

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH G. MARINO

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Lieutenant Colonel Joseph G. Marino on September 13, 2007, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth. Colonel Marino, thank you very much for having me here today.

Joseph G. Marino: Pleasure.

SI: To begin, could you tell me where and when you were born?

JM: I was born in Brooklyn, New York, 1912.

SI: I would like to ask you a few questions about your family background and your parents. What were your parents' names?

JM: Thomas Marino was my father, Carmella Marino was my mother. ...

SI: They were both from Sicily.

JM: Both born in Sicily, yes, right. They were immigrants.

SI: Did they ever tell you anything about their lives in Sicily, any stories about that?

JM: Not really, not really, except it was a comparatively hard life and my father wanted something better, apparently. So, well, they were married and immigrated to the United States. ...

SI: How old were they when they came over?

JM: My mother was seventeen. My dad was about twenty-one or twenty-two.

SI: Were they both from the same village? Is that how they met?

JM: Yes, yes, same village in Sicily.

SI: Had any other members of the family come over to the United States before them? Did anybody sponsor them to come over?

JM: No, no, they were on their own.

SI: Did they tell you anything about what it was like to emigrate to the United States, such as the voyage over?

JM: The voyage over was rough. They came over [in the] latter part of February, 1912, and early March. So, it was a rough ocean. Apparently, my mother was very sick, seasick. [laughter] My father handled it very well, from what they told me.

SI: Did they come through Ellis Island or by some other route?

JM: ... Through Ellis Island, yes.

SI: Did they tell you anything about that experience?

JM: Not really, not really.

SI: I wondered if they were separated or anything.

JM: No, no. They had an easy time coming through, from that standpoint.

SI: Do you know why they settled in Brooklyn originally?

JM: I guess because of the large Italian area in Brooklyn, and that's where they settled. My dad was a barber.

SI: Had he been a barber in Sicily?

JM: In Italy, yes.

SI: You were born in Brooklyn shortly after they came over.

JM: That's right.

SI: When did you move out of Brooklyn?

JM: I would guess it was about ... late 1915, early 1916, somewhere in there, and we moved out, according to what Dad told me, because there was an epidemic of a flu and he wanted to get me out of there, and I had a kid sister who was two years younger than I am, and so, he wanted to get us out of there. So, ... they moved to New Brunswick.

SI: Do you have any idea why they chose New Brunswick?

JM: That, I don't know, except that he had two choices, either Long Branch, New Jersey, where he could buy a barbershop, or here in New Brunswick, and he chose New Brunswick. Why, I don't know.

SI: Did he buy a barbershop in New Brunswick?

JM: He bought a barbershop on George Street in New Brunswick.

SI: Do you have any memories at all of Brooklyn?

JM: Not really. [laughter] The only real memory I have of Brooklyn was, up the street, one night, there was a fire. It was [that] a house burned down. That's about the only memory I have of it, of Brooklyn.

SI: When you first moved to New Brunswick, where did you live?

JM: My dad bought a house on Throop Avenue, 91 Throop Avenue, in New Brunswick. At the same time, he bought the barbershop down on George Street.

SI: About how far away were these two places?

JM: The two buildings? Maybe about a mile, mile-and-a-half.

SI: You have a younger sister.

JM: Younger sister.

SI: What was her name?

JM: Carole.

SI: Do you have any other brothers and sisters?

JM: Yes. I have another younger sister, Joan.

SI: Was she born after you moved to New Brunswick?

JM: Yes, all born in New Brunswick. No, my ... other sister was born, Carole was born, in Brooklyn. She was an infant when we moved here, and Joan was born in New Brunswick.

SI: What do you remember about that neighborhood on Throop Avenue? What was the neighborhood like? Was it mostly Italian?

JM: No, no, no, it was very diverse. We had a bakery across the street; they were Jewish. We had friends up the street [who] were Irish. People next-door had a store; they were Italian, but it was a very diverse group. It wasn't an Italian neighborhood or an Irish neighborhood, much like the Sixth Ward in New Brunswick was over the years, you know. That's, technically, Irish. ... Sixth Ward was Irish, in New Brunswick.

SI: Which ward were you in?

JM: Second Ward.

SI: You entered school in 1917 in New Brunswick, or thereabouts.

JM: Thereabouts, yes.

SI: Where did you go to school?

JM: I went to the Lord Sterling Elementary School in New Brunswick, down on Carman Street.

SI: What do you remember about your time at the Lord Sterling School? What was it like then? I know they have rebuilt it. It is on another street. It is on George Street now, right?

JM: Yes. ... Yes, they closed it. ... I understand, now, it's a ...

SI: Is it a charter school?

JM: No, it's a home for the elderly. ... They converted it into apartments for people, you know, instead of destroying the building.

SI: Okay, the original building.

JM: The original building, on Carman Street, yes.

SI: What do you remember about going to school there?

JM: Well, I enjoyed it thoroughly, very much so. I guess, like everyone else, the biggest thing I remember about it was the Hall-Mills murder, because the wife who was involved in the murder, who was murdered, was the wife of the maintenance man, [James E. Mills], in the Lord Sterling School. [Editor's Note: Mr. Marino is referring to the murder of Rev. Edward W. Hall, pastor of New Brunswick's St. John's Episcopal Church and his alleged mistress, a singer in the church choir, Mrs. Eleanor Mills, whose bodies were discovered on September 16, 1922, in nearby Franklin Township, New Jersey.] That's about the biggest thing I remember about it, but I had fond memories of school and the teachers. As a matter-of-fact, ... this is an interesting story. In the third grade, I had a teacher who eventually became my mother-in-law, [laughter] and the first time I laid my eyes on my future wife; she was Catholic, is Catholic, was Catholic. ... She went to Sacred Heart School in New Brunswick and, on Catholic holidays, they had no school, and so, my teacher, Mrs. Boulger, had no alternative [but] to bring them to school with her. ... They sat in the back of the room, she was a twin, for that holiday, and that's the first time I saw my future wife, not knowing her, of course, but, eventually.

SI: What was her name?

JM: Margaret, Peg, and she went to school at Trenton State and I went to Rutgers. She was a phys. ed. down there and I was a phys. ed. at Rutgers. She got a job in New Brunswick, at the high school, when she graduated, about two years after I graduated, of course, and I was teaching at the Roosevelt Junior High School, phys. ed. ... Through school functions and things, we met and ...

SI: Then, you figured it out.

JM: Right, and we started dating before I went into the service, and ... we were married during the war.

SI: I definitely want to ask more about that later on. You brought up the Hall-Mills murder case, which was a big, scandalous news story at the time.

JM: It's still. Every once in awhile, somebody writes a book on it again, after all these years.

SI: You were just a little kid when it happened. What do you remember hearing about it at the time?

JM: Well, of course, it was a big scandal and all that sort of thing and we kept reading all about it, but ... quite a bit of the kids, and I was one of them, didn't bother going to school that day and, at the funeral, we sat across the street and watched the whole procession, you know. ... It was quite an affair, and never really solved.

SI: What happened to the maintenance man? Did he leave the school?

JM: No, he didn't. He stayed there and went on about his business. His son was also a student at the school, as was, I believe he had a daughter, that I didn't know, but his son was in the school and they went about their business, and as though nothing happened, and we were kind of instructed, in a nice way, by teachers, to just ...

SI: Keep quiet.

JM: Yes.

SI: You went to the Lord Sterling School during the time when America was fighting in the First World War.

JM: That's right.

SI: Do you remember if that affected the school, or New Brunswick in general? What do you remember about that era?

JM: Nothing, really, except that you hated Germans, and, you know, the funny part of it is, across the street from the Lord Sterling School is St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, and School, at that time, and it's a German congregation. ... Of course, we hated it. That's about all I can tell you.

SI: Do you remember if people would change their names?

JM: No, nothing like that. ... As I say, we had the complete disregard for the school, for the Germans, that sort of thing. It's the same thing that happened with the Italians during the World War II, you know, and Germany during World War II, again.

SI: Do you remember any parades or anything like that during World War I?

JM: No, I don't, as a matter-of-fact. I don't. I was quite young at the time. All I can remember is bringing in quarters, once in awhile, buying stamps, to raise money for the war, you know, war effort.

SI: War bonds.

JM: Yes.

SI: Do you remember any rationing from World War I?

JM: ... That, I don't, no.

SI: They would have "meatless" days and "wheat-less" days.

JM: I was too young for that. I was too young for that.

SI: How far away was the school from where you lived?

JM: About five or six blocks, that's all.

SI: You would walk there.

JM: Yes, walk to school, yes.

SI: Did most of the kids from your neighborhood go to the same school?

JM: Yes. ... Every school you went to, you were in your neighborhood.

SI: When you were a child, growing up in New Brunswick, what would you do for entertainment or fun? What kind of things would you do?

JM: Well, I joined the YMCA and got quite active in it, with their gym and their athletic program and their gymnastics program, and that's how, I guess, I became interested in physical education, but that was my entertainment, the YMCA.

SI: The YMCAs, even today, they are still very popular and important, but, back then, it was even more so, the way I understand it.

JM: Yes, yes, much more so. It was a hub for everybody, but, at that time, too, you see, New Brunswick wasn't built up at all. You take the women's college [New Jersey College for Women, now Douglass Residential College]; when I was growing up, it was only three buildings, on Suydam Street. Across the street from it was a whole block of no houses at all. We used to go up there and play baseball, for instance. Well, now, it's all dormitories. There were places to play ball all over the city. Little by little, buildings were built here and homes were built there and everything went down the tubes. There was no place to play anymore, except to go up to a place like Buccleuch Park, some parks that they got. Feaster Park, on

Throop Avenue, was just up the block from where I lived originally. There's parks and that's it, but, at that time, there were lots all over. You could play anyplace you wanted to, you know.

SI: How much time did you spend at the YMCA?

JM: A lot of time, after school, and especially in the summer, you know, but we'd spend a lot of time at the "Y" and it kept you off the streets, you know, but kids [were] more ingenious then. You played games at home that you ... made up by yourself.

SI: Can you give me an example of something you would do?

MJ: Yes, play "nip," for instance. It's a little game ... where you take the handle of a broomstick, for instance, make a nip out of it. It was about four or five inches long, but pointed at each end, and, with a stick, you'd hit it. It'd fly up in the air, and then, you'd hit the stick, hit the nip, see how far you can hit it, stuff like that, playing dodgeball at home, in groups, things of that sort, you know. You amused yourself. There was no TV at the time, you know, and so, you learned to amuse yourself, skated a lot, roller bearing skates, ... went to the movies for a nickel, big day on Saturday, you know, that sort of thing, and that was your entertainment.

SI: Which movie theater did you go to?

JM: The Strand, which doesn't exist, the Empire, which doesn't exist, the (Bijou?), which doesn't exist, the Albany, which does exist, the Rivoli, which doesn't exist anymore. The State Theatre was built; I don't remember when it was built, but it was much later than the rest. That's still in existence and has a very fine program now for the cultural activities, bands and singers and speakers, that the community enjoys all around New Brunswick.

SI: Originally, it was just a movie theater.

JM: Yes. It was movies and acts, at that time. The Opera House was another building, on Liberty Street, which doesn't exist anymore. As a matter-of-fact, it burned down, years ago.

SI: You said acts. Would they have vaudeville-type shows?

JM: Opera House and the State Theatre had movies and acts.

SI: Growing up in New Brunswick, did you interact with Rutgers before you actually became a student?

JM: Yes, yes. Rutgers had a program at the end zone, on George Street. Kids could go up and sit in the end zone. They had seats for them to watch the football games, and I saw some of the old-timers play, Homer Hazel, and, oh, I can't think of the names now.

SI: Robeson?

JM: Who?

SI: Paul Robeson?

JM: ... No, Paul Robeson was before my time, I think, if I remember correct. I don't remember him playing, to be honest with you, but it wasn't much before that, but I saw some of the old greats, [C. Hoyt] Terrill, [E. Gaynor] Brennan, some of the real greats that played. ... I watched them play and they held their own, you know. At that time, they were playing Lehigh and Lafayette and Moravian and some of the smaller schools, nothing like today.

SI: Princeton was the big game of the year.

JM: Yes, yes.

SI: Would you go there for swimming?

JM: No, nothing like that. Outside of that, I had no contact with Rutgers at all.

SI: After you graduated from the Lord Sterling School, where did you go next?

JM: Then, I went to Roosevelt Junior High School and that was the seventh, eighth and ninth grade.

SI: Was that still in the Second Ward?

JM: No, no. I don't know what ward that's in now, to be honest with you, but I don't think it's the Second Ward.

SI: Was it further away from your home?

JM: Yes, yes, not much further. It's just maybe about two or three blocks more, further away, but it's just a ten-minute walk, that's all.

SI: This time, during the 1920s, is seen as a period of prosperity in America, just following World War I. Do you remember any of that in New Brunswick? For example, did you notice a lot of growth?

JM: Well, the Roosevelt Junior High School was built when I was still a kid, as a matter-of-fact. I played there while they were building it, [laughter] and they'd built this, the present school, around the old school and, as I say, I played there quite a bit and it was there, and through the YMCA, that I became active, very active, in basketball. ... So, I played a lot of basketball at the YMCA, and then, got busy at the junior high school level, and then, when I went into high school, played up there.

SI: What position did you play on the team?

JM: Center. I was a tall, lanky kid at the time.

SI: Were there other extracurricular activities that you were interested in in junior high?

JM: No, it was mostly basketball. ... I played some baseball, played some football, through the YMCA, but nothing [fancy], no uniforms, anything like that. We played in our street clothes, up at Buccleuch Park, under supervision of [the] YMCA.

SI: Would you just play other teams throughout the city or would you play other towns?

JM: Just among ourselves, yes, kind of an Army-Navy-type thing. [laughter]

SI: Did you have a rival that you always wanted to beat?

JM: No, not really, no. Just a bunch of us, we played together, you know, choose up sides and go up there. It was tackle football, but no equipment, no helmets, no pads, no nothing.

SI: Academically, did you start developing an interest in one subject over another?

JM: No, not really, except for phys. ed., you know, and I was just an average student.

SI: I want to ask more questions about what your neighborhood and your home were like in the 1920s. Today, homes have all these modern amenities, like electricity and central heating; what was your home like then?

JM: Well, our home, we had electricity and we had a furnace, coal furnace, nothing like oil, you know. I'm trying to think; no, no, when I went into the service, my home, we lived at Commercial Avenue, at that time, and we still had a coal-burning furnace. I remember that distinctly, [laughter] because, when I was in high school, I ran on the track team, as a hurdler. ... A couple of times, I hit hurdles and, at that time, the tracks were made of cinder, nothing like today, and, when you went down, ... I got pretty much scraped up, you know. ... I came home one time, all scraped up, having hit a hurdle and fell, and my mother was so angry, she took my whole uniform, shoes, sweat suit, (running sack?), took it down and burned it. [laughter]

SI: Was that the end of your track career or did you just have to get new stuff?

JM: No, no, no. I had to pay for it, of course, at the high school, ... but I continued and I ran track at Rutgers, also.

SI: Did you have to do a lot of chores around your home? Did you have to put coal in the furnace?

JM: Yes, up to a point, you know. Well, when I was home, I'd carry out the ashes and all that sort of thing, which ... you don't do that today. There's oil, so, you don't have that problem, but the ashes [would come out] and shake it down, so that the burnt ashes would go down and clean the bottom out ... and take them upstairs, out of the way, outside. ... Burning, then, the coal was a chore. It was a chore.

SI: Did you have other things that you had to do around the house?

JM: Well, the usual things, whatever my mother wanted me to do, take out the garbage, do this, do that, run an errand, go buy this at the store, whatever, you know, that sort of thing.

SI: Did your family keep up any "Old World" traditions in your home, such as in food or holidays? Did they speak Italian in the house?

JM: No, no. My mom and dad spoke both English and Italian. Sometimes, when they were alone, they would speak Italian, but, when my sister and I were around, always English, always English.

SI: What about food? Did they cook mostly Italian food or did they mix up your diet?

JM: I would have to say they stuck mostly to Italian food, spaghetti, macaronis, meats. My mother was an outstanding cook, excellent cook, and she could sweep up the kitchen floor and make a good meal out of it. No, she was that good, but it varied. While [there were] the spaghettis and the macaronis that we ate, not every day, of course, but it was always something different, you know, whether it was lima beans or peas or whatever, and then, a lot of the stuff that my mother made was handmade, that she cooked. ... Everything was delicious, delicious, things that you'd pay a lot of money for in the store today, that you buy frozen today, too, by the way, which you didn't have then, you see. ... Come the seasons, for instance, tomatoes, at that time, you could buy a whole basket, a whole bushel, ... of tomatoes for maybe a dollar, you know, and she would preserve them. So, we'd have tomato sauce, not bought out of a can.

SI: Did you grow any of your own food?

JM: She had a garden in the back, yes, but just stuff that she needed, like, to help with the taste of the food.

SI: Like herbs, yes.

JM: She'd grow tomatoes, for instance. Flowers, she loved flowers. Tomatoes, I think, were the big part, but not enough to preserve them, just what she needed at the time, you know, and it'd help with the cost, and then, of course, at that time, by that time, we started running into the recession, 1929, and so, she grew a lot of the food ... that she cooked.

SI: She would do a lot of her own preserving and canning.

JM: ... Oh, a lot of stuff was preserved, yes, yes, and what my dad did do was make his own wine, and, at the beginning, it was a chore. I had a pair of boots and he had a big, metal container of some kind that he threw grapes in. He bought the grapes by the box and I had to stomp them to death and they were squeezed and he made wine out of them, and, later on, they had the machine, a grinder, and made wine that way.

SI: Did he always make wine or was it just during Prohibition?

JM: Always made it. ... I'm trying to think of Prohibition; they made it anyway, and Prohibition didn't bother them. As long as they made it in the home, you know, not sold, why, and that wasn't only [my family]. Everybody did the same thing. People made beer, in their bathtubs, you know, at that time.

SI: Do you remember Prohibition affecting the city in any way? Were there any speakeasies or black markets?

JM: They had the usual speakeasies, which were permitted to function. I suppose they paid off [the authorities], you know. Everybody knew they were there, you know.

SI: Did your family maintain any connection with the family in Italy?

JM: Yes, yes. My parents constantly contacted their parents' home, in Italy, and sent clothes and money, you know, clothes that we grew out of, sent to them, because my father had a couple of sisters and her brother. His brother eventually came over and lived with us for awhile, then, married, had his own life, and, eventually, my mother's mother and her two sisters, kid sisters, [came over]. ... My mother's father died, so, when he died, then, they brought my grandmother and ... my mother's two sisters over and they lived here. My mother had a brother, two brothers, in Brooklyn, lived in Brooklyn, where ... my father and mother originally settled, and so, they lived with us, and then, you know, periodically, until they married.

SI: You had extended family around New York and New Jersey.

JM: No more. I've outlived them all.

SI: You mentioned that you were Roman Catholic. How important was the Church in your family's life and your life?

JM: Well, we were churchgoing people. ... As a matter-of-fact, when we lived on Throop Avenue, we moved down the street a couple of blocks, across the street from the Sacred Heart Church, and ... I went to church there, but I went to public school. So, we went to church, and then, eventually, I don't remember the year, but the Italians built their own church on the corner of Sandford Street and Remsen Avenue, and, of course, we joined there, because my father was instrumental in getting the church built, raising funds and that sort of thing. ... I don't go to church anymore, because I can't get there physically anymore, ... but that's where my [family went]. I was married, by the way, in the St. John the Baptist Catholic Church. That's where we were married, but, ... when I was married and after the war, we bought this property and had this home built here. That was in 1949 and '50. ... April of 1950, we moved in and, at that time, we moved from St. John's to the St. Mary's Parish, here, where I've been ever since. My daughters were married there, they were baptized there, the whole bit.

SI: Your first home in New Brunswick was at 91 Throop Avenue.

JM: Throop Avenue.

SI: Then, you said you moved further down Throop Avenue, by the church.

JM: Down the street, to 50 Throop Avenue. My father bought a home down there, sold the one up above. Why, I don't know, and then, he moved down two houses. [laughter] He bought another house on the corner of ... Townsend Street and Throop Avenue and enlarged it and had a barbershop there.

SI: In the home?

JM: In the home, yes. ...

SI: Did he sell his other business?

JM: He sold the other two houses, yes. My father did a lot of the real estate business. He made a little money by buying and selling, you know, and he was very aggressive that way. ... He bought properties in and around New Brunswick. I imagine he bought; I'm trying to think, one, two, three, four, five, six, he owned seven properties, eight properties, in New Brunswick, at one time or another, buying and selling, and he always made a profit, you know.

SI: Did he always remain a barber or did he move into real estate eventually?

JM: No. He always remained a barber and retired as a barber.

SI: How involved were your parents in community affairs and other things?

JM: Well, my father was active in the Italian community. My mother was a homemaker. That wasn't her style, ... but my dad was and he was quite active. As I say, he was active in the church, helping whatever needed to be done, raising funds, so that the church would eventually be built, and he lived long enough to see it built.

SI: He would probably have been active in Chamber of Commerce-type activities, business activities.

JM: No, nothing like that, no.

SI: More community affairs.

JM: Yes.

SI: Were there any Italian festivals, annual festivals, that sort of thing?

JM: Yes, they did. They had an annual dance. [laughter] I can still remember it, down at what was then an armory. It's now on the corner of Handy Street and Joyce Kilmer Avenue. ... I think it's a drug addiction recovery place now, but they had an annual Columbus Day affair down

there. ... That's about the size of it, but, what they did do, a lot of the families, and my family was one of them, weekends, especially during the summer, going down the shore, you know, about eight or ten of the families got together and went and they visited on Sundays, during the winter months, you know, go to this house and go to that house and they visited. They stayed together and, during the summer months, when it was warm, why, they'd go visit in the evening, you know. You didn't sit around. There was no TV. The radio came along eventually, you know, but there was no TV. ... They [would] visit each other and had companionship that way.

SI: I was curious about that, because you mentioned that your neighborhood was not an Italian neighborhood, but you were still able to maintain contact with the Italian community.

JM: No, it wasn't; yes.

SI: Was there any kind of reaction among Italians in New Brunswick when Mussolini took over in Italy in the mid-1920s? Were there any pro- or anti-Mussolini feelings?

JM: No, no. As a matter-of-fact, personally, my dad thought it was a stupid thing, wasn't in favor of him at all. I had an uncle who thought Mussolini was the greatest thing on Earth, [laughter] and it was the funniest thing in the world to watch he and my other two uncles argue, three against one. ... That's the way it was and they argued back and forth, but there was no animosity about it. It was a nothing affair, really. What was it, Ethiopia, I believe?

SI: Yes, in the 1930s.

JM: That he overcame. [laughter]

SI: After Roosevelt Junior High School, you went to ...

JM: Went to the high school.

SI: Had that just been built at the time?

JM: ... No, the high school had been built and it was built with a lot of controversy, because it was built way out on Livingston Avenue. You know where it is, where it was?

SI: I believe so.

JM: ... It was just torn down last year. ... The state was supposed to build another school there and, after they told them to tear it down, they told them they had no money and, now, it's a big empty lot. ... The local school officials are left holding the bag, squeezing some kids in where they shouldn't be, you know, scholastically. They're getting their education, but the building's not what it ought to be, and it's too bad. What happened, I don't know, but, apparently, the new high school is going to be built. I saw that in the paper, not just a few days ago, and they're going to start real soon and it's supposed to be ready by 2010 and that should relieve a lot of the congestion that the schools have now.

SI: Originally, why was it controversial that it was built down on Livingston Avenue?

JM: Too far out for the kids. There was nothing out here at all, nothing here at all, out as far [as] where we are right now, for instance.

SI: Which, now, I think of as being deep within New Brunswick.

JM: Yes, now, it's all [built up]. There isn't an empty lot in New Brunswick.

SI: From what I understand from interviewing people who went perhaps ten years after you, it was a regional high school. Kids came in from all over.

JM: Yes, yes. When I first started to teach in New Brunswick, we were receiving kids from Franklin [Township], from Highland Park, from South Brunswick, from Milltown, from Sayreville, Parlin; of course, they had a choice. They could go to South River or to New Brunswick. Some went to South River and some came to New Brunswick; Piscataway, Edison. No, there was a time when the schools in New Brunswick were bulging, to the point where we had double sessions. They were that crowded. ... Up at the high school, for instance, they had kids starting at eight o'clock in the morning, other kids starting at nine o'clock in the morning, other kids starting at ten o'clock in the morning, and getting out at two in the afternoon, three in the afternoon, four in the afternoon, in order to have room for all of them. New Brunswick was that crowded, but, then, ... Milltown sent their kids to Spotswood, Highland Park built their own high school, Edison built their high school. As a matter-[of-fact], all these schools around us now are much bigger than New Brunswick, population-wise, as far as the school population is concerned.

SI: However, the crowding you are talking about was when you first started teaching.

JM: Yes.

SI: What about when you were a student?

JM: When I was a student, ... all these kids were coming in from all around.

SI: However, it was not as crowded then.

JM: Not as much, not as much, but, every year, the enrollment went up and the schools got more and more crowded, and then, ... the WPA [Works Progress Administration] came along and the high school had an addition built, and that relieved a lot of the congestion at the high school, yes.

SI: When you were a student, what was it like to be in classes with kids that came in from far away? How did everyone get along, basically?

JM: Oh, no problem at all. No, everything was integrated. There was no, "We're from here," or, "You're from there." No, everything was integrated. You're in New Brunswick High School,

you're a New Brunswick High School student, and that was it. No, there was nothing like that at all.

SI: There was no "farm kids" versus the "city kids."

JM: No, no, nothing like that at all.

SI: You kept developing your interest in physical education.

JM: Yes, yes, so, [I] stayed quite busy with athletics. I coached freshman football, freshman basketball, and I was the head coach of varsity track, and that was all pre-war, pre-World War II.

SI: That was when you were teaching.

JM: That's when I was teaching, yes.

SI: Okay. When you were a student, you were on the track team, you were on the basketball team.

JM: Yes.

SI: You were in New Brunswick High School from 1930 to 1932.

JM: No, I graduated from [there in] 1930. I didn't go to Rutgers ...

SI: Right away.

JM: No, no. ... That was during the Depression years and there was no money and Rutgers, ... at that time, to go to Rutgers, it cost four hundred dollars. You're talking big money, in [the] 1930s, you know, and so, ... when I graduated, I went back to school for postgraduate work and, at the same time, I worked on the outside, earned some money, and then, in '35, I entered Rutgers, in the Class of '35.

SI: You entered in 1931.

JM: I went to school for two years, then, dropped out again for a year, to make some more money, and finished up in '36. I graduated from Rutgers in 1936.

SI: You started with the Class of 1935.

JM: I started with the Class of '35. I should have been the Class of '34, under normal conditions, but I wasn't the only one, you know. There was a lot of that, yes.

SI: You were still in high school when the Great Depression really began, with the stock market crash.

JM: Yes, yes.

SI: How quickly did things turn bad in New Brunswick?

JM: Well, they turned bad all over. Money was hard to come by, you know, and everything was cheaper, of course, but, still, it cost money. For instance, I worked at the YMCA, also. I got involved in that, too, and I was making forty cents an hour. ... I worked behind the desk, I worked the telephones, I worked down in the shower rooms, cleaned the showers, you know, that sort of thing, anywhere I could make a dollar, and I used to make as much as two or three dollars a week, doing that, at the same time, going to school. I worked downstairs, dishing out towels and keys to members coming in, the businessmen's organization that they had down there, and any job you could get, you'd take.

SI: Did you have other jobs? Did you work anywhere else besides the YMCA?

JM: ... While I was in high school, I also worked at a store that sold goods, cloth, that sort of thing, you know.

SI: Like raw materials.

JM: Yes, and, [for] five dollars a week, I went down ... every morning, before I went to school, and swept ... the front sidewalk, cleaned out the gutter and went to school, and, after school, I went back down and delivered [the] packages of people who wanted packages delivered when they had shopped, you know, and so, five dollars a week is what I made.

SI: Did the Depression affect your father's business at all?

JM: Oh, yes, in that, instead of getting a haircut, let's say, every three weeks, they made it every four weeks, you know. [laughter] So, things slowed down considerably. Well, that happened all over, you know. People just didn't worry about getting a haircut on time.

SI: Did you see other effects of the Depression in New Brunswick? Did you see people losing their homes or things like that?

JM: ... That, I didn't, wouldn't, know about, you know. I know times were difficult. I remember my mother taking the collars of my shirts, for instance, when it wore [out] in the back here, taking it off and reversing it, so, I could wear it further, without having it wearing back there, you know what I mean?

SI: You would have to come up with certain ways to save money.

JM: That's right, yes.

SI: Do you think you would have gone to college sooner if not for the Depression, or would it have been difficult anyway?

JM: Well, if Dad had the money, you know, and if we had the money, four hundred dollars was an awful lot at that time, ... I would have gone right away, but the money just wasn't there. So, I had to earn some money, which I did. ...

SI: When you earned this money for college, was it at the YMCA or was it at another job?

JM: No, at the YMCA, mostly, mostly.

SI: You worked there full-time for a year.

JM: Yes.

SI: When you were in high school, were people encouraging you to go on to college? Did you expect that you would be going on to college?

JM: ... People, no; that was my father's ambition. Actually, he wanted me to be, I had a choice, doctor, lawyer or engineer, [laughter] none of which I wanted, and we discussed it, and even argued about it, and I told him I wanted to be a teacher and a coach. ... As it worked out, everything worked out fine, because I became a teacher. I loved what I was doing. I went on at Rutgers and, before I went in the service, as a matter-of-fact, I didn't even go to graduation, I went in the service, I got my master's degree in administration. ... Then, when I got out of the service, I continued and ... worked on my six-year level, which is a doctor's degree, minus the dissertation, all of which raised my salaries and that was my ambition, you know. ... It paid off, because, eventually, I was asked to be vice-principal of the school, when an opening came up, and that was a tough decision, because I loved what I was doing and was my own boss in my own classroom, my own coaching. I could do whatever I wanted. When you get up there to be in administration, everybody tells you what to do. [laughter] Anyway, I ended up in administration and I retired from the New Brunswick school system, after thirty-eight years, as the principal of the junior high school.

SI: When you were deciding on college, did you ever consider any other place besides Rutgers? How did you decide on Rutgers?

JM: No, no. It was Rutgers or nothing. It was bad enough, four hundred dollars a year; at least I could live home and save dormitory money, I could eat home, you know, which was cheaper than eating [or] paying for food at a college away from home. No, there was no question about it. It was Rutgers or nothing, which was fortunate for me, because I enjoyed it and I liked it.

SI: When you were in high school, did you have a coach or a teacher who guided you or encouraged you to go on further in your education, or supported your ambitions?

JM: My track coach did, Doc (Baldwin?), but, outside of that, not really, not really.

SI: Did most of your classmates go on to a place like Rutgers or other colleges, or was it not expected?

JM: ... Most of them went to Rutgers, because it was cheaper. See, ... as I said before, you're talking about the Depression times and money was a big factor, and so, it was cheaper to go to Rutgers than anywhere else, but there were some people who went away, yes.

SI: You first entered Rutgers in 1931, the Fall of 1931.

JM: Right.

SI: What do you remember about your first few weeks at Rutgers as a freshman?

JM: Well, we had to wear beanies. I'm trying to think; there's certain places we couldn't go, not allowed, freshmen couldn't go, and we had to go to chapel once a week, and you had to go. You got a card, check in, but, ... while I was still in school, that was done away with, that being [you] must go to chapel, you must wear a beanie, and all that sort of thing, to single you out as a freshman.

SI: They stopped doing that later on.

JM: Yes.

SI: Did the sophomore class haze you at all?

JM: Oh, yes. As a matter-of-fact, there was a lot of hazing at Rutgers, a lot of hazing. ... There was still some hazing there, as you probably know, but, while I was in school, there was a tradition. Sophomores and the freshmen, I've forgotten which was which, but one group lined up on the banks of George Street and the other class on the towpath between the river and the canal. Well, one thing led to another, there were a couple of drownings in getting [across], and so, that was abolished, but the hazing still went on. When I went in as a freshman, I remember things I had to do during freshman week, which was in the middle of the winter, between terms. ... Even after, I don't remember when it happened, but I remember, one night, a fraternity house a couple of rows down from us on Union Street, I think it was the Theta Chi, they got one of their freshmen, got him all wet, in his clothes, and put him out on the roof, in the winter. If I remember correctly, he developed pneumonia and died. So, these are the types of things, you know, and I know, in my case, [laughter] ... during freshman week, they'd built ... a huge metal pan and they threw in there a lot of water, vinegar, mustard, flour, you name it. Then, they built a fire and the freshman had to take a mouthful of water and spit it out, to put out the fire there. This is the type [of] thing, just hassling, you know. ... Our fraternity was on Union Street, at that time, was the Alpha Kappa Pi. It no longer exists. It's now the Alpha Sigma Phi, on College Avenue. They amalgamated, and, in the back, in the house, it was an old mansion ... and you could come from the third floor to the first floor, down through the back steps, but they were narrow, and we'd have to carry a ladder down, [laughter] then, come back up the other way, carry a ladder, just make life miserable for you. We were told to go over to the bridge, the [Morris] Goodkind Bridge. You know where it is? crossing the Raritan, over by the theater out there, and, under the bridge, there was a box with a penny in it, "Find it," this sort of thing, you know. Unbeknownst to us, our faces were painted, all-black, and we were blindfolded and, in the middle of the night, we were driven, where, we don't know, I don't know, and dropped off and

we had to find our way home. Now, here it is, midnight, black as [anything], no moon, no nothing. You didn't know where you were, and it's just hazing, hazing, hazing. That's all it was, but, when it was over, it was over, just that week, but, during the course of the time, it cost some lives, stupid things that were done, you know, going to extremes, just like these kids today. Some of them are drinking themselves to death, you know, this sort of thing. There's this problem, what is it, Rider [University] right now, going on? [Editor's Note: Mr. Marino is referring to a Rider freshman who died as a result of alcohol poisoning during fraternity pledging in March 2007. A trial involving members of the fraternity was in progress and in the news at the time of this interview.]

SI: Yes.

JM: Yes. ...

SI: Was there any drinking back then, among students or in the fraternities, like there is now? Usually, now, when you hear about problems with fraternities, it has to do with drinking.

JM: Nothing like it is today, apparently. I would have to say I'm definitely sure, from what I read in the papers. I know, [in] my case, oh, we had a few, you know, during the big dance weekends. ... I don't even know whether they have them anymore or not.

SI: I do not think so.

JM: No, ... big affairs, and some people overdo it. Hey, that's [life], you know, everything's not perfect, but nothing like the problems they have today. ... That never happened while I was in school, by the way. A lot of the fraternities were closed down because of it [in later generations].

SI: How much control did the administration try to exert over the fraternities?

JM: At that time?

SI: Yes.

JM: Well, they had control over them, because they didn't have any real problem, you know, but, now, from what I read in the papers and what I know had happened to my fraternity, they were closed down twice, twice in about four years. That's too much, you know. Once, you're burned, you know, ... and, within four years, to be closed down again, and so, I don't know whether they're operating now or not, to be honest with you, in my case, and I've cut all ties with them, as a matter-of-fact, because of it. I get quite angry about it. ...

SI: What first attracted you to, one, being in a fraternity at all and, two, the Alpha Kappa fraternity? It was Alpha Kappa then, right?

JM: ... Alpha Kappa Pi, yes. Well, some friends that I had in high school were there and they asked me to join and I did. That's about ... it, and I enjoyed the company. It was somewhere to

go at noontime, you know, instead of running home. I had my lunches there, instead of going home, and, on occasions, for whatever reason, I slept over there, if it was warranted, for whatever reason, and, oh, I enjoyed the company and belonging to, you know, that sort of thing, and we had our parties, too, you know.

SI: From what I understand, back then, if you were not in a fraternity, you did not have much opportunity for social activities and so on.

JM: That never occurred to me. ... Well, that much is true, because a fraternity could have a party, you know, and you had a party. That's all. Everybody brought dates, you had a dance and all that sort of thing, and you could have it right in your own fraternity house, but it was a party weekend. It wasn't just, "You had one this week and I had one another week," that sort of thing. It was a weekend that the whole school had, and I don't know whether the non-fraternity people had anything going for them. To be honest with you, I couldn't tell you that. I don't know.

SI: Did you get involved in the physical education course immediately or did you decide later on to major in physical education?

JM: No, I didn't. I started as a business [major] and I was not happy about it. As a compromise to my dad, "Hey, phys. education, what's that?" you know, and I told him and he didn't approve of it, but, at the end of the year, I said, "Look, Dad..." "Look," he said, "Joe, be happy. Go, do what you want to do," and I transferred to phys. ed. and the rest is history.

SI: Do any of your professors or classes stand out in your memory?

JM: ... I had one, and, unfortunately, I can't remember his name, as a matter-of-fact. [laughter] What a sense of humor; he was great, he was absolutely great, and we became quite friendly. As a matter-of-fact, he became one of my father's customers. I've got to tell you this story, and, one day, I took my ... older daughter down to get a haircut and we were sitting there and she was reading a comic book. My father was cutting the hair of the head of the church, Monsignor Mangano, from St. Mary's Church, and his assistant was cutting the hair of this professor. ... My daughter was reading this comic book and I actually picked it up by the two ends and, [under] the weight of it, [it] came apart. "Damn it," she says. [laughter] I curled up in my seat, waiting for something to happen. Finally, the prof says, "Joe, she's got a mind of her own," and that broke the ice, but he was great. He was great. You always enjoyed going to his classes, because you learned something and you enjoyed being there, and that's why you learned something, you know, but he was outstanding, and I can't remember his name. Isn't that funny?

SI: Was he a phys. ed. professor?

JM: No, no, no, he was not a phys. ed.

SI: What did the phys. ed. curriculum consist of then? What would you do?

JM: Well, it consisted of, mostly, athletics, learning to coach, all the sports, you know, the techniques of coaching, the techniques of teaching, what to look for, what not to look for. Then,

of course, there was education, education classes, because you're also taught not only the physical angle of it, but you had first aid, you had health, you know. So, you had a lot of programs that go on, and so, it was a diversified course, and we had world history, some academic courses to take, too, you know, biology and chemistry, kinesiology, all about the body, that sort of thing, you know, because, in athletics you get involved with bodies, bones, broken bones, and all that sort of [thing]. ... So, it was a diversified program and you had all phases of it, but ... coaching techniques is what you concentrated on.

SI: You were also involved in the athletic teams at Rutgers.

JM: Only track.

SI: Only track, okay.

JM: Yes, yes. I tried 150-[pound] football. At that time, I weighed well under 150. As a matter-of-fact, when I went into the Army, I was only 135 pounds. ... I tried it, but I couldn't do the work I was doing, play football and go to college, too, you know. It was too much and I needed the money. So, I couldn't give up the job, and so, I gave up football and stuck to track. That, I could make, track, could make ends meet.

SI: Which event did you run?

JM: I was a low and high hurdler. I ran the hurdles.

SI: Do any meets stand out in your memory? Were there any rivalries?

JM: Not really. We ran against Lehigh, Lafayette, Columbia, you know, and then, we had our meets, Mid-Atlantic meets, which were held at different schools, in each alternate years, you know. Track wasn't a big thing. Bernie Wefers was the coach at that time, no scholarships.

SI: You had to leave after two years.

JM: After two years, yes. The money wasn't there for [college], so, I had to work for a year, to build up and get more money and be able to pay tuition. As I said, it was four hundred dollars at that time.

SI: You were still working at the YMCA.

JM: Yes, yes.

SI: Very roughly, how many of your classmates do you think were in a similar situation, where they would have to save up money and leave school for awhile?

JM: I honestly don't know, to be honest with you, but I do know that money was a big factor, and I know one fellow sold his stamp collection to pay for his tuition, you know. It's that sort of thing.

SI: Were there any other options, like a State Scholarship?

JM: Well, oh, yes. Some of your football players, for instance, basketball, they got scholarships. That, I know. Nothing like today, but they got partial [scholarships], and so, they didn't have to worry, and then, a lot of them, and we were one of them, a lot of the fraternities gave some of the football players their room and board and picked up the tab, for football players, and that's what it took to come to Rutgers, you know, any school, for that matter, you know.

SI: You wrote down on your survey that you were not in ROTC.

JM: ... No, I was not. I had a choice, because of my eyes, and so, I chose not to. ... It turned out, the way things turned out, to be very fortunate for me.

SI: Were you involved in any other extracurricular activities at Rutgers, like the *Targum* or anything like that? [Editor's Note: The *Targum* is the Rutgers student newspaper.]

JM: No.

SI: Any clubs?

JM: No, just the fraternity. That's all, and ... the club that the phys. eds had, because, from time to time, we met with the Douglass phys. eds, kind of a combination-type thing, you know, little affairs.

SI: Like socials.

JM: Yes. It's a social thing, to get to know each other, you know.

SI: Was there much interaction between the NJC and Rutgers campuses then?

JM: Not then, not then. ... From what I understand, there's much more so now, yes, and we had no busses like they have now, for instance, taking them from one campus to another, and where the stadium is didn't exist. Well, as a matter-of-fact, ... that stadium was built while I was in school, by George Little, who was the athletic director. He had the WPA, and that was part of our work, too, by the way. He was very enthusiastic about it and he used to take us over there, ... while they were building it, and told us about what to do, how and what, why they were doing this and why they were doing that. ... Yes, we were there when the hole was built, where the stadium is now, and how they took the topsoil off to preserve it, and they built a huge mound over here, and then, when it was built, it was brought back and the grass had [topsoil], ... no shale. You know, they had real dirt on it, grass and all that sort of thing, and he taught us a lot about building, what to look for, what to know, what to think about prior to the whole building, you know, but it was built by the WPA.

SI: You mentioned that the WPA built the addition to the high school in New Brunswick, and they built the stadium. Did you see the effects of the WPA or other New Deal programs around town?

JM: Oh, no, a lot of WPA. That was the big thing, all over the place, you know, not only here in New Brunswick, but all over the state and all over the country, I'm sure, it was built. So, I'm not familiar with what was built all around New Brunswick, but, you know, [in the] education of mine, I knew about, and the high school was one of them. They built quite an addition to it and relieved the congestion there considerably, ... but this was after the Rutgers thing. They weren't built at the same time.

SI: Did they have any NYA programs at Rutgers at the time that you were there, the National Youth Administration, giving college students jobs?

JM: Oh, yes. I did a lot of basketball officiating, at the old neighborhood house. The building is still there, but it doesn't operate that way now, but it was quite an active place. They had basketball leagues, you know, and, yes, ... I officiated a lot of basketball games at night, made money that way, too.

SI: Where was the old neighborhood house?

JM: Neighborhood house was on the corner of Baldwin Street and Commercial Avenue. It's still there. The building is still there. Now, what it's used for now, I don't know. It was a very active place.

SI: It was like a community recreation center.

JM: Yes, yes, very active, very active.

SI: Was that a NYA job?

JM: It's almost like a YMCA. They had basketball leagues and they had checkers and things upstairs, you know, and that sort of thing, that you can congregate in, nothing musical, dances or anything like that. ... Everything was a social type thing, but it was mainly basketball.

SI: Do you remember any kind of cultural events, musicals or concerts, at Rutgers when you were a student?

JM: I didn't attend them. Yes, they had them at the gym and, once in awhile, they had something at the chapel, also, when I was a student, but, you see, most of the guys that went were working, part-time, also, and so, didn't have time for stuff like that, you know.

SI: What do you remember about going to chapel? Was it an actual ceremony or was it just to listen to speakers?

JM: Yes, yes, it was a ceremony. It lasted about a half-hour, something like that. I guess that either it was the original charter of the college, or not, that was the reason for it, but, while I was in school, it stopped. I don't remember, was it freshman or sophomore year? We didn't have to go anymore, but that was a national thing. I remember, my daughter, for instance, went to St. Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana, and her first year there, she had to wear a uniform. That's a college student, and then, that was gone. Just one year, that's all, but what was strict, out there, for instance, at that time, was your hours. They had to be in their rooms [by] ten o'clock, earlier during the week. That's weekends, earlier during the five days of the week. I remember, one of her friends got back late on a Saturday night, couldn't get in. Fortunately, it was in the spring, so, she just slept outside, but she wasn't inside. Sunday, her parents were there and took her home. They threw her out of school. That's how tough it was. They were really tough. ... I know my daughter was grounded for; she and about six friends went to town and the movies. When they came out, it was a big snowstorm in South Bend. Traffic was a mess. They were late getting back. They were forgiven, but they were grounded for, I think, a month, couldn't go off campus.

SI: You might not have been subject to this, since you lived at home, but, from interviewing people who lived on campus, I know the administration almost acted like their parents, doing things like what you just described, making sure that they were in at a certain hour, that sort of thing. Do you remember any other examples of that at Rutgers?

JM: No, no. We had no limits. I couldn't tell you about the dormitories, but, of course, with your fraternity, that's something else. Kids come in eight o'clock, two o'clock in the morning, you know. You're on your own.

SI: Did you have rules in the fraternity, such as you had to be at dinner at a certain time or you had to wear a jacket to dinner, things like that?

JM: I think, the, if I remember correctly, evening meal, but not at lunch, yes.

SI: It sounds like you were very involved with the campus, even though you did not live on campus. Do you feel like you missed out on anything by living at home?

JM: Not really, since I belonged to a fraternity, you know. Say you belonged to a fraternity; you're pretty much in it, and the dances and all that. You had your own area up at ... the "Barn," [the College Avenue Gym]. Every fraternity had an area, maybe the size of this room, where they ... could stay, as a fraternity, you know, and, when you'd dance, you'd go downstairs and danced.

SI: At any point, were you unable to keep up your involvement with the fraternity or with sports to just focus on your academics?

JM: No, no. I didn't have to give up anything. I managed.

SI: In the last two years, after you had left for a year, did you just pick up again with track and the fraternity?

JM: What do you mean, my junior and senior year? Oh, yes, yes, I finished up with track in my junior and senior year, yes.

SI: It was not difficult to have that break in-between.

JM: No, no. Well, you get in a routine, you know, and, pretty much, get it organized and you're doing all right. I could handle it all right.

SI: Were you able to stay involved with the fraternity during the year you were not there?

JM: Well, as a matter-of-fact, I was on the board of directors, board of governors, after the war. When the war broke, then, I was gone and that was the end of that. Yes, so, I was involved with the management of the fraternity for a couple of years after. I was local, you know, and nearby, so, I was handy. ...

SI: Let us wrap up by talking about Rutgers. Next time, we can just go right into World War II.

JM: All right.

SI: As you were coming to the end of your time at Rutgers, what did you think the future would hold for you? Did you already have a job in mind?

JM: Well, you see, now, you're talking about, again, jobs are hard to come by, and you joined these teachers' organizations, ... send them a resume and all that, and they would try to get you jobs. Of course, you paid for it, you know, if you got a job, and so, you'd send out letters and resumes and you'd join these. They're in the educational books, magazines that they send out, that you could join, and so, I sent out a lot letters, but the funny part of it was, they wanted nobody except people with experience. You can't get a job, you can't get experience, you know. Fortunately for me, a job opened up in New Brunswick, ... and it was only for half a day, though, but I took it, you know, and I taught health at the junior high school and taught phys. ed., for just a half a day, and then, the next year, ... I got a full-time job, because the enrollment started to go up, you know. They needed more teachers ... and more classrooms, so, I got a full-time job, twelve hundred dollars a year. The second year, I got a raise, 1225 [dollars], [laughter] twenty-five dollars for a year, year's raise, but, as I say, this was the Depression years, you know.

SI: Any income was probably very welcome.

JM: Yes.

SI: What was it like to now go into teaching, and teaching in places where you had gone to school?

JM: My going to school, you mean at Rutgers?

SI: No, I meant beginning your teaching career. How did you feel about the job and did you like the job initially?

JM: Well, I loved being with kids and I loved what I was doing, and I think because it made me a better teacher. ... As a matter-of-fact, one year, after I graduated, I took a job in New Hampshire, at a boys' camp, for seventy-five dollars a summer, [laughter] but it was all mine. It didn't cost me a penny. My meals were free and all that sort of thing, you know, and I worked there for ... sixty years.

SI: Sixty, wow.

JM: Sixty, six-zero, years, minus the four years I put in ... with the service, you know. From 1937, I worked there every summer, and it has stood me very well, but I enjoyed what I was doing, I enjoyed being with kids. People always said to me, "Jeez, you're with kids all day long; how can you go to a camp during the summer with more kids?" Kids are kids; they're great. I enjoyed it and I'm very happy with it.

1SI: What was the name of the camp?

JM: Camp Winauke, Center Harbor, New Hampshire, right on the Lake Winnepesaukee, beautiful spot, great.

SI: Were there any challenges involved in your early teaching career, before the war? What was it like, being a teacher, then?

JM: Being what?

SI: Being a teacher in that time.

JM: Teaching, no. The kids were more docile than they are today. Right after the war, they became belligerent, because the law let them be belligerent and teachers couldn't do a thing about it. Prior to the war, it was different. You laid a finger on a kid after the war and you were fired. Before the war, you laid a fist on them, it was all right. You know, it was discipline, but it wasn't necessary. It was a rarity, you know, but it did happen, from time to time, ... but my particular challenge was being made head varsity track coach and [having] no team to speak of, and I had to build it, which, fortunately, I did and that was built up quite a bit. ... The track coach, when I was there, prior to when I got there at the high school, was interested only in running. The other sports, like the javelin and the pole vault and the high jump and the hurdles, he ... knew nothing about it. Just runners, that's all he had, and so, it didn't amount to anything, but, when I got there, as I said, I was coaching the football and basketball and track [teams] also. So, they made me assistant track coach and I immediately went to the football team and those that didn't play baseball, "You're a weight man," you know, or, "You're this or you're that," and I was down at [the] junior high school. ... In the future, then, I was able to pluck kids out that I recognized with talent, you know. For instance, ... they don't have them anymore, [but we] used to climb ropes, and the kid, [laughter] "You, you're a pole vaulter," that sort of thing, and I'd see a kid with a good arm, "You're a javelin thrower," you know, a kid with weight, a weight thrower, ... a

shot or the discus, and this is what you looked for, kids who were agile, quick. ... These kids that came to us from the farms, where they did a lot of walking, their legs were strong as oxes; they were milers and half-milers, that sort of thing. ... We'd build up the program. We had one heck of a program in New Brunswick and we had, for years, ... outstanding track teams. That was helped by Johnny Ragone, who you mentioned before. When I went in the service, he hadn't even graduated from college yet. He was still ... at Rutgers, but he did his practice teaching at New Brunswick and, when the teachers left, and a number of the phys. ed. [teachers left], Bill Lindstrom was another one, who was phys. ed. with me, he got to be principal of the high school and he went into the Navy. That's another story, and, anyway, Johnny Ragone took over. He didn't go into the service. I was thinking [he] almost went into the Coast Guard, but, when the time came, the war was over and that was it, but, in the meantime, he had built up a program of cross-country and winter track, which I couldn't do, because I was coaching football in the fall and basketball in the winter. So, by the time ... the spring track got ready and in shape, the season was over, you know. So, we just had pretty good teams, but, when he came along and did what he did, then, our teams were always outstanding. As a matter-of-fact, there was one stretch there where we won the county championships nineteen years in a row, and I think about twenty-five out of twenty-six years. They won a lot of cross-country championships. They won indoor championships, including being invited to Madison Square Garden, when the Millrose Games were running, all that sort of thing. So, we had powerful teams. Our problem was, we won Central Jersey championships and that's as far as we could go, because the senior dance was Friday night before the state meet and I gave the kids the opportunity to stay home and help win the meet or go to the dance. Well, they were in love. So, most of them went to the dance. ... The coaches would say to me, "How could you? You mop up the Central Jersey with lots to spare," ... and I had to tell them, "What are you going to do?" I went to the principal and asked him, because three years out of every seven years, there were five Saturdays in May, and I asked him to move the dance up one week, so that it wouldn't interfere with [the state meet]. He wouldn't do it. So, that's his [prerogative]. He was running the school; that was it. It cost us a lot of championships. It really did, and what I loved about it is that I was able, [with] a lot of these kids, to get them in school, college scholarships. I'm talking about Duke, you know, schools like that. A lot of them went to Rutgers, because of [the proximity], but, oh, ... a lot of them then went to the black schools, too. New Brunswick had quite a few blacks, and has a lot of them now, but we had a lot of outstanding athletes, I mean, outstanding.

SI: Very interesting. It really was not that developed when you started it and you really built it into a team, with John Ragone.

JM: Well, I started them. I started them down in seventh grade, and what I missed out on, those that came in from the various schools, he picked up on. So, we had a good thing going. So, when I started them in the seventh grade, by the time they got to be ninth graders, ... a lot of them ran on the varsity already.

SI: I just have one last question before we end this session. Before you were called into the service, before America got into the war, a lot was going on overseas; Hitler took over several countries and the war started in Europe. Did you follow that in the news? What did you think of that at the time, in the late 1930s and early 1940s?

JM: Well, all I knew was that, eventually, we're going to get in. That was a given, and everybody knew it, and then, ... Roosevelt came along with the lend-lease destroyers, you remember, about fifty of them, if I remember correctly, and it was just a matter of time, and then, we got a lot of help from the Japanese and that was the end of that, you know. ... All heck started, but, then, they started after us. Now, the Navy was after phys. ed. people and I went down [to] 90 Church Street [in Manhattan]; I'll never forget that. They were recruiting phys. ed. people for their naval program. ... Bill and I went down. We were teaching together at the junior high school at that time. Bill and I went down and ... I don't know how many jobs were open, but there were a number of them and there were probably, I would say, maybe, somewhere between eight hundred and a thousand guys down there, many of whom were professional football players, figuring, you know, they had an in. ... We went down there and they had so many and their [general] resume was so great, after about the third meeting, after being down there about the third time, they came out and said, "Look, anyone in here who does not have a master's degree might as well leave. You don't have a chance." Immediately, more than half dropped out. I had a problem with my eyes and the doctor said to me, "You've got to do this, you've got to do this, you've got to do this," and among the things was, "Drink carrot juice, eat carrots, supposed to help the eyes." [laughter] I had one eye which failed and the other eye passed, and I went home and my mother would cry and ... peel carrots for me, crying. [laughter] Anyway, I went back in a couple of months, took the test again. The eye that passed originally failed; the eye that failed originally passed. So, the Lieutenant took me inside to an elderly admiral. I walked in there and I said to myself, "I've got it made." He was a little fellow. ... I don't think he was five-[foot]-ten and weighed 150 pounds, but he had stripes all over. He was an admiral, and the Lieutenant said to ... the Admiral, he said [what had happened], and he explained my situation with the eyes, and this guy stood up and he says, "Out there are the Japanese. You were on watch and you didn't see them and California was bombed, because you couldn't see," and he started to lace into me. I wasn't in the service yet. "All right, sir, look, I'm just trying to get in. Don't sit there and bawl me out because I'm trying to get in." I said, "I don't have to take this. Thank you for your help," and I left, just like that, but this guy, ... here's a guy, probably hadn't been in the service for years, you know. They called a lot of them back because of the need, and, brother, he went out of his way. The Lieutenant said to me, "Jeez, I'm sorry. I didn't think anything like that would happen." "Don't worry about it." As it turns out, everything turned out very well for me, as I'll tell you later on.

SI: Thank you very much for this first session. In our second session, we will pick up with Pearl Harbor, your time in the service and your career afterwards. Thank you very much.

JM: No problem.

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Reviewed by Joseph Hou 4/1/09

Reviewed by David Kelley 4/1/09

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 4/20/09

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 4/23/09

Reviewed by Joseph G. Marino 6/6/09