. Make sure they're doing what they're supposed to do. Don't let them get out," but most of them were just sleeping, at that time. So, I didn't have any problems.

SH: Was medication used on them?

FL: Sometimes, yes. You know, you had a three-hour medication sheet and you'd go around, try to wake them up or give them a shot or whatever was required.

SH: Were they also receiving psychiatric care?

FL: I have to say I don't know, personally, but I assume they were, during daylight hours.

SH: You were just there at night.

FL: Yes.

SH: It must have been kind of spooky to be there at night. Were you by yourself?

FL: No, there was always at least two, sometimes three, yes, because … you've got, essentially, a hundred patients and, if they decided that they wanted to gang up on you, yes, they could.

SH: Had the surgical corpsman served anywhere besides Bainbridge?

FL: Not as far as I know. Oh, he might have, but, certainly, as a first-class corpsman, he was stationed at Bainbridge for quite a long while--very sad.

SH: Are there any other stories that you recall?

FL: Not that I can think of.

SH: Were there any dependents at Bainbridge?

FL: There were officers' quarters on the base, where a wife could stay, and did, because some of the officers lived on base. … I remember that specifically because one of the things I asked for, and got, was to watch a child birth. So, they let me do that. I was involved in a [birth], because I was, you know, thinking about medicine as a career. I was involved in a, what do they call them? investigating a dead body. What do they call that?

SH: Pathology, forensics?

FL: Yes. There was this young man from Alabama. He was nineteen and he died from--it was a brain problem anyway--quite, you know, usual, normal, but he died on the operating table. They're trying to do something for him, and he had to be autopsied, was the word, and I must say that one of the things that taught me, if you have ever seen--most people see dead bodies already prepared, taken care of, in the casket, you know, whatever. I remember seeing this young man when he went into the autopsy. All his blood had settled to his lower region. So, it was on the back of his legs, on the back of his behind, up his back, but the rest of him, it was a white that you wouldn't believe, just pure, alabaster white. … You know, it's a shock to somebody who's never seen it before. So, I got involved in this thing and I remember it because, to some extent, it was funny and it told me I was also able to handle it. The doctor who was performing the autopsy took out the young man's lungs and he threw them in my arms. He said, "Go weigh these, Lang," and I had to go over to a scale, weigh his lungs and put them in a canister, but I still remember doing it. … So, I got to do a couple of things I would never in my life have ever done, unless I became a doctor.

SH: Were you involved in any other procedures that resulted in someone dying?

FL: No. … You know, I was able to sit in on a number of operations, but it was never very serious.

SH: Were people brought to the Bainbridge Hospital by ambulance or in an emergency situation?

FL: Not that I ever saw.

SH: After you decided that you did not want to go to medical school, as this officer, the dentist, had offered, what did you decide you wanted to do?

FL: What I always wanted to do, want to go be a chemical engineer, and I went back to NYU and I became a chemical engineer.

SH: When did you first realize or know that you were going to be discharged from the military?

FL: About a week before I was actually discharged.

SH: Really?

FL: Yes, because, at the time, they were not sure how [long you were required to stay in]. You were signed up for the duration plus six [months], that was … the government's policy, but, if they didn't need certain things, they would let some out, and I was fortunate enough to be able to get out quickly.

SH: You came out in July of 1946.

FL: Yes.

SH: What did you do? Had you saved any money?

FL: Yes. I saved three hundred dollars or four hundred dollars and I came out and I bought a 1936 Chevrolet, in very bad condition, that I could fix up--imagine, a 1936 Chevrolet.

SH: It was just ten years old at that point.

FL: Yes, it was. … It was a clunker, jeez, [laughter] and I fixed it up with the help of some other people.

SH: Were you aware of the GI Bill and its advantages?

FL: Oh, sure.

SH: They had told you about that.

FL: Oh, yes. I knew all about that, and I knew where I was going back to and where [the] money was coming from, and that was good for my mother and father, too.

SH: Where did you decide to go to school?

FL: NYU.

SH: Was it difficult to get in with all the returning veterans? Since you had been a student, was there kind of a space for you?

FL: No, I had no problem, I guess maybe because I had been a previous student. Oh, yes, there was a lot of people trying to go to school at that time.

SH: Had New York or the Bronx changed at all over the duration of the war?

FL: No, not particularly.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: We will continue. I asked about changes that you noticed in New York and you said there was not really that much.

FL: No, I didn't see many changes. I guess the reason for that is, [I was] in college. … The college wasn't any different at all. It was the same, same professors, teaching the same subjects, you know.

SH: Had your mother and dad talked to you at all about how it had been for them during the war, what efforts were being made on the home front?

FL: Let me put it this way--no, they never really said anything about it and, because I was home so often, I can say that there was never any evidence of any difference, none at all. They lived their normal lives, ate their normal food, did their normal things.

SH: Was it hard to come back and live at home again?

FL: Oh, jeez, yes. That was a story I started to tell earlier. … One of the first weekends I was home, … you may have to close your ears for this, Grandma was serving dinner, downstairs, and someplace during the meal, I said, "Pass the fucking butter." [laughter] I guess nobody really said anything, but I was thinking a lot, "Oh, boy, oh, boy, you loused it up this time," but, you know, you get used to a certain way of talking when you're in the service and it's not always the nicest words you're using.

SH: She did not smack your hand or anything.

FL: No, no, they didn't smack my [hand], did nothing. It was the silence that was worse, dead silence. [laughter] I expected my grandfather to say something, but he didn't.

SH: That was the change that you were going to tell me about that your family saw in you.

FL: Yes, yes.

SH: What did they see? You talked about being such a young man when you went in. Did they ever comment on how much you had matured because of your service?

FL: Yes, there was some of that from my mother, particularly. No, to be honest, … if I hadn't had that almost two years, I'd probably still be a kid, you know. … It was a need for that for me and it had some advantage, I think.

SH: With the GI Bill, you went on to NYU and got your chemical engineering degree.

FL: [Yes].

SH: When did you meet Mrs. Lang?

FL: I got out of college in June of 1950. I met her in June of 1949, at the wedding of a friend that now lived next-door to my wife, and so, I met her at that. By June, when I got out of college, she and I were already engaged and, on Armistice Day of that year, we got married, Armistice Day of 1950. So, we've been married just fifty-eight years this year.

SH: Congratulations.

FL: Thank you.

SH: You have three children.

FL: Three, you know, got a daughter, two sons, of whom I'm proud. His father is a DMD [doctor of dental medicine], my daughter … has got her doctorate in microbiology, among other things, and did research in that area, and my other son's a lawyer. So, I think we made out very well.

SH: Your time in the service sounds fascinating in some respects.

FL: I think everybody has some fascinating things to talk about.

SH: Did you keep in contact with anyone that you served with or met?

FL: No.

SH: Did you join any service organizations?

FL: No. They're still trying to get me to join, but I'm still not joining. [laughter] I'm not a joiner.

SH: After you had your degree in chemical engineering, did you work in the Northeast or were you sent around the country?

FL: No, I worked in the Northeast area. I first went to work for Crucible Steel Company in Harrison, New Jersey, and I worked there for six months. Then, I moved up and went to work for Curtiss-Wright Corporation, building aircraft engines and doing quality control in [the] metal area. Then, I went to work for the International Nickel Company and doing various things for them.

SH: Where was the International Nickel Company located?

FL: Well, they had a big office in downtown New York. That was six or eight floors at 1 New York Plaza, yes, right across from the ferry stop, but they also had a research laboratory in Hoboken; … not Hoboken, right along the river. Anyway, I went to work for them. Six months, I think, I spent in this area, down here, and then, I was moved up to Sterling Forest, New York. They had built a brand-new research facility and that was beautiful and it was only half an hour to work, lovely. [laughter] So, I'm one of the few people that I know; we, my wife and I, moved into this house in 1957, April 1st of 1957--that's something to that--we've been here ever since. So, I never had to move, never had to move, very unusual. A lot of the people I knew, … you know, they ended up going, first, to Georgia, then, out to Ohio, and then, someplace else. "No thanks, guys."

SH: What has been your passion since you were in the military?

FL: What has been my passion?

SH: Did you have a hobby that you enjoyed immensely? You have done a lot of work with the Boy Scouts.

FL: It'll sound silly to you, but my passion is to live. … I am firmly, personally convinced that the reason for life is to live it, and so, I do.

SH: That is the advice that you will give to your grandson.

FL: Absolutely--do your thing, every day. If, today, something tells you you'd better go do this, go do it; don't hold back. You have it in you to do what you want to do.

SH: I thank you so much for sharing.

FL: My pleasure, gives me a chance to gab. [laughter]

SH: We do appreciate it. For the record, we should say that you were in Sampson from October 1944 to January 1945, then, in Chicago, training in radio repair, from January 1945 to April 1945, then, down to Gulfport, Mississippi, in April 1945, then, reassigned to the reassignment group at Great Lakes in April 1945, and then, sent to Bainbridge in May of 1945 until you got out in July 1946.

FL: Right.

SH: Thank you, and I thank Mark for keeping on you to participate.

FL: My pleasure, really is. I'm sorry I had to have you come up here, instead of me going down there, but it's getting a little hard [to travel] at the moment.

SH: No problem, we really appreciate it. This concludes our interview.

[TAPE PAUSED]

FL: … Go ahead; one very nice and one not. I had one young black sailor that I had to give shots to and, you know, people, they seize up when you try to give them a shot unless you do it the right way, you know, … but many of the black men, their skin is so hard that it's really difficult to get a needle in. It really is, no, and I learned how to give a good shot. … When you did it enough times, you could just give him a slap on the behind with one hand and give him a shot with the other, immediately, and so, they felt the slap, but they didn't ever feel the needle. So, I got pretty good at that. So, that was kind of a funny story, but … we had one--you talked about VD [venereal disease], I think, at one point. We had a young man in, again, a black man, who had that and they gave him some of the first--oh, what did they call them? not penicillin, the

next stuff that came out. I've forgotten all these names at this point, and he got four pills every three hours, around the clock. Well, some fool, I don't know who it was, told this young man that, you know, if he took the whole day's worth at one time, it'll clear it up. So, he saved all his pills and he took them at one time and they found him the next morning, dead. … His skin, when they got him up and … took care of his body, all of his skin on his back and his bottom and the back of his legs was all stuck to the sheet, had just dehydrated him that badly. I remember that, too, because it was very sad. He was a very nice young man who listened to somebody and shouldn't have.

SH: Were there a lot of educational films for people about VD?

FL: Oh, yes, there were a lot of educational films about VD and they emphasized to young soldiers or sailors or Marines going out that they should clean themselves with soap and water and they should do this and that, you know, and gave them a shot, usually, before they went out on liberty, all because, you know, they were afraid of VD. There was a lot of it going around.

SH: Again, my thanks to both you, and to Mark and to Katie, thank you.

FL: It was my pleasure, it really was. I enjoyed it.

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

Reviewed by Sean Strausman 3/1/11
Reviewed by Conor Mason 3/1/11
Reviewed by Noah Glyn 3/1/11
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 5/30/12