

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN A. PINO

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins an interview with Dr. John A. Pino on November 15, 1999, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Sandra Stewart Holyoak and ...

Lynn Marley: Lynn Marley.

SSH: Dr. Pino, we would like to thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to come down to the university and sit for this interview. To begin, where and when were you born?

John Pino: I was born in Tyler, Pennsylvania, in 1923, January 26th, middle of winter.
[laughter]

SSH: What was your father's name? When and where was he born?

JP: Well, my father's ... name was Antonio and he was born in a small town in southern Italy, called Tuglie, which I visited, by the way, after World War II, on the 13th of June ... in 1884.

SSH: What was your mother's name? Where and when was she born?

JP: My mother's maiden name was Dolores Reino, R-E-I-N-O, and she was born in San Nicola, near the same town of Tuglie in southern Italy, and her birthday was September 19, 1894.

SSH: Okay. Do you know how they met?

JP: Oh, gosh, I don't know how they met. I know that they were married when he was twenty-six and she was sixteen.

SSH: Were they married in Italy?

JP: They were married in Italy, and they left, presumably, rather soon after that, and came to the States, and that was the last that they ever saw [of] Italy.

SSH: What year was that, for the record?

JP: For the record, I believe it was 1912.

SSH: That was before World War I, then.

JP: ... It was about the time of World War I, yes.

SSH: Do you know why they left Italy? Did they already have family here in the States?

JP: Well, during that part of Italy's history, the country was pretty poor and the ... whole southern part of Italy ... was very poor, was an agrarian kind of society. As a matter-of-fact, it was called "the *mezzo journo*," which means "the middle of the day," but, the main reason for the exodus of a lot of people at that time was the poverty, and they were looking for a new life. Apparently, there had been some émigrés and they, naturally, passed that onto others.

So, a few, including one of my father's brothers, had been to the States and had sort of established the beachhead, as they do even today, you know, when people come to the country, and so, they made the decision, I guess, which I am forever thankful for, ... to emigrate, my parents did, and it was a great thing, because traveling, in those days, was not that easy. You know, you don't get on an airplane ... and be there in twenty-four hours. It took them almost a month by ship, but, they were coming to an unknown destination.

Can you imagine the [United] States in 1912, 1914, in that era, and the ... long days of travel by ship? ... Anyway, they decided to come and I think ... it took a lot of courage to do that, I think, [especially] for a young girl of sixteen, recently a young bride. I don't know whether they knew at that time whether they would ever get back or not. It wasn't their intention, I don't think, to go back, because they were looking for a new life. It must have been ... pretty desperate, you know.

SSH: Only your father's brother was here in the United States?

JP: He was the only other member of my father's and mother's family that came, yes.

SSH: Did any more family members come over later?

JP: No, no, they didn't.

SSH: Did your parents ever talk about the family they left behind? Did you know about their brothers and sisters?

JP: Yes, we knew, and, ... as I said earlier, I had the good fortune, ... when World War II was over, and we'll get to that part, I don't want to jump ahead, but, I did meet my grandmothers, and some of my mother's sisters, at least three of them, and a couple of my father's sisters and their children, who were still there in the same towns. I mean, ... this letter describes that trip. ... This letter was written fifty-five years ago.

SSH: Oh, wonderful. Did your father have a trade when he came here?

JP: ... No, he didn't. My father was a laborer, plain and simple, that's what he did there, [with a] limited education. He went through, probably, the sixth grade. My mother probably never even had that much of an education. So, they were basically, I would say, almost illiterate. They could read, ... but, [they were] not educated.

LM: Did your parents speak English when they arrived in this country?

JP: Not a bit.

LM: Did they learn the language as they went along?

JP: Well, this is one reason why they sort of accumulated ... in groups, in areas where others

[were], so they could be with their own kind. ... As I said earlier, you find the same thing happening today. Spanish-speaking people accumulate in areas where there are Spanish-speaking people, and it means that they at least can get along with their own kind, but, they are not very good with the language.

SSH: Where did they first arrive in the States?

JP: Well, they, ... apparently, like everybody, came to New York, came through Ellis Island. I'm doing the history of their arrival, you know.

SSH: Great.

JP: My daughter's very much into that, and then, from there, by train, they went to western Pennsylvania, ... in the coal mining region, where there were jobs waiting. I mean, ... if you read some of the histories of that period, employment agencies, railroad people, mining companies, and so on, were practically at the docks offering these newcomers a job, which is what they wanted. So, they got the backbreaking jobs of mining, and [clearing] timberlands, and railroad building, and [working in] steel mills, and all that sort of thing.

SSH: Your father went to work in the coal mines.

JP: He went to work in the coal mines and, basically, that was what he did for most of the time, ... until I was born [for] about five more years and that would be about 1930. So, he worked almost twenty years in the mines.

SSH: Do you have any siblings?

JP: Yes. ... All of them were born in the same town in Pennsylvania, Tyler, except ... the youngest one of the children. There were eight of us, four girls and four boys. The oldest was a girl. ... In fact, the three oldest were girls, and then, the next four were boys, and then, there was another girl, so, ... it was divided that way, but, all of us were born in Pennsylvania, basically, except for the last one. She was born in New Jersey, where my parents had moved.

SSH: What was it like to grow up in Tyler, Pennsylvania? I assume that you went to school there.

JP: Well, I was ... still pretty young. I was still under five and I've been back there. You know, you kind of go back to these places and there's really ... nothing much there. [laughter] ... It was a small mining town. It had the country store and everybody worked for the mining company, ... who owned your soul, you know. That's the way it was in those days and all I remember is hilly, woodsy areas. We used to pick huckleberries, we called them, blueberries, in a little can hung around our neck, up in the mountains, and the only other basic thing that I remember is that our house burned down.

SSH: Oh, no.

JP: Yes, the whole town caught fire one night, and I remember being carried away from our little house by somebody, and we went to live with relatives until we had another place. ... Well, you remember little things, like, picking up the coal from the tracks, the spilled coal, for the [fire], little things like that, but, I don't have very deep memories, except that some people lived down on the one side of the track, but, ... they were all part of the same community, a mining community. ...

SSH: Were there any other ethnic groups represented in the Tyler mining community?

JP: I believe the only other ethnic group that I recall them speaking about was Polish people.

SSH: Did your father ever join a union or talk about unions?

JP: ... Well, they might have had that. I'll tell you, I don't think the unions were very strong at that time. ... The companies just ran everything and ... I don't think he, [my father], got involved in union affairs very much. You know, they were ... very humble people and they were glad to have a job and bread on the table. [This] is what their main objectives were in life, you know, not how much they could earn, or overthrow the company, or anything like that. They were a very, very humble kind of people.

SSH: After the fire, you remembered going to live with relatives. Did you stay with your father's brother?

JP: No. ... It wasn't my father's brother, but, it was ... another man that had a big house, and I guess we all, you know, crowded into this house. We had a cow, I remember that. My mother used to provide us with milk from the cow, and the cow came with us, but, other than that, I don't remember a heck of a lot about how long we stayed there. I know we stayed there for a while, because my mother even ... took care of boarders, you know, because there were a lot of ... single men coming to work from the other country, and they needed a place to stay, and they just worked. They worked hard and long hours, and all they had was a place to flop down and sleep, and then, somebody to feed them, so, ... there was a lot of that going on, too.

SSH: Was your family involved in any church or social activities?

JP: ... There was a church. I should remember the name of it. I don't remember. I think it was St. Mary's, and the older ones used to go to church, and my oldest sister was the one. I remember her being in school. I don't remember where she went to school, ... because Tyler didn't have [a school]. I don't think we had a school, yet. They might have built a school later on, but, the older ones went to school. I mean, this was in the normal course of things until, I guess, ... she had done her elementary school, and then, she was helping with the teaching in the school, in the elementary school. So, that was a beginning, but, she didn't go beyond elementary [school].

SSH: Did your parents want all of your brothers and sisters to go to school or did they encourage them to go to work at a certain age?

JP: Well, I would say ... there was not the tradition of going to school, you know, and it was expected that you'd go to work and contribute to the family. ... This was the way it was in the old country, it's the way it is ... still in some developing countries, and that's why they have big families, to take care of the old people, and raise the young ones, and all that kind of stuff, and that was the way it was. That was the culture they came out of.

So, while it wasn't prohibited not to go to school, it was expected that, you know, when you were old enough, you'd have a job and contribute to the family. That was sort of the expectation. Now, I don't remember any specific edict that everybody was expected to go to work, but, we had a work ethic, and even after we moved from Pennsylvania, and this is probably where I get my agricultural background, my father, with my uncle's help, bought a small farm in New Jersey, northern New Jersey.

SSH: Where was this?

JP: ... It was in Totowa Borough. I don't know if you're familiar with that.

LM: That area is quite urban, now.

JP: ... It's quite urban now, but, it was a wonderful place to grow up, because I basically lived there, from the age of five until ten, on a farm and we had everything. We had cows, and chickens, and fruit trees, and all of that, and that was another phase of life, when I began ... to remember, sort of, my own growing up, you know, at that stage, because the memory of Pennsylvania is a bit dim, except for some of these major things.

SSH: Where are you in the birth order?

JP: I'm number six.

SSH: Okay. Did all of your siblings move to Totowa Borough?

JP: Everybody came to Totowa Borough, yes. Everybody came and lived there, and, let's see, ... if I was five, if you just go up in a progression of two, almost, ... the oldest was about eighteen, my oldest sister.

LM: Were you brought up speaking both Italian and English?

JP: Oh, yes. ... Now, that's an interesting point, because the Italian ... that my parents spoke was a dialect and Italy, at the time of their growing up, was fractionated into provinces and small towns. Everybody had their own dialect. The one thing that Mussolini did which was a good thing, ... he standardized the Italian language, and, even today, if I'm speaking ... with a relative, which I sometimes do, one of my cousins, if I speak Italian, I sound like ... I'm a hick, you know, because they can hardly understand me anymore, and they laugh ... at some of the words I use, but, that was ... the Italian we learned. ... I can understand all the modern Italian, and I read it, but, I don't speak it very well, because I learned the dialect, and it's terrible.

SSH: You said that your father's brother helped your family buy the farm in Totowa Borough. Was he also a farmer?

JP: No. ... He had apparently settled in New Jersey, in Paterson, and he became a barber. He had a barbershop. He was the one that sort of was the entrepreneur at the time and it so happens that ... I think it's his [my father's] oldest brother, one of his brothers, anyway, whose name was Luigi, also was a barber in Italy. He stayed there. So, barbering must have [been] sort of a tradition there in their family, but, ... my father's brother ... was here in New Jersey and had a barbershop in northern New Jersey, in Paterson.

... He was sort of more familiar with the comings and goings of modern economic and political life, you know, because he was in contact with those kinds of people, but, no, he was not a farmer. He didn't know very much about farming. ... It was bought at Depression prices, of course, and it was lost at Depression prices. My father couldn't pay the mortgage.

SSH: That was going to be my next question. How did the Great Depression affect your family?

JP: Well, it impacted [us] very seriously, because my father tried to make a go of the farm itself with, basically, poultry, as a matter-of-fact, and it was terrible. I mean, diseases would wipe you out, and prices of eggs would be low, and I remember, at that point, that we, ... some of the kids, would ... deliver eggs, house-to-house, to some areas. We had customers and so on, but, eventually, that collapsed, because he couldn't keep up the payments on the mortgage, and they foreclosed, and so, he left the farm.

SSH: Where did you go after that?

JP: We went to the City of Paterson and he became, again, a laborer in factories and whatever other labor that was available. That was the time I was finishing up grade school and I graduated ... from Public School No. 3, it was called, I mean, in a tough neighborhood, you know, I mean, ... in a town where you had a mixture of ethnic groups. We were all in the same boat, Irish, Italian, Jewish, black. So, I graduated there ... in 1936. I was thirteen. Now, that's the beginning of sort of the ... professional aspects of my life, because it was ... in grade school, the last year, that I got oriented to studying agriculture, in high school, because one of the teachers there had come ... to the grammar school and spoke to the class, you know.

... Now, here, this was where the question of, you know, "Do you go on?" of your house, your culture, and some of my other brothers and sisters [were already at work]. My oldest sister was working. ... My next oldest sister was working already. They did not continue school. The third sister, she was also working at that point. ... My older brother passed away during that period, right after we moved to the city, because he had been born during the big flu epidemic of the early 1900s ... and his heart was affected by that.

... I was getting to the age where, you know, I could either be going to school or get out and work and so on. ... I think they recognized that I was a little more inclined ... to study and I was smart. I think they recognized that. ... In grade school, I was the chief of the student police department. [laughter] So, you know, there's some indications that you've ... got something there, and so,

when I went to high school, of course, they let me go to high school.

... There were three wonderful Ag teachers at that time that sort of guided you, you know, Mr. Woelfle, ... he was a Rutgers graduate, by the way, and he played an important role, later on, in getting me in Rutgers, and Mr. Potter, I remember these teachers very well, Sepanski was the other one. Sepanski, I think, also was a Rutgers graduate. The program was divided into two parts. ... You either took what they called the “9-3” and prepared to go to college or you took what they called a “6-6,” which was geared to students who mainly were farmers or children of farmers.

... So, I took the 9-3, the science end and sort of a college preparatory [curriculum], though I didn’t know [it]. At that point, I think ... my interests were in teaching, because, when I graduated high school, I said that I wanted to be a high school teacher. That’s sort of what I knew I wanted to do. So, I was heading in that direction and how I got to college, well, ... that’s part of this process. Anyway, it was breaking with that kind of tradition, ... ‘cause none of my other brothers or sisters did go to school beyond high school.

SSH: Even your youngest sister?

JP: None. I was the only one.

LM: Growing up in Paterson, do you remember listening to Lou Costello on the radio?

JP: Oh, yes, of course, Lou Costello and Bud Abbott, Abbott and Costello, yes. ...

LM: Every night, he said good night to all of his friends in Paterson.

JP: Yes, right, exactly. Yes, Paterson ... had it’s heyday. It was a silk city. It was ... an industrial town, basically, had jute mills, and people worked in the factories, again, much of the labor ... being immigrant labor. ... We had groups of immigrants, ... a lot of Irish and Italian, in my neighborhood, where I grew up after I was ten years old.

LM: Which section of Paterson did you grow up in? I am familiar with the area around Sinatra Street.

JP: A section called Dublin. [laughter] ... You know, it’s been wiped. The section I lived in has been wiped away by ... Highway 80, [which] went through there. There was ... the Lackawanna Railroad. That went right along side the Garrett Mountain. As a matter-of-fact, when we were kids, I wondered why I never became a mountain climber, ‘cause we climbed the sheer face of this mountain to get up to the top ... from the side of the mountain where we lived. I mean, we were kids and we crossed this railroad. I wonder, now, why we never got killed or something. [laughter]

SSH: Was the Lambert Castle there by that time?

JP: The Castle was there, yes. The Castle was there, yes.

LM: They are renovating that, now.

JP: Are they? Well, that was a town, and ... it had a market, it had a farmer's market, which I was familiar with, because, in my agriculture course, we ... had to work, in the summertimes, on farms to get skills ... in agriculture. ...

SSH: As a high school student?

JP: As a high school student. I mean, this was ... part of your curriculum, and so, either the teachers would help you find a job or you'd find your own job, and, every summer, I worked.

SSH: Where did you work?

JP: On a farm up in, ... what's the name of the valley? It was up on top of the mountain and on the other side of the mountains. Mountain View is one place that I worked. There were a lot of farms, small farms, there and Preakness Valley ... was full of "truck farms," they called them then. They produced vegetables for the Paterson Market and New York, and I would sometimes go into the market, you know, early in the morning with the farmer, and watch them sell their produce and all that. It was fascinating.

SSH: Did you live with the farmer?

JP: ... No, I lived at home and that was another thing. I did an awful lot of walking in those days, from my home up to the farm, which was probably a good ten miles, up there and back. I have to tell you a little story about that, because ... I would get up early. This one morning, I guess it must have been too early, it was about four o'clock in the morning, ... and it was just so early, I decided, ... you know, I didn't have to be up yet. So, I curled up on a rug ... by the kitchen sink, and my mother heard me, I guess, stirring around, and she got up, and she immediately got frightened. She said, "Johnny, what's the matter?" I said, "Well, it's too early to go to work." ... She was pretty scared [that] ... something had happened to me.

... Yes, those summers were ... an interesting experience. I mean, you worked. You started at ninety-five cents a day. I worked up to a dollar and twenty-five cents a day, yes, a day, [laughter] and, with some of that money I saved, I had 125 dollars in the bank by the time I came to college.

LM: That is quite impressive.

JP: ... I mean, they were tough days.

SSH: Where were your siblings working at this point?

JP: Most of the sisters worked, probably, in factories. ... I don't really know what their work was, but, they were in [the factories].

SSH: Were they all living at home still?

JP: Yes, except, now, my oldest sister, by the time we moved off the farm, ... she became married. She was married to a man who happened to be a bus driver, and that's what he did all his life, and she had three girls, and they have done well. One is married ... to Dr. Guy Bush, who is a very well known entomologist, works at Michigan State, I guess it is. ... She went to college and all that.

... Her sister, this is my oldest sister's second daughter, became a nurse, and she married a doctor, and they live in Pennsylvania. They've got loads of kids and they're quite a successful family. ... That's the way it was, and the others, my second sister, who has since passed away, my oldest sister passed away, too, and the other kids, they were just normal, you know, average people.

SSH: Did your family ever play or watch any sports?

JP: One of my brothers played ... with the street team. We used to go up to the park every Saturday and Sunday, [to] watch these kids. They played without helmets, without shoulder pads. [laughter]

LM: Did they play football?

JP: They played football. Yes, they were football players. ... I never had it real easy at sports. ... I was not athletic. I mean, I just wasn't, nothing, baseball, or swimming, or anything.

SSH: Did anyone play a musical instrument?

JP: I played the saxophone for a while and I guess I was the only one that did that. I learned how to play the saxophone while I was in high school.

SSH: Did your mother ever work outside of the home?

JP: No, she never worked outside of the home. She was a home mother. ... I tell you, raising eight kids, I don't know how she did it, I don't, [laughter] incredible.

SSH: You were studying agriculture in high school. How did you become interested in coming to Rutgers?

JP: ... Well, I was taking the science courses, ... physics, and all the rest of the history, and all the basic courses that one would need ... to prepare for college, and, again, ... it was Mr. Woelfle, the head of the department there, who took me and Davie Grunes, who became a professor at Cornell, a Jewish boy from Paterson, and brought us down to Rutgers. He says, "You guys need to go to school, so, I'm going to take you down." He brought us down. I mean, you know, I didn't know about colleges and all that kind of stuff. We didn't have that tradition. Nobody had been there. Nobody spoke of college or of careers. ... I just followed the natural inclination of what I had been doing and that was, basically, the agricultural orientation. I don't know if I'd do

that again, if I had known better, but, ... I don't regret it, but, Mr. Woelfle brought us down and introduced us around the school. ... We decided, "Well, maybe we ought to go down to Rutgers." I never thought of going anyplace else.

So, we applied and were accepted in the Ag School, and ... that's how come I came to Rutgers, but, it was only because a high school teacher took enough interest to bring me down, because I doubt whether I would have wound up in college, because ... I would have followed the tradition of, "Well, it's time to go to work," or something, like ninety-nine percent of ... my high school class did. ... I really don't know [of] anyone [else who went to college], ... maybe a couple of ... other people in the class. At that time, college was not a great option.

You know, people were still poor. I mean, we had lived through a pretty bad depression and, if you were eating, I mean, literally, [you were well off]. You know, you didn't buy clothes. ... As I said, a dollar and a quarter a day, a day. ... I mean, adults didn't earn too much more than that. ... So, college was sort of a luxury for many of the immigrant children families. They just didn't think about that. They went to work. I mean, I remember, the O'Neills, and ... name all the kids I grew up with, they all went to work, and I, Johnny, went to college.

LM: What was your family's reaction to the fact that you wanted to go to college?

JP: Well, I think, ... actually, they were very proud in a way. ... You know, I was the only one. ... I mean, in a way, I was different, because ... I was light haired. I was blond, then. My other brothers and sisters were all sort of your ... coloration, with brown eyes and so on. So, I was sort of the "white sheep" of the family. [laughter] I always did things different, you know, and ... I guess my family expected me to be different, for some reason or another, and so, when I came off to college, I mean, I knew that I couldn't expect a heck of a lot of financial help, but, I had the moral support to go, to come, and, you know, ... I'd come home, bring all my laundry, and eat well for a while. ... [laughter]

LM: That has not changed much. [laughter]

JP: That hasn't changed much, and my father would sometimes help me out with, you know, ten, twenty dollars, whatever he had in his pockets.

SSH: What was your father doing at this time?

JP: At that time, ... no, he wasn't retired, yet, but, ... he was doing labor work, basically, still. ...

SSH: Was there an area that he worked in frequently?

JP: No, not really. He didn't have any retirement. You know, he had no retirement, because it was before the days of retirement. So, he worked ... just about until he couldn't work anymore, and then, ... mostly, well, that gets into the time of the service and all that, too. ... That comes in a little later, but, I started in 1940, the Class of 1944, of course, and I started ... with my own money. I rented an apartment in what was called, then, we called it, the "Zoo House." There was a house right next to, what's it, St. Peter's Church, right over here?

SSH: Yes.

JP: ... It was a boarding house. I mean, it must have had about twenty kids in it, I mean, crowded in rooms. Mrs. (Rosenfelt?), I think, was the landlady's name and that's where we lived, right there. You know, we'd cook our chicken soup or whatever it was.

SSH: Were you rooming with the young man from Paterson?

JP: Davie Grunes, I think ... he was one of my roommates, but, ... there must have been three or four other guys in the room, too. I mean, it was as low a rent as you could get. We had the money to pay rent. [laughter]

LM: Privacy was not really an option, I guess.

JP: No, no.

SSH: When you came down from Paterson with Mr. Woelfle, did you meet any of your future professors?

JP: ... You know, I really don't recall who the professors were, except Professor Helyar, who was sort of the Dean of Men, and ... he kind of sticks out. ... They didn't really grab a hold of you in the Ag School until sophomore year, because you were kind of a general student in the beginning. That first year, most kids took, I guess, the same stuff.

SSH: What was it like to be an entering freshman at Rutgers in 1940?

LM: Did you experience any hazing? Did you have to wear a dink?

JP: Well, yes, ... learning to be on campus, and then, I think, perhaps the thing ... that impressed me more than anything else is, ... I knew that there were kids on campus who knew what college was all about and sort of behaved like, you know, they knew what it was about. Here I was, I mean, like a foreigner, again, you know. This was my first time on campus and, "What's college life all about?" I didn't even know what a fraternity was, and I see these guys living at fraternities, and, "These must be the wealthy guys," you know, and you didn't envy them, particularly, but, you realized there was another kind of student around.

... You made friends, ... and you hung around with the people that you could hang around with, ... and worked, and that's what I started. ... I had to look for jobs, too, keep myself alive, because ... there were a lot of days when you just ate a can of Campbell's tomato soup, you know, and crackers, but, you know, that was okay.

SSH: Where did you work?

JP: Well, where did I work? The first year, I didn't do too much. ... I found a job, and that gets into another part of my life, but, I found a job working in the department store downtown. You

know, I'd work in the afternoons, in the stock room and things like that, anything to earn a few bucks. ... The first year, as I say, ... I didn't do too much outside work, because you were pretty busy with studying, you know, ... getting accustomed to ... just the whole idea of how to study and ... look up stuff in the library. I mean, this was kind of a new world for me, you know. So, first year was kind of tough. It was kind of tough.

LM: Did you ever have a Professor Archibald in the Ag Department? He was one of the big Ag professors here.

JP: Not in that first year, I didn't.

SSH: Did you ever meet Dean Metzger?

JP: Oh, yes.

SSH: What was your impression of him?

JP: Dean Metzger was ... a Mr. Chips of Rutgers. I mean, he ... kind of permeated your life in a way, ... because he had sort of your moral good at heart. ... Maybe he was a preacher, I think, and, you know, he'd get us into Kirkpatrick Chapel and all that, and so, I kind of looked up to him ... as a very important person on the campus that helped to maintain the whole college atmosphere, you know.

... President Clothier, wow, he was ... way up in the clouds, ... not that he was up in the clouds, but, I mean, I visualize him as a man of huge importance and he was a distinguished person. I mean, he spoke well and ... he was a campus president, you know. I mean, I admire these people and I think ... I learned to grow up respecting authority, anyway, so, these were authority figures that you respected, you know.

SSH: What did you think of mandatory chapel?

JP: ... Oh, I went to chapel and I went to church, right next door. [laughter] ... So, I did both. Yes, I'm Catholic, obviously, and so, the church was right there, next door, that was handy, and the chapel was across the street, here, on Queens [Campus], so, that had no problem. I think it was good. I think it still should be mandatory.

LM: I do not think that we would all fit.

JP: No.

SSH: Did you join the Newman Club or any other on-campus clubs?

JP: ... Yes, I joined the Newman Club. I'm not a joiner, generally speaking. I mean, even today, I don't belong to the Rotary or to the veterans' organizations. I'm just not a joiner, but, I did join the Newman Club. I don't remember what we did. Basically, we went to meetings, occasionally, and had some discussion, but, I don't remember that we did very much, maybe,

partly, because I was not that active, but, I did go to their meetings, but, ... it didn't result in any long lasting impression on me, particularly.

SSH: Did you attend any of the dances?

JP: Only later on, I guess in my junior and senior year, I guess after I had met the woman who became my wife. [laughter]

SSH: We will ask you about her in a minute. Were you awarded any scholarships?

JP: Yes. The second year, ... I was awarded a state scholarship, and, probably, if I had applied earlier enough in the first year, ... I might have been able to get something, but, I didn't know anything about [it], and, you know, you really need somebody to sponsor you, but, in the second year, I did get a state scholarship, not a heck of a lot of money, but, it paid tuition and that stuff. So, that was good, and then, in the second year, I got ... something else which was very important, and I think I got this through Professor Helyar, basically.

They had rooms and space on the Ag Campus, they still do, I guess, where they stuck kids in corners, you know, to help them out, and they gave me a room in the Poultry Building, upstairs in the attic of the Poultry Building, and that was a godsend, because, there, we could cook our meals and ... we worked off our rent, so to speak. We took care of the furnace, and burned up all the chickens in the incinerator that they autopsied, and things like that, but, having that room was really a godsend, and ... I think there were six of us in the Poultry Building, and they were spread out through other places ... around the Ag School, the Piggery was one of them, the Entomology Building was another one, and Phelps House, and places like that.

LM: Since you were so close to NJC, did you date any of the Coopies, as they were called?

JP: I dated a couple of Coopies, and then, after I dated the one girl, ... as I said, I quit dating the NJC girls, but, ... I mean, here, that's something else. ... I mean, you don't know what it's like not to have very much money. I mean, when you don't have a buck in your pocket, ... if you date a girl, what do you do with her? You know, you've got to take her out for an ice cream cone or something. I mean, so, those were tough times, but, there were ... nice girls that we went out with.

LM: Were you involved with the ROTC for your entire Rutgers career?

JP: ... Well, as an undergraduate, yes, ... everybody took ROTC for two years, I think, and then, ... in 1942, when December 7th came along, well, you know, the whole world changed then, and one needed to think about what he was going to do, and we knew we were going to go into the service. ... As a matter-of-fact, I tried to enlist in the Navy Air Corps. I went up to Newark and even had an exam, which I failed, and I never went back. The guy said, "Go home, and rest," or something, "and come back," but, I never did, and so, I decided, I went to the ROTC at that point, which I joined, and stayed in for the third year.

LM: Do you remember where you were and how you found out about the attack on Pearl

Harbor?

JP: Yes. I was in my room, upstairs in the attic in the Poultry Building, and we all heard this, all the guys up there, and we said, "Oh, this is it." I mean, it was ... a somber moment, but, we knew that, ... sooner or later, we'd be heading out.

LM: Did you see the campus atmosphere shift from the gay college milieu to a more militaristic demeanor, with the mandatory gym program and the accelerated curriculum?

JP: Yes, that came on, originally, quickly, ... because the college soon was used for training people, and so, we recognized that there was a change on the campus. Yes, it was ... sobering, but, you know, from there on, in a sense, a lot of the things you had to do, you did sort of, almost, in a blur, because some of the stuff you didn't want to really have to think about, but, you worked hard. ... You knew that you had to go as far as you could get in college and, fortunately, ... I was able to complete my third year of classes. ... I still didn't know where I was going to be or wanted to do, except I had this vision of teaching someday, and so, the military changed that. ... We became part of the advanced ROTC. We were inducted as privates. ... From the 20th of September of 1940 'til '43, I was an ROTC student. ...

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

JP: They took us in as privates, I guess, and we were mobilized, but, we didn't immediately go off campus. I don't remember an exact date when we first went to basic training.

SSH: As a senior in high school, were you aware of what was going on in Europe at that point?

JP: I don't think we were aware very much, ... not before 1940. ... I knew, at least, that there were a lot of things happening in Europe ... from 1933 on, that Germany was becoming strong, and they were gobbling up territories, but, we didn't really relate it too much to what significance this had for us, but, we knew things were happening.

SSH: At Rutgers, do you remember any demonstrations for or against intervention or any discussions of FDR's policies?

JP: No, not that I recall. You know, I think ... the general feeling was, you know, "We went through big World War I and here we go again, here's another war," and people were not very inclined to do that. We knew there were ... some groups in the United States, in fact, that were sort of pro-German. We'd hear about little groups that were rounded up, occasionally. We didn't know whether Mexico was going to be with us or against us. I knew that. That was something that we were all aware of, and then, we knew about the Lend-Lease sort of thing. This was the way we were going to help.

... Unless you were more directly concerned with those things, I don't think ... one followed the evolution ... of how we, eventually, were brought into it, and, of course, until, smack, ... we had Pearl Harbor, and, of course, even today, you don't really know whether that was engineered to get us into the war, because we had to get into the war. I mean, things were going badly for the

Europeans. We knew they were losing. We knew that the British ... were on the ropes, and, in spite of all of the ... so-called Lend-Lease that we were giving [them], they were not going to hold out.

SSH: Did your family discuss Roosevelt and his New Deal programs? Were your parents for or against him?

JP: Well, I think, generally, they were for him, because there were ... social welfare programs. The WPA was the Works Progress Administration, which gave a lot of jobs ... to people that didn't have any jobs, and, of course, the general public viewed that as being good. There were jobs for young men, the CCC camps. In fact, my brother, older than I, went to one of those out west and they were, you know, digging trails and whatever they did in the CCCs. So, government programs were coming on stream at that time and I think, generally, they were viewed, at least by the working class of people, as being very desirable kinds of things.

... I can't remember too much of myself being aware of politics. Being in school as a student, I guess I was pretty much concerned with, you know, keeping myself alive and studying, but, you know, you knew what, sort of, was going on in the world, ... until it came close, and then, we knew then that we were going to be affected directly.

SSH: Immediately after Pearl Harbor, was there any talk around campus of enlisting right away and trying to get into the action or were you all counseled to wait?

JP: No, I think ... many young men just went off. I mean, they volunteered or they were drafted. Some of them went and volunteered, because they could [then] get into the service that they chose, rather than wait for the draft, and that was partly my intention. Many of them went into the Navy ... or other branches of the service. Many of them would do almost anything other than the Army. I mean, nobody wanted to go in the Army. Of course, that was what we were in, ... this Army infantry thing, but, ... one knew that he would be going, sooner or later, and it was a question of, in what capacity would you go?

... I guess most of us thought, "Well, we'd rather go as an officer than as an enlisted man and, maybe, have ... some advantages as an officer," but, we knew that infantry officers were highly necessary and needed, so, we didn't have any illusions about what we would be winding up doing.

... There was a, you know, tremendous mobilization. ... I mean, everybody was either called [up] in the draft [or enlisted] and ... I don't think students necessarily tried to avoid it. They just knew that, at some point, they would be going in. In a way, it was a question of trying to finish up a semester or a year, so that at least you had that under your belt, and, fortunately for the group, my group, the Class of '44, we were able to finish up our third year, which was ... a big help ... after we came back.

SSH: Did you go to school during the summer?

JP: No, ... we were in military training. I think we were still here on campus. ... That's

something I don't remember clearly, exactly, the dates, but, as I recall, while we were here on campus, waiting to go off ... to basic training, we had military classes and instruction here, marching around and all that, but, ... we didn't take regular classes at that point.

SSH: Where did you do your basic training?

JP: Fort McClellan, Alabama.

SSH: Can you tell us your story after leaving Rutgers?

LM: And becoming the Black Fifty?

JP: And becoming the Black Fifty? [laughter] Yes, well, ... they mobilized us, of course, and then, ... sent us all to basic training, and, [on] the 19th of March, ... we were ordered to active duty as privates.

SSH: What year was that?

JP: ... 1943, and that was the ASTP here at Rutgers. We were here for a while. So, we completed our junior year, which is right. In June, fifty members were sent to Fort McClellan. That was the first place for infantry basic training, and some went to another place at Camp Crowder, and so on, and some other places. Now, that was ... the trip where we got the name of our group, because they sent us down on the trains that were ... coal locomotives, and, of course, it was hot. It was June, and so, as we chugged our way South, opening the windows and all of that, we arrived on the base there [laughter] looking like coal miners, you know. ... So, when we got off, off boarded, off-loaded the train, I don't remember how the saying goes, as it's recalled here, that the sergeant said, "You're the blackest bunch of guys I ever saw," and it was mainly because of the coal, you know. It wasn't because we were African-American. We were just black. So, that name stuck as the Black Fifty.

... They put us in battalions for training purposes, basic training, with other groups of college students. Some were from Texas, some were from New York City. I mean, ... it was a mixed bag. ... We all kind of leaned on each other to survive basic training, because it was tough. Basic training was tough and not only did we do the normal basic training, but, thirteen weeks was when they ... gave people basic training, and then, shipped them out to their units. Well, we got our first basic training cycle, and they weren't ready to take us at the Officers' Candidate School, so, they gave us another basic training cycle, and then, I think we came back to Rutgers for a time, and then, went back, again, ... to our Officers' Candidate School.

SSH: Where did you go through Officer Candidate School?

JP: The infantry school was Fort Benning, Georgia.

SSH: I assume that before this rather slow train ride through the South, you had not traveled very far outside of the New Jersey area.

JP: Well, you know, the only traveling I had done was in, I think it was, 1941, the summer. It was after my freshman year. We knew the war was coming, I guess. We had rationing and stuff like that, and two kids that I grew up with, Ed Campbell and Al (Koly?), friends of mine from New Jersey, we decided that, if we were going to do anything, we'd better do it now, and so, we decided to cross the country, and we bought an old Ford car, it wasn't a Model T, quite, but, ... I think it was a 1937 model or something like that, and we drove across the country, all the way to California, in that thing, and slept outside, in the woods, and on the highway, or wherever we could, and we went 8,500 miles that summer, the three of us, drove down along the coast of California, all the way down into Baja California, Mexico, not too far in, and then, down through ... [the] Grand Canyon area, and down Texas, and then, back. So, we did that during that summer. ... How we managed to do it, with gas rationing and all that? I don't remember, but, still, we did it. So, that was ... the extent of my travels, ... getting back to your question.

SSH: Did you try to find work at all while you were traveling across the country or did you have enough money saved up to just keep traveling?

JP: ... Well, we had enough saved, I guess. We didn't eat that much. We would ... buy stuff for breakfast and sandwiches, and, I mean, we had enough, I guess, not very much, but, we managed, and we did ... one thing, one time, that was ... a little bit scary, almost, but, we were ... outside of Reno, Nevada, I think it was, and we went up to a place called Big Cottonwood Canyon. ... One of the two guys knew this place, and it was way up in the mountains, and, as we were driving, we were up in the snow line.

... As we were going up there, we came across this orchard of these huge, big, (Oxhard?) cherries. It was just out there, you know. ... We were pretty hungry that morning, so, we were out there eating our weight in cherries. [laughter] ... Pretty soon, we hear this man say, "Hello, boys, you having a good time?" We just about dropped dead and we said, "Yes, sir, we are. We are picking some cherries and having them for breakfast." He said, "Oh, well, ... hey, pick a box of cherries you can take with you." He was so nice a man, and so, we did. I mean, these were huge, absolutely beautiful cherries, but, that was an interesting experience, ... as far as helping to eat.

... As I say, we were spending very little, except on gasoline, and, fortunately, the doggone car held out pretty well. [laughter] I mean, ... we loaded all our junk in there. I still have pictures of that trip, but, anyway, you do these kinds of things.

... Part of this whole military thing here, in my own life, I think it was very important ... in learning the fact that ... you can be like the next guy. You can do what they can do. I think, for a man, that's very important, that you're equal to your peers, and, as I look back on my military history, I think that was one of the things ... that probably was as important as anything that happened to me, that you could survive the rigors the same as the next guy, you know, and it was rigorous. If you ever had any doubt about it, you were put to the test, and so, I think, in that way, it helped create some kind of ... self-esteem, you know. It was important. ... I mean, it was tough.

I mean, basically, any of the guys that will talk to you about their basic training, I mean, I think

they could have run us over with a tank and we could have survived. We were tough. I mean, the trainers had no mercy. These were college kids that they got, you know, when we arrived. "We're going to show these college kids," "Ah, college kids, huh?" because they were used to dealing with ... regular troops, and these were some rednecks from down South and that sort of thing, but, ... they were good for us.

I mean, they toughened us, and not only that, ... we became their pride and joy. First of all, we knew how to march like crazy. I mean, we could march better than anybody around, [laughter] but, not only that, they put us on forced marches, and we performed, and we were ready to go. They'd call you in the middle of the night, "Okay, everybody, form up and we're going on a hike." Well, okay, you'd get your pack and you'd go. They treated us rough, ... no favorite treatment, because we were college kids. We were, in fact, I think, treated more roughly than anything else, but, it was good for us, because it gave us good training, good discipline. Anyway, we did that.

We went through the basic training business until we finally got to Officers' Candidate School and our group was a little bit split up, because, I think ... in the one class, they took the men in the alphabet whose names ran up to M, or N, or something like that, and there were a half a dozen or so of us who went into the succeeding class. So, we were separated that way, but, that was the beginning of a separation, because, after candidate's school, then, everybody was assigned ... to their unit.

SSH: Were you ever given any liberty time while you were stationed in the South?

JP: There's not much to do off base, not in that place, like, Fort McClellan. I mean, these towns, they were military towns. All they had was bars and prostitute houses. I mean, you know, ... some of the guys talked about going to, where would they go? Anniston, I guess. Anniston was the name of the town, but, some would go farther away, if they had a longer weekend, just to get to where they could see some action, I guess, but, ... that didn't attract me. I didn't go far off the base.

LM: When you did leave the base, how were you received by the local people, being a military man?

JP: Well, I mean, that's all that was around, was military people. [laughter] So, you know, the people lived off that. I mean, all the people around these camps were involved with the military. So, they were pretty accustomed to having the military around.

SSH: Had you met the future Mrs. Pino by this time?

JP: Yes. ... She was sort of my girlfriend at that point. We were engaged.

SSH: How and when did you meet her?

JP: In New Brunswick. She was working in the same department store where I worked part-time and we met then and started dating. She was a local girl. She was in New Brunswick High,

and so, we dated, and then, ... well, just to follow that up, ... we got married, actually, at Fort Benning, when I graduated.

SSH: Really?

JP: Yes. So, we probably accelerated that, because I knew I was going overseas and she knew I was going overseas. So, I guess we made the decision, "Well, you know, you may not come back," and all that kind of stuff. So, it was probably not a wise decision. [laughter] ... Hey, I was twenty-one at the time, 1944, yes, twenty-one, and so was she. So, we decided to do it.

SSH: Did her parents come down for the wedding?

JP: She had only a mother. No, she didn't. Her mother ... was sort of an invalid at that time. She didn't live too long, and so, ... Edith came down alone.

SSH: That was a pretty brave thing for a woman to do in 1944.

JP: Oh, yes. Oh, you better believe it. She came down on a train, too, but, there were ... other women coming down to see their men, some of them married or some of them, you know, but, ... she had never traveled [before] and it was ... quite an experience for her. I don't know. I mean, to think back, you know, you did foolish things during the war.

SSH: Where did you get married?

JP: ... We married in the chapel at Fort Benning and my best man was a man by the name of Ralph Pino. ... He was in one of the other companies. He was a man from Massachusetts. He wasn't a relative or anybody I knew, but, ... his name was Ralph, and his name was Pino, and he became my best man. I don't know that we had a best girl or lady, but, it was a short ceremony, and I went back to camp that night, that day, ... after the ceremony.

LM: Did she stay in Georgia?

JP: Yes, she stayed until we graduated, and then, ... we came home for a short leave, and then, she stayed home while I went on assignment to Camp Shelby, to my unit in Mississippi.

SSH: What was your assignment at Camp Shelby?

JP: They assigned me ... to a rifle company. It was C Company, the 273rd Infantry, First Battalion, and I became the executive officer in that company, and ... that company, that whole division, the 69th Division, which is this one, was getting itself ready to be sent abroad. So, ... we were filling up the slots to bring it up to strength before it went abroad.

LM: How did the Army train you to envision the enemy? What was your personal vision of the enemy?

JP: ... Oh, we had a pretty healthy respect for the ability of the Germans. ... I mean, they were

winning wars. They had powerful troops, but, at that point, the tide was beginning to turn. I mean, the war in Africa had licked the Germans there, but, we knew that they had strength still. ... Then, of course, there was the relationship about the Japanese, and the Russians, and all of that. So, we knew that it was going to take a heck of a lot of effort on the part of a lot of people to bring the enemy down. I mean, they were shooting rockets. I mean, these were ... new weapons. So, we were dealing with a powerful, powerful enemy. We knew that. We hadn't really learned too much about the atrocities at that point. ... Maybe it was known, but, ... I don't believe I was really much aware of the atrocities that we learned about later on, but, we had no illusions about an easy war or anything like that. ... I mean, it was scary.

SSH: What were your duties as an executive officer?

JP: Well, your job was to overlook a lot of the administrative stuff, the management of the troops, the supply activities, do everything that a company commander couldn't do, work with individual soldiers, soldiers that had problems, you know, relationships ... with other units. You were like the vice-president of a [company], you know, the executive officer, and I was young, you know. I was only twenty-one, and then, coming into this company, of course, there would be other soldiers, some of them almost old enough to be my father. I mean, there were older men and a mixture of all kinds of people, which you had to help form into some kind ... of a fighting unit.

SSH: Do you think that most of your men were literate?

JP: Well, I think most of them were literate, but, some barely so. ...

SSH: Were they from all over the United States?

JP: All over. ... We had people from the South, we had people ... from the cities. They were from all over.

LM: With such a melting pot, as the executive officer, how did you go about creating cohesion among your men?

JP: By orders. [laughter] In the military, you don't have to worry about convincing anybody. I mean, it's a little bit different, and, of course, most of that discipline, I mean, it was discipline. You just did it "the Army way" and that was the job of the squad leader, the platoon leader, the platoon sergeant. I mean, they just ... carried out the discipline and informed the [troops]. ... I mean, it was just your job to evaluate whether these people are doing their job.

I didn't have immediate responsibility for the individuals. That was done by the [unit leaders], because, after all, it's the units that the men work with, the relationship between the guy and the guy next to you, almost. Beyond that, you don't care, because you know that your life depends on these two guys in this unit. So, you become very, very localized in your thinking and ... as long as the sergeants and the platoon leader knew their men and built that kind of cohesion in his own men, that was what you had to expect, ... as far as the company level was concerned. ...

SSH: How many men are we talking about?

JP: Well, there would be four platoons composed of four squads and a squad would be anywhere from thirteen to fifteen people, depending on what kind of squad. The rifle squads, I think, were thirteen people. The weapons squad was something different, but, each platoon had about sixty people. So, you're talking about 240 people in a company, 240 men.

SSH: How long were you in training there before your orders came in?

JP: About three months.

[Editor's Note: Dr. Pino asked that the following addendum be inserted at this point:

"For an additional perspective, please see the article entitled, "My US Army Experience During WWII," written by a man in my company, George Gardin, Company C, 273rd Infantry Regiment. His article appeared in Volume 53, Number 3, of *The Fighting 69th Infantry Division Magazine*. The relevant part begins on page 44 and ends on page 51. The ex-soldier did a good job of describing the activities of our company. I do not remember him specifically, but, I did know some of the men he wrote about, Lt. Schuler and Sgt. Pavlik."

End addendum. Oral history resumes.]

SSH: Was that normal?

JP: Well, ... of course, the unit had been there and I don't know how long they'd been there, getting themselves [ready]. I was just thrown in ... with fillers, you know. I don't remember when that particular unit, the 69th Infantry, was activated. It probably tells it in that book, but, ... they were pretty far along in their preparations for mobilization of the full strength of the unit, I mean, with artillery and all the other units that they had to have. Ours were the infantry units.

So, it wasn't unusual. I could have been in the unit for months and they could have been sent off, because, presumably, I had training, you know, and they needed people. So, you could have gone directly from officer's school, or basic training, right, [and be] shipped out to the front.

... Three or four months was not unusual. ... The determining factor was the ... preparation of the unit, whether it was full strength, had all of its men, not so much whether they were combat ready, but, that's what they said, "Combat ready," which meant, basically, having your men and equipment. So, we were ... shuffled off to Fort Dix, I guess as a unit, whenever that time was. I don't remember that. ... Well, anyway, it was ... the Fall of 1944 when we began to [move out]. Okay, this was the 15th of August, 1944, to the 26th of March, '45, executive officer, Company C, ... 273rd Infantry. ... Well, that covered the period from the time I arrived there ... until the end of the war, practically.

SSH: From the South, you were moved to Fort Dix. Where did you depart for Europe from?

JP: From Fort Dix, they took us by train, and then, they took us to New York, our port of

embarkation, where the ships were, and loaded us up. Again, that's described in here, in the history book. They put us on Liberty ships, yes, and took us across. ...

SSH: Do you remember the name of your Liberty ship?

JP: No, no, I can't. ...

LM: Were the Liberty ships Merchant Marine vessels that had been commandeered by the Army?

JP: No. ... The Liberty ships were specially built vessels. ... They were called Liberty ships because they were rapidly built, something to stay afloat. ...

SSH: Troop carriers?

JP: Troop carriers.

LM: How were your accommodations?

JP: Spartan.

LM: As an officer, how many people did you share a room with?

JP: Well, probably ... a couple hundred. I don't know.

LM: Were you separated from the enlisted men?

JP: Yes, but, that didn't mean very much. Yes, troops ships were spartan, jammed with GIs and equipment. Well, I don't know, they don't have the name of that particular [ship], but, you know, they were just ordinary ... ships.

SSH: Did you come over in a convoy?

JP: Yes, we came over in a large convoy. ...

SSH: When did you become aware of where you were going?

JP: ... Not until we came up to Dix. ... I mean, we didn't know, when we were in Mississippi, whether we would go ... to the Asia Theater or to Europe, but, ... we were pretty much sure that it was the European Theater, because that was where things were going badly, and so, then, when they shipped us up to Fort Dix, of course, we knew that that's the way to cross the Atlantic, and I mean, crossing ... the ocean in a convoy, one thing you're aware of and knew about was the German U-boats. I mean, that had received a lot of play, because we lost so much of our shipping. So, you felt lucky if you got across there without any incidents, and then, of course, everybody was sick, naturally, but, they got us to England okay, and that was our staging area, because that was where the combinations for all of this movement to Europe were.

SSH: Where in England did you pull into first?

JP: I guess it was Southampton, and then, we went to a town ... near Andover where they had ... facilities ... specifically for these kinds of organizations, you know, the military, Quonset huts the called them.

SSH: When you were in England, were you able to get any liberty time?

JP: Yes. I managed to get to London once.

SSH: Did you?

JP: Yes.

LM: What were your impressions of London? It had been pretty well bombed by that point.

JP: The impressions were that everybody ... was, you know, very busy. I mean, everybody was running around. I mean, there was ... a lot of activity, military, particularly, and that was where you'd go. You'd go to a USO place or something like that, and the British people were, of course, busy staying alive and all of that, but, ... I mean, the town ... was kind of a devastated place, because of the bombing and all of that. I mean, you realized that here are these people [that] are really toughing it out, but, this was the beginning.

This was sort of your initiation into a war zone. I mean, this was a war zone. Now, you really were in a war zone, and, of course, there, at our base, where we were located, ... we knew that things were going bad. ... We were near an airfield and there were ... a lot of airplanes coming in. These were hospital ships, hospital planes, with a lot of wounded, and that was about the time of the Battle of Bastogne, way down there, so, ... there were a lot of casualties coming in. ...

SSH: As an officer, how and when were you informed about the D-Day invasion? You were still stateside then.

JP: ... Yes, yes. We knew this was the big invasion, and we knew that that had taken place, and that was, of course, before we got there, and, of course, we were all hoping that this signaled the beginning of the end, and, at that point, everybody was kind of looking for Christmas [to be] kind of an end of the war. It didn't happen that way.

... Naturally, if you're going ... into a military confrontation like that, the weaker the enemy the better. I mean, you know, ... it's going to be tough anyway. So, that was an important event, that that had taken place, and that the US troops were moving along fairly well, ... until they had this counter-offense by the Germans, and that was about the time ... that we were pushed to get into the [fight]. In fact, according to the history here, they took quite a large number of [our men], about 2,500 of our troops, to send them there immediately, because they were in such need ... of soldiers, and then, ... they refilled our division after we got over on the Continent.

... A lot of that, you know, you kind of lived from day-to-day, in the sense [that] much of it is a blur in my memory. ... At that point, I was doing a lot of [administrating]. I was also appointed as the censor for the company, so, a lot of my time was taken having to read all these letters that these guys were sending home, you know, and blocking out this and cutting out that, you know, ... not that you paid much attention to what the guys were writing, because, you know, everybody's writing the same stuff, "I miss you," and ... all that kind of stuff. ... According to what you were told to do as a censor officer, any indication of where you were or what you were about to do had to be cut out. So, that was one of [the] things I remember taking a lot of my time while we were in camp, waiting to be shipped over to Germany, or to Europe.

SSH: How often did the air raid sirens go off?

JP: Out in our area, not very frequently. We were ... sort of out in the country.

SSH: What about during any of your visits to London?

JP: I just ... did the one. There were no air raids then.

SSH: Just the one?

JP: Yes, just one time I got to London. I've been to London many times since then.

SSH: From Andover, where did they send you to go across the Channel?

JP: Again, I think they sent us down to Southampton, ... to ships, and that didn't take very long, once we got on.

SSH: When did you go over to the Continent?

JP: ... I'd have to look at this thing to remember. Yes, we went on January 22, 1945.

SSH: Okay.

LM: How often were you able to receive mail or get in touch with your wife and family?

JP: Well, you got mail, regular mail, but, you know, ... you didn't have telephones. [laughter] You didn't make any toll calls and you'd ... write frequently. I sent a lot of letters. You'd write. You didn't have much else to do, you know, in your spare time. You didn't have television to watch or anything like that. ... The military became a hurry-up-and-wait kind of a thing, ... you know, and it was just preparation, preparation, "You men, are you ready?" and keep your equipment clean, and all of that sort of thing.

SSH: Did you have an officers' club or any source of recreation?

JP: Not really. In town, in London, there were, you know, officers' clubs, and then, they had these shows that would come around, occasionally, and I think, maybe once or twice, we went

into the local towns around there. You'd go to a local pub and you were always treated well, you know, I mean, as a soldier. These people were desperate.

... I think, in a way, they were ... not ambivalent, because, you know, the Americans were overpowering. You'd come in there, you kind of took over, and the British were naturally hospitable, but, ... [laughter] they'd rather have the Yanks home, you know, but, they were nice. I mean, the people were nice, and, at the USO clubs, ... they went out of their way to try and make it pleasant for you, because they knew that, you know, they wouldn't see a lot of these guys. They didn't see a lot of their own.

SSH: Did you have any interaction with the British military?

JP: No.

SSH: It was strictly American?

JP: Yes.

LM: What about Rutgers men? Did you ever run into any of your classmates?

JP: No. I had never run into another one. After the war was over, Crandon and I ran into each other, somewhere in Germany. I don't remember. Crandon remembers that better than I do, but, that was the only other Rutgers person I ran into.

SSH: Can you tell us about crossing the Channel?

JP: Yes. Well, when we went over, ... it was a rather rapid crossing, uneventful, particularly. We got there fairly quickly, and we came into La Havre, and they loaded us onto trucks, and ... this was late [in] January. It was cold as hell, and we were in open cattle trucks, standing up, hovering, and [they] took us to ... our first assembly area, and we stayed there. I have to revert to some of these notes here. ... Yes, we got in the trucks and [they] took us to another location in France, an all-night ride, and then, on the 24th, the morning of that morning, we arrived at the first location there, still in France.

LM: Did you cross during the day or during the night?

JP: It was at nighttime, as I recall, and then, we moved to another place, to Belgium, where they put us into trains, what they called the forty-and-eights, then, which were sort of the same trains they used to deport ... the Jewish people, on these cattle cars, and then, they took us closer to the front lines, which was in Belgium, and that was where we then began to get into the theater, the operational theater.

SSH: Do you remember your first day of actual combat?

JP: ... The most that I remember about that, I'll tell you, ... when they put us "in the line," so to speak, in a position, I remember going in, and, as we were going in, the unit that we were

replacing was coming out, and I will never forget ... the look on the faces of these people that were coming out. I mean, they were exhausted. Their eyes were sunken. They're scared. They don't say anything and I knew that we'd be coming [out] like that.

LM: Do you remember which division you were replacing?

JP: It was the Ninety-Ninth Infantry. ... It was frightening to see these guys, because they were coming out ... of an intensive period of fighting, and it was cold, snow on the ground, there were a lot of dead bodies around, still, in the woods, animals covered with snow. So, that was ... the first impression of getting in where the real war was.

... So, our units occupied positions in ... the Siegfried Line, as they called it there, with pill boxes, in towns that were being destroyed, and the Germans were still fighting pretty strongly, and this was your [introduction to combat]. I mean, you know, you go in with everybody else, nobody's ever been in combat before, and so, it's a terrible experience. You know ... somebody's going to shoot you, or somebody's going to get killed, and there were a lot of people killed, young. ... Some of them even were replacements that came in the unit rather recently. They just didn't survive. I mean, they talk about the expenditure of second lieutenants, I mean, privates were just ... about as expendable, or worse.

LM: On the front line, how often were you able to have hot food? Were you living mostly on C rations?

JP: We had hot food, ... quite consistently, in fact. I think the military did a magnificent job of keeping the soldiers really well fed, [except] ... for when you were on marches or ... you had to move from one location to another, you were eating C rations [then]. Most of the time, your kitchen unit kept up with you pretty well.

LM: Did you have a chaplain traveling with your unit?

JP: We had a battalion chaplain.

LM: Was he present on the front lines?

JP: Oh, yes. He was up ... there, pretty much, and we had a medical doctor that was up with us. ... Yes, he was a young man, the chaplain. I think he was a Catholic, as a matter-of-fact, the one chaplain, but, those people pretty much stayed with us.

SSH: What were some of the battles that you participated in?

JP: Well, the two ... that we had, ... the Rhineland Battle ...

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

SSH: This continues an interview with Dr. John Pino on November 15, 1999, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Sandra Stewart Holyoak and ...

LM: Lynn Marley.

SSH: We were asking you about the battles that you were in.

JP: Well, the military records show ... two battles. I had two battle stars. One was the Rhineland Battle and the Central Europe Campaign. So, those were two and those were, ... basically, the last two great military events of the European War.

SSH: Were they mostly in Germany?

JP: In Germany, yes. See, ... we were in Belgium at the time, and then, from there, moved into Germany, which was adjacent. ... Probably the one vivid memory I have is ... when you're getting shot at. [laughter] Our troops were on the move, and the Germans were firing at us, and we came under heavy fire from some of their tanks, and we knew the tanks that the Germans had were very powerful. They called them "88s," and our unit was receiving fire, and I remember all of us diving for whatever cover we could. ... You'd look for any kind of a hole to get into, and then, it stopped, and we moved on, but, it was frightening, I mean, to really be receiving fire. A terrible incident happened in those first days. A whole platoon from B Company was lost when a satchel charge accidentally went off just before the unit went on patrol.

Well, I don't know that there were any other [incidents], ... you know, as we marched along from town to town. We were in this one town again, and some military vehicles, some of our own, were moving along the streets, and one backed off the road. I was just around the corner and coming out of a house, and this truck ran onto a mine, and it blew up. You know, ... you were lucky not to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. So, a lot of the ... things that happen to you is because you were in the right or wrong place at the wrong time, but, you know, things moved ... fast after that.

Then, from about that point on, when the unit was moving fairly quickly, I was hospitalized. I developed a strangulated hernia and the doctor said I should have it taken care of. So, they sent me to a field hospital and I had that [treated]. ...

SSH: Where was the field hospital?

JP: In France, and by the time I got back to my unit, they had moved way forward, practically up to Leipzig. ...

LM: Before you were sent to the hospital, how often were you able to take a hot shower?

JP: [laughter] Not very frequently. ... It's hard to even remember when during that period you had a chance to get back and take hot [showers], but, there were times when you'd get back, and just dump all your clothes, and get new clothes, wash up, and then, ... you would do the best kind of bathing you could in these towns, when you had a little respite. [laughter] You would kind of dab ... under your arms, [laughter] but, everybody is smelling about as bad. [laughter] ...

LM: It sounds like the Army has that slogging-around-in-the-mud image for a good reason.

JP: Yes.

SSH: How was the weather at this point?

JP: Well, ... it was winter, of course. It was cold. You know, you were cold. You know, again, this is where ... the kind of basic training you get [matters]. I mean, you have to be tough. I mean, you were out in this cold, sleeping outside, you know, like an animal in this cold, and, I mean, you survived, and it impresses you that you were alive, you know. Your feet are cold, your hands are cold, and then, when you managed to warm up a little bit, it kind of goes away, and a lot of things you don't think about, because other things are more important.

You know, your men are important all the time. You're running back and forth, you know, seeing how they are, getting them billeted, getting them up, and getting food to them. I mean, you know, you're so damn busy all the time that you really don't have time to think too much about your own comforts, so to speak. So, your days are long, your nights are short. ... Just to clean, occasionally, to shave and brush your teeth, maybe, [were comforts].

LM: Did you ever encounter men intentionally not changing their socks or doing other things to receive the "million dollar wound?" Did you have problems with that in your unit?

JP: Not really. I don't think so. ... You know, it's amazing how men ... respond to being a part of something, whatever it is, and there's a certain pride in being a man, and, I mean, we were all scared. I mean, anybody that denies that they weren't scared is just, you know, [full of it]. I mean, we were scared, scared, because, you know, a whizzing bullet past your head ... is something to be afraid of. So, everybody was afraid.

... On the other hand, there was a certain pride in knowing that you were carrying your weight, that you were part of the group and being able to do it. I mean, ... there were breakdowns, occasionally, sure, but, most of the time, I think, most of the men were just absolutely incredible, incredible. I mean, they lived up to being what they had to be. Nobody wanted to be there, but, you know, they were basically honorable men. They were loyal and they were doing a job that had to be done. We all knew that.

SSH: Did you interact at all with the local people in, first, Belgium, and then, Germany?

JP: ... Not really very much, because, in Belgium, there were not too many civilians around, for that matter, that we could interact with. ... As we were in our first staging area in France, ... we saw some of the local people, but, you know, these were people that were frightened themselves. ... They didn't have much contact. They weren't outgoing as much, ... and they were minding their own business and trying to stay alive, and, again, they were a very small part of what we assumed was the population, because people had moved out of the war zone, but, some people stayed in their areas. It was not until after the war was over that you began to see, you know, some of the civilian people.

SSH: As a man with an agricultural background, did you ever look at the landscape and think of it as anything other than a battlefield?

JP: Well, you couldn't help but look at what was left of some of the fields and wonder if these were ever going to be farms again, or anything else, but, that didn't play very much of a part in my thinking at the time, [laughter] I must admit. I never really got into any of ... the agriculture activity. I mean, I didn't see much agricultural activity.

SSH: You were there in the winter, so, that makes a difference, too.

JP: Yes. Well, you see the barns, the way some of them carried on, but, more of that came after ... the hostilities ended.

SSH: Can you name some of the towns that you traveled through as you left Belgium?

JP: Miescheid, Gieschied, Reiferscheid, ... they were the three that were in our way and we had to get through. That was while I was with them, and then, there were ... other, larger towns as the unit advanced, but, you know, ... in a way, it's hard for people down at the level of a company to have a real grasp on the broad picture. I mean, I look at these maps that we have now, and you sort of place yourself ... where you were in that totality of the military scheme, but, when you're fighting your sector of the war, that's about where your attention is. So, it was ... hard to know the movement of some of these other units.

SSH: Did you ever see any black troops?

JP: No.

SSH: What about in the trucking units?

JP: You know, having mentioning that, it seems to me I recall, one time, experiencing a trucking outfit. Maybe those were the guys that moved us ... after we got into France, members of a transportation company, but, other than that, I had no [contact with them]. ...

SSH: Were you part of what they called the Red Ball Express?

JP: No, but, I knew the Red Ball Express existed.

SSH: You said that you were very focused on the sector that you were in and your job there, but, were you able to find out anything about where your brothers were serving?

JP: ... Both of my brothers, one was next older to me and the one was next younger to me, both of them were in the Navy. One was on a destroyer, and the other was on an aircraft carrier, and they were both in Naval action in the Pacific, but, I didn't know exactly what they were doing, because we ... weren't communicating with each other directly, then, but, they saw action there. Fortunately, both of them came back home, but, the one was [on] the aircraft carrier USS *Independence*, I think he was on that, and they saw a lot of action, and Jimmy, my younger

brother, ... I think he was on the USS *Vincennes*, which is a destroyer ship.

SSH: Did your parents work on any of the homefront war effort initiatives?

JP: No.

SSH: When did you find out that the war had ended in Europe?

JP: Well, I had just gotten back to my unit, and ... we got word that the war was over, and, of course, we knew that the Asian War was still going on, and, shortly after that, they broke up our units, rearranged them and all of that, and what they were interested in doing, then, was moving as many people from the European Theater that they didn't need across ... the ocean and over to Asia.

So, shortly after that, I was separated from my unit and sent to ... a mobilizing center, which was in Antwerp, and that was where a lot of first and second lieutenants, and, you know, the kind of guys they needed [were sent], and we were waiting there to be shipped back to the States to be sent to Asia, and while we were there, the war in Asia terminated. Well, we were almost halfway there and halfway back. So, unfortunately, they decided they would leave us in Europe and we were all reassigned to different units again.

So, I went back ... to Austria and participated in the occupation troops at that point. It was a completely [different] unit, completely different duties, and it was just kind of keeping people busy and doing [that] sort of thing until they got things organized with the troops coming back home from the other theaters. So, I spent nine months in occupation duty.

SSH: What were your duties during this period?

JP: One thing they had me doing, ... I was in Salzburg, in Austria, and I was responsible to collect up what they called "the chemical warfare material," and most of that consisted of gas masks and things of that sort. There were warehouses full of this stuff. So, what I had to do was see that this all got loaded, ... I think we were using POWs then, on trains, which were shipped over to the Atlantic coast, I think, and they were dumped in the Atlantic Ocean, but, I did that for a couple of months. ... They called me a chemical liaison officer, it was a fancy title, and then, that job finished. ... They assigned me to a company that was located in a small town ... outside of Salzburg, just to sit in occupation duty in the American Sector. ... The Russians were on the other side of that town. So, I spent some time there, you know, ... just in occupation duty, just patrolling and that sort of thing.

LM: Did you ever encounter any displaced persons?

JP: Oh, yes. ... There were a lot of [DPs]. What we saw a lot of was caravans, ... and a lot of them, Hungarians and Czechs, going back in horse drawn carriages and stuff like that, a lot of those kinds of people who had either been working for the Germans either as, not slaves, but, indentured people, kind of. ... Some were professional kinds of people as well, finding their way back.

SSH: When did you first encounter prisoners of war? Were you involved in taking any prisoners of war?

JP: ... Constantly, you had prisoners of war and the biggest ... volume of those came largely [towards the end]. There was a trickle of them when ... I was with the unit, before I went to this hospital thing, but, a large number of them started coming in ... when the Germans were really giving up, and things were moving very fast, and large numbers were surrendering, and then, as we got closer ... to the union with the Russian troops, there were a lot of Germans spilling into the American Sector to give themselves up, but, those were handled. Usually, they were dispatched quickly to other units that handled, specifically, German war prisoners.

SSH: Did you have any interaction with the Russians?

JP: Yes, at this site. ... We'd go up to the border and meet with the guards, but, that was, you know, just say, "Hello," and check with them, but, there wasn't any interaction, particularly, with them, not at that point.

SSH: When you encountered the Germans that were pouring into the American sector, was it obvious that they did not want to be under Russian rule?

JP: Oh, yes. They were absolutely terrified of the Russians. They were afraid of Russian atrocities. We knew that the Russians just took everything that was not [bolted down], even that they'd take the toilets and stuff like that, [laughter] but, they were treated pretty harshly by the Russians. I mean, the Russians suffered a lot, and some of their behavior was a little bit understandable, but, the Germans were frightened, because they knew that they ... had also treated the Russians pretty badly, and the Russians suffered tremendously, tremendously. ... So, the Germans ... knew that they might wind up in Siberia and be lost forever. So, they would do anything to get to [the American Sector]. I mean, even the civilians, they didn't want to be in the Russian sectors and that was a big problem, probably a bigger problem than the soldiers, because the civilians didn't want to be under Russian rule. So, you were burdened, I mean, ... the civilian authorities were burdened, with a lot of people that didn't live in the area. ... It was German. So, it was a problem.

LM: Did you have any apprehensions about the Russians yourself?

JP: Not really, except, there's a different mentality. The people at the level that I dealt with ... were not political people. I mean, they were just rough and tough soldiers, pretty much the same as ... they would probably describe our people, just rough Americans, you know, from out of the backwoods. Well, you imagine these guys were from the same farms, and hills, and so on. ... So, you weren't talking to poets and musicians. [laughter]

SSH: When you were in Salzburg, did you take advantage of the city's culture?

JP: Yes. I saw my first opera in Salzburg, *The Masked Ball*. ... It was wonderful. It was a nice city to live in. I wasn't there very long, but, they had the opera house there, and I guess I went a

couple of times, and these were ... artists who were also kind of returning, and so on, but, they got ... the opera house going, the symphony, and an opera company, and, as I say, I saw my first opera there.

SSH: Did you feel that you had good medical care in France? What was your experience in the military hospital?

JP: ... Well, I didn't have anything really serious. I certainly wasn't wounded and there were wounded there in the hospital. I mean, there were people there ... with pretty bad wounds. ... I mean, you almost felt like you shouldn't be there, I mean, you know, a hernia in wartime. Well, the doctor didn't want me to strangulate with this thing. ... So, I felt that they were competent. ... I mean, they seemed to be able to do anything there that they could do anywhere else, but, who is to judge? You know, this is what you had to do. ... I don't know if it was a hospital or some kind of a building which they had converted to a hospital, but, they were treating a lot of [men] who were wounded there as well.

SSH: Did you think that they had the proper amount of staff and supplies?

JP: Yes. There were a lot of nurses. They were good doctors. ... I never had trouble with the operation they did on me, so, I guess it was okay.

LM: Did you speak with any of the wounded soldiers there?

JP: Yes.

LM: What were your impressions?

JP: ... One had been a glider pilot who had taken a bullet in the butt, ... but, he was in good spirits, and [there were] others that had wounds here and there, and except for the very serious ones, who would be evacuated, I thought that, you know, a lot of them were quite brave in the way they felt. Certainly, they had no question about ... the medical attention that they were getting.

SSH: You mentioned earlier that you became aware of the atrocities when you were in Europe.

JP: Yes, because ... one of the first locations that they sent me was in this occupation thing, because they were moving us around quite a lot, and one of the towns I was in was Linz, in Austria, and they had a couple of these smaller camps. I don't know [if] it was a labor camp or an interment camp, but, we knew that there had been people there that had been interred, and ... it was obvious what they were. I didn't see any of the places where they had the ovens and all of that, but, a lot of these atrocity stories ... became known to us after the war.

SSH: Was that when you first heard about it, after the war?

JP: Yes, that was the first [time], yes.

LM: Did you see any of the “walking skeletons?”

JP: No. ... We didn’t see those and I didn’t see them.

SSH: Did you have any contact with the Japanese-American troops that had come up from Italy?

JP: No, no. ... There was one officer who was with the First Division that had been with them in Africa and all of that, that I had met, and survived, because he had a tremendous turnover, but, everybody had a great respect for that division, the First Division, but, ... other than that, I had no contact with [Japanese-American soldiers.] ...

SSH: Did you rub shoulders with any of the famous people that we have read about?

JP: Like who?

SSH: Did you run into Patton or Eisenhower?

JP: [laughter] Oh, no, no, no, I didn’t. ...

SSH: Some people have stories like, “I saw the top of his hat.” [laughter]

JP: No. ... I don’t remember seeing any of those people, either the British or the Americans. No, it’s rare to see people like that, you know.

SSH: Did you see any USO shows, before or after the war?

JP: Yes, before the war, I remember there was one, but, I don’t remember who the heck it was, and I remember going to another one after the war. You know, these people came through and entertained, and got a bunch of the guys together, but, other than that, I really don’t remember much of the details about that.

SSH: Did you have any dealings with the Red Cross? Did you ever need to call on them for help?

JP: No, not so much. We knew they were there, we knew the Salvation Army was around, and ... they provided a lot of care and comfort, you know. I mean, [they were] sort of ... your link with people instead of the military. Other than that, I didn’t have too much, you know, other interaction with the Red Cross.

SSH: Did you get any R&R while you were in Europe?

JP: Well, yes. ... This was after the war was over and I was in-between these assignments when I took ... the liberty to go down to Italy. I was in Austria at that time, located in this town of Lofer, and they said ... I had leave time. So, I decided, well, I would go down to Italy, and it was the first leave that I had taken, and so, ... they loaded us up into ... a two-and-a-half ton truck, and drove us through the Brenner Pass, through the Alps, and down to Milan, and, from Milan, ...

they put us aboard a train and [we] went to Rome.

... As I was in Rome, I said, "Gee, you know, I'm in Rome, maybe [I should] see if I could find some of my people?" ... While I was at the hotel in Rome, I met up with this Air Force lieutenant. We just were having a drink or something, and we were talking, and he was located on the other side of Italy, in a town called Bari, which was not too far, and I said, "Bari?" I said, "You know, my people used to talk about Bari," and his Air Force unit was there.

So, I was telling him about my people coming from that area. He said, "Well, why don't you come with me?" and I said, "Gee, well, I have nothing else to do, so, why not?" So, what he did, he was flying back to his base on a B-17. So, they loaded me up on this B-17 and what did they do? They put me up in the nose, in this glass nose, you know, where I guess the bombardier used to be, [laughter] and that was my first ride in a big airplane like that. So, we got back to the base, ... and he told his commanding officers that he had brought me and told them the story that I had told him, and so, his commanding officers said, "Well, you want to go take a look, go ahead." So, he gave us a jeep and the two of us started along the Adriatic Coast. We stopped at every damn town along the way, asking if anybody knew this family, you know.

Well, to make a long story short, ... as I eliminated things in my own mind, we finally got down to this town where my people had come from, and as we were driving into the town, we saw a little kid on the road and asked him if he knew anybody by that name, and he said his father's name was Pino. ... From there on, it was an incredible story. ... This must have been one of my father's cousins, or something like that, and he sent word to my grandmother, that was my father's mother, that there was a man here, a soldier from the States, and so, ... they took me to see her, and, pretty soon, half the village came together.

LM: What was the name of the town?

JP: It's called T-U-G-L-I-A, Tuglia, and so, I saw this little lady here, ninety-one years old, you know, and aunts and other people like that. I guess half the town was related, and so, we spent ... the night there, in what was my father's house, then, because he had inherited this little house, and one of my cousins was living in it. So, my grandmother says, "That's his house. He's got to stay there." [laughter] Well, anyway, we had a nice visit there, and the next day, we went to an adjoining town, San Nicola it's called, and saw some of my mother's family, and her mother was still alive, and so, that was the last time anybody from my mother or father's family had seen their parents alive, because after I got back home, later on, both of my grandmothers had passed away, but, they were very poor. I mean, this was the end of the war and they were ... just surviving, basically.

SSH: Did you take any pictures?

JP: Yes. ... As a matter-of-fact, ... when I got back to Rome, I sat down and wrote a letter to [my family].

SSH: Do you want to read the letter for the tape?

JP: No, I don't particularly want to read the letter for the tape. ...

SSH: [laughter] She was a tiny, tiny lady.

LM: Oh, wow. Was she even five feet tall?

JP: ... You know, they shrivel up when they get old.

LM: She was adorable.

JP: The 15th of December, 1945. ... When they got this at home, I mean, they were just incredulous, you know, that I had seen all these people and was going back to another world, really, and I felt very privileged to have been able to make that kind of contact, but, anyway, [that] ... sort of highlighted the end of my military career in Europe, you know.

SSH: You were fortunate to get to travel by air.

LM: Also, just finding them.

JP: ... You know, all I had to go by was the things that they had mentioned in their lives and it was just a matter of [deduction]. You should have seen this lieutenant who was with me. [laughter] I mean, he was just sitting back, enjoying it all. I have a picture of him somewhere, too.

SSH: Did you stay in contact with him?

JP: No, I haven't. No, we lost contact after we got back.

SSH: Do you remember where he was from?

JP: I don't, you know, I don't. I may even have it in the records somewhere. I don't know, but, it was such a fortuitous thing to have met with him, you know, and his unit commander let us have his jeep, and, here, we drive into this town ... [as] American soldiers, in this town, you know, they'd seen the war and the devastation, and then, to find these family people. I've been back since then, and, of course, things have changed. I was back once or twice, once, I think it was, the same town.

LM: You saw your family there.

JP: Yes. A lot of them had moved away. They moved up north, which is more prosperous, but, there are still some people left there.

SSH: Where were you when you finally got your orders to go home? I assume that it was based on points.

JP: Yes. I guess ... at that stage, they were counting points. ... I was in Austria, in this town of

Lofer, it was called, L-O-F-E-R. It was wonderful. I mean, it was paradise.

SSH: Really?

JP: Beautiful, you know, through the wintertime. I mean, ... the snow, the roads, they'd blow the snow and it's like running through a channel of snow. It's just a fairy land and a little town, a little, typical, Bavarian town. People were nice, of course. They were nice to the Germans, too, I guess, but, they were nice to us, and that's where we kind of waited out our turn to get called home, and, [it was] in March, I guess it was, when they decided to send me home. So, I came back to Rutgers.

SSH: Did you go through the cigarette camps?

JP: They moved us until we got to, because I came back on a ship again, ... the port. I think it was at La Havre or maybe it was Bremen. I'm not sure, but, they had these assembly points along the way, and you were moved from one to another, either on a truck or a train, and, when they got enough people together, they'd load them on a boat and send them home.

SSH: Did you ever go to Berlin?

JP: No.

SSH: What about Paris?

JP: ... Paris, yes. How did I get to Paris? ... I don't think I went to Paris or Berlin during the war. It was after the war. ... Well, Berlin, I visited after the war, but, they were still ... divided, Berlin, and Paris, I visited after the war, too. I went there to a World Poultry Congress. Well, I was still in graduate school. ... You know, you're sitting around, playing cards, and waiting for your next [assignment], you know, hurry-up-and-wait. You're just a number, and so, that was ... sort of an uneventful time, not much to remember there, just except moving from one place to another.

SSH: Where did you land in the States?

JP: New York.

SSH: Were you discharged immediately?

JP: Pretty much, just as long as it takes to get down to the [discharge center]. I think we were given a short leave, if you were in the area, which I was, and then, they processed you and discharged you. ...

SSH: Did you stay in the Reserves?

JP: I joined the National Guard after a couple of months that I was home. So, I was in the Reserves.

LM: What was your reaction to coming home after being gone for so long?

JP: Well, it was sort of a, “thank God it’s over with,” you know. I’m glad to get back and ... start picking up your life. Well, I had to pick up a life. I was married. I didn’t know what that was like, being married, you know, [laughter] and I knew I still had school to finish. So, I was pretty well focused on getting back, and finding a place to live, and getting back to school, and that’s what I did, essentially. I had a couple of months before school started. I got back ... in March and [school] didn’t start until the September semester, I think it was.

LM: Where did you live when you came back to Rutgers?

JP: New Brunswick. ... My wife was living with her mother and we moved in there.

LM: Do you remember the street?

JP: Yes, it was on George Street, yes. As a matter-of-fact, I came by the apartment. It’s one of the few buildings standing in that area.

LM: Where?

JP: It’s up near Rumson Avenue.

LM: Okay, towards the NJC campus.

JP: ... Yes, about halfway up there, and ... we stayed there for a time, ... until university housing became available, and then, we moved to University Heights.

LM: Oh, the Heights campus. Did you have running water there?

JP: Oh, yes. ... These were the temporary buildings that they had. They were military buildings, I guess, but, they were temporary. There were two apartment units, each building was two apartment units, and we lived on Bevier Road. So, I started. I came back and started. Well, I did a little stint of working at Squibb for a while. I went to work there in the interim, and then, when school started, of course, I was a full-time [student] going to school.

SSH: The sheet said that you were discharged from Camp Kilmer.

JP: Yes, ... I’m not sure that that was [it]. [Reading] “Relieved from active duty, 8th of June, 1946,” and somewhere, I thought we were released from Camp Kilmer. Another place, the official record says Fort Dix, but, I think I was at Kilmer, because that was close by.

SSH: What did you do at Squibb? Was it hard to find a job with so many soldiers returning?

JP: Well, ... I think that was the only place I applied. I got a job there and they put me to work. ... What we were doing, ... they were making influenza vaccine, and I was ... in the influenza

vaccine department, and, actually, I was running a couple of machines that separated out the viruses from the culture medium, the egg material that they collected. So, I was running what they called then the Sharples. It was a high-centrifuge apparatus. It spun around ... at quite high revolutions and the material, which was the influenza virus, would collect on the sides of ... this tube. So, that was what I was doing. ... I don't say it was a highly skilled job, because I didn't have much skills as far as manufacturing, but, it was working with people who were doing a lot of the technical work, you know, inoculating the eggs and all that. So, we were producing influenza vaccine.

SSH: Did you ever compare what you had just left and what you were now doing?

JP: No, well, it's always there in a way, but, you know, you had to compartmentalize, and ... I think I did a lot of compartmentalizing. I put it in a box, I put it in the back of my head, and I shut the door, ... in a way, not that I wanted to forget the military experience, because, you know, I'm glad I had it and survived, but, it wasn't ... a pleasant thing, I don't think. You know, you can't describe it as something that you deliberately wanted to do. It was tough, it was scary, and to see the destruction of the kind of humanity-to-humanity treatment ... that occurs in the world, I mean, all those things, I didn't really want to dwell on it, frankly, and I had my own life to put in order, so, I didn't.

SSH: I mean, you had been part of a killing machine and now you were working on something that would prevent death.

JP: Yes, well, ... I didn't quite [think that]. ... I knew I was interested in science. I mean, whatever that did. Science, obviously, ... you think of science as a benefit to mankind. Obviously, science can be the other way, too, but, I really ... didn't have any emotions about, you know, "What have I just been through?" and, "What am I doing now?" kind of thing. I just put that ... behind me and I had too many other things to think about. You know, as I say, being married, and, you know, starting a family, and finishing school, and that was a big thing in itself, because what I thought was, "Well, I've got a year of school, and then, ... I'll go about what ... I wanted to do," which was teaching, and that changed after I got back to school, and that's a whole other story. I don't know if you want to get into that.

SSH: I wanted to ask you about the GI Bill and your return to the university.

JP: Well, yes. As I had been ... to Rutgers, and I knew I was coming back to finish up my final year, and I started doing that, and I was ... doing poultry, mostly, then, and the man who was the head of the department was Willard Thompson, another great mentor in my career, ... I was going about my business, doing my final course work that I needed, and he caught me in the hall in the Poultry Building one day, and he asked me to come into his office.

... He talked to me about what my plans were. I said, "Well, I'll finish up my coursework," and so on, and he says, "Well, ... would you consider taking an assignment as an instructor?" Well, I said, "I hadn't thought about it, ... you know. What does that entail?" [He said], "Well, being an instructor," and he says, "Well, you can do graduate work, too." Well, that led to a whole new rethinking of what I was going to do. ... So, I accepted the instructorship, and I registered for

graduate school, and I knew I wanted to do a Ph.D. in zoology, so, that's what I did.

I signed up, and Dr. Boyden was my chairman, he was the head of the Zoology Department, and I did ... my graduate thing there, and was teaching at the same time, and that was tough going, because I was carrying a heavy teaching load in mostly poultry courses, introduction and that sort of thing, but, it was a job. So, I had the GI Bill ... for a rather short period of time, because I qualified for it, but, then, when I took on the job, of course, that was ... all I needed, and so, I went through the process of doing ... my graduate studies and all of that, and, let's see, I graduated in 1951, I think I got my degree [then].

In the meantime, I was spotted by somebody on the staff of Rockefeller Foundation. I was ... doing some work on my thesis, my research work, when somebody came in the lab. I think I was doing a splenectomy on some chicken, taking out the spleen, ... in connection with antibody production, and this person leaned over my shoulder and said, "Is John Pino here?" I said, "Yes, I'm he." He said, "Can I talk to you?" He says, "I'm Dean Chandler from the University of New Hampshire." [Mr. Pino uses a New England accent.] So, one thing led to another there. He had apparently heard me give a talk on a subject in agriculture at the Ag Engineering Department at one time, this was months previously, and he was the Dean of the College of Agriculture in New Hampshire, looking for a department head, and I hadn't quite finished my degree, yet.

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

SSH: You were telling us about going up to New Hampshire for an interview.

JP: Right. I hadn't quite finished ... my Ph.D., or dissertation.

[Tape Paused]

The President of the University of New Hampshire was not impressed by my youthfulness. Mind you, [I was] twenty-eight years of age, had commanded a company in charge of people in the military, but, this man thought I was not mature enough, I guess. Anyway, I didn't get the job, but, that's okay, as it turned out.

So, I finished my work, and, after getting my degree and all that, I stayed on in the department and was promoted to assistant, and then, subsequently, associate professor, which was on a career track.

This man, in 1954, Chandler, his name was, he went to work with the Rockefeller Foundation, full-time. He had done some consulting work with them, but, they hired him. He became the president of the university, but, then, they hired him to come on to the foundation full-time. When he went to the foundation, they were looking for people in Mexico, someone to head up their animal research component, and he came back looking for me, and this time, of course, they hired me. I went with the Rockefeller Foundation in 1955 and that was the beginning of another whole span of my life.

SSH: Tell us about your family. How many children do you have and how old are they?

JP: We have four children. As a matter-of-fact, my daughter just came up from Mexico. She's at home now, visiting. [I have] a girl and three boys, and Susanne, we took her to Mexico when she was eight years old, and she, essentially, has grown up Mexican. ... She married there. She had a family there. She has five boys, and so, I have five grandsons of hers and two of whom have children. So, I have four great-grandchildren.

SSH: Oh, my word.

JP: Two boys and two girls, and the other boys live up in Westport, Connecticut, near me, and they have families, and so on. ...

SSH: Did any of them come to Rutgers?

JP: No, I'm sorry to say. One went to [the] University of Arizona and he got his degree in agriculture. He didn't come to Rutgers. I don't know why I didn't make him come to Rutgers. [laughter]

SSH: You taught classes here at Rutgers after the war. What was it like to teach classes that were a mix of high school graduates and veterans?

JP: ... You see, my group, when I came back, I was with a lot of veterans. We were in the classes as veterans, but, as I took on classes, I don't recall any of the kids in the Ag School that I taught were veterans. Mainly, I taught Ag courses and these ... were still young kids. So, I looked at them as [young] and I was still not a heck of a lot older than they were. I mean, these were seventeen or eighteen-year-olds. I was, what, twenty-eight, twenty-nine years old?

... There weren't any veterans of the veteran's age in those groups. Gradually, the number of veterans in the university, I don't know how the curve goes, but, the number of veterans who were returning gradually leveled off, I guess, and disappeared, but, when I was taking classes, as a veteran, ... there was a noticeable difference in the seriousness, and the kinds of issues that were discussed, and so on, but, some of my courses were still taken with, like, pre-meds. ... In my graduate work, for example, I was taking endocrinology, and physiology, and those kinds of things, mostly which were taken by kids that were taking pre-med. So, I didn't get the full flavor, you might say, of being in a class full of veterans.

SSH: When you came back, did you get involved in any social activities?

JP: I was married and my wife ... was a local girl, so, our social life centered about the friends here. It was mostly an off campus life, and, as you know, town life is separate from university life. ... I mean, we had a lot of social activity, but, it was all with people ... that were not university people.

SSH: How do you feel that your war experience impacted the man that you are today?

JP: Well, as I say, I think ... it gave me a sense of, maybe, self-worth, because you have to

remember the background I came out of, you know. To be born in this country or to be an immigrant in this country, you still ... have to prove yourself in a way. There's an establishment in this country and, if you don't believe it, you better believe it.

I spent ten years in Washington, and you're in or you're out, and background has a lot to do with that, a lot. ... It even amazed me that ... a person with my name and my background could be hired by an organization like the Rockefeller Foundation. I mean, I never said that to anybody. I shouldn't be saying it here, perhaps, but, I felt my worth, in a sense, because I was able to do almost anything, just about anything, that anybody else did, and the military showed me that. I mean, it was tough and I survived that. I mean, I think it gave me a sense of worth, and then, the whole experience of living with men your equal or not your equal, ... you could judge yourself against something, which the military forced you to do that, because ... you lived with hundreds of men, you know, and you were ... forced to make a judgment of yourself, in a sense, at least I did, and I think it at least gave me a sense of pride and worth.

I mean, this Black Fifty is, to me, an incredible expression of the camaraderie that you have when you experience something like going to war together and living together. ... I think from that standpoint, at least, I don't regret ... having had the military experience. I'm glad I survived it, of course, but, I don't know whether I think that ... the later experience that I've had, I feel, has been incredible. ...

SSH: Could you talk a little bit about the Rockefeller Foundation and your work there?

JP: ... I think that brought together a lot of the things ... that I felt and a lot of the things I was probably trained for. ... I liked dealing with people, young people, in terms of training. ... Some of my students, who were my students, ... Ralph Brinster, who's a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, ... that kid could really be a Nobel Prize winner. I mean, these are some of the people I feel I had a hand in making. ... I think I understand the value of a leader-professor-mentor kind of thing and I think I played that role with some of these [people]. Now, when I joined the foundation, I, again, was thrown into that kind of a role, because we trained, in this case, it was Mexicans, where I was first exposed.

... I would love to take you down and talk to some of the young people that I brought up, you know, and that was very satisfying, and building ... research facilities, and then, beyond that, traveling around the world, dealing with leaders in the field, which is a fantastic thing, and not only that, but, during that period of time, this was after the war, it had something to do with the war, too, [the] population began to explode, and the world was facing a food crisis. I mean, there was a world food crisis in the early fifties, if you remember that, and one of the things that the foundation did was, it started its agricultural program to try and address some of the food problems of the world, you know.

The first place they went was to Mexico. I won't even get into the reasons why that happened, but, there were events that precipitated that, and it was an experience there. What they did, ... they employed scientists, well trained scientists, and ... essentially said, "You go down to Mexico and figure out why they can't produce the food they need," and we had wheat specialists, corn specialists, potato specialists, bean specialists, animal specialists, and so on, and we had good

leadership. We had a man who was incredible, George Harrar, who was the leader, who was a soil scientist, and we had some very great advisors, Dr. Stakman, from the University of Minnesota, was a soil scientist. Bradley, from Cornell University, and Mangelsdorf, from Harvard University, who were advisors for the foundation's agriculture program. ... They said that, "What these countries need is research on the ground," because the idea prevailed that, "Well, we're a great agricultural country, all we have to do is go down, and show people how to do agriculture, and we'll solve the problem." Well, it wasn't that simple. The problems were different and it took scientists to understand the problem in order to solve the problem. Well, the upshot of it was that several such programs, similar to the Mexico program, were started in Columbia, South America, Nigeria, in India, in Chile, and so on, around the world. They did this in a number of places.

... In the 1960s, they decided that, "Well, we can't just keep repeating this, country after country." I mean, the problems were too vast. So, George Harrar and Frosty Hill of the Ford Foundation had the idea, "Why don't we build one big center someplace to attack a major food problem?" and after discussing it, of course, they came up with, "Most of the world's people live off rice." Rice is the most important cereal grain to the majority of people. So, they established what's called the Rice Research Institute in the Philippines, huge success. ... It investigated rice, and focused on rice, and so, these new rice varieties started filtering back to the country, and rice production went up. It was very, very palpable and noticeable. ... Shortly after that one, again, for reasons and events just too long to try and relate them all, but, in Mexico, ... the foundation established the Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), which was to address problems in corn and wheat production around the world, mainly in poor countries, not in the United States, but, ultimately, all ... the developed countries, like the United States, benefited from these findings.

So, that went on again. Again, there were four of these international centers established. Again, the foundation [said], "Well, we can't keep building these." So, again, not to make a long story out of the thing, what was created ... was an international group called the Consumption Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), which brought together ... a lot of other developed countries, like Germany, France, the UK, and so on, ... that came together in a cooperative program and built additional ones of these international centers around the world. Well, while this was going on, I had moved, of course, up to New York, and I was involved in negotiations, and establishing these centers, and getting the other countries involved, and all that.

... You've heard of the Green Revolution? ... That was based, really, on the findings in Mexico. You've heard of Norm Borlaug, who is a Nobel Prize winner? He was also my colleague in Mexico. So, it was a great, great time in agriculture, in world and international agriculture, and I was privileged to be right in the middle of all that. So, I feel that was a great time in my life, too.

... Of course, that took me out of contact with people connected with Rutgers, like ... Crandon [Clark] and Dick Hale, [who were] wondering what had happened to me. I was pretty much abroad most of the time. So, I did a lot of traveling when I was transferred to New York ... in connection with our own programs around the world, in China, Russia, India, well, you name it, in Africa, and so on. So, that's been a great experience.

SSH: How long have you lived abroad? I know that you lived in Mexico for several years.

JP: Ten years, that was about it. That's the only time I lived out of the country. I've traveled all over.

SSH: What do you do now?

JP: I try to do as little as possible. [laughter] Well, I'm involved in a couple of things. One, I'm involved in a program in Mexico that works with rural villages in rural development. Again, it's something I do because I like it, and I also am the chairman of the board ... of a journal that's published on, it's called biodiversity, *Diversity Magazine*, which publishes articles in the field of conservation and the utilization of plant and animal genetic resources. So, I'm involved with that and that's about as much as I really should do. There are a lot of things I'd like to do. ... [laughter]

SSH: That must be very exciting, to be involved in something like genetics at this point in time.

JP: Yes, it is. ... Oh, it's moving incredibly fast. ... I think I mentioned to you, I gave a speech. Johnny Baylor, one of my classmates, asked me to come up and talk to his group, and in just putting together the paper that I gave there, ... it's just this whole area is moving so fast, because it has to do with so many really important things.

In going back to the wheat, the rice, ... and those things, one of the things that was important and critical to the success of those efforts was collecting material which is called germ plasm, seeds of all of the different varieties and types, ... which were used in breeding programs, and these were collected from around the world, and it used to be that these kinds of collections one could do pretty freely. I mean, countries would let you come in, and collect material, and bring it back, and use it. Then, a lot of this process of seed improvement shifted from the land grant colleges and the state universities to the private sector and the private sector started making big money using improved seeds. Not only they went from that, but, they started patenting seeds, and then, came the biotechnology, that started changing seeds, and, pretty soon, the countries around the world who were not up to the US [level] were saying, "Well, we're getting left behind." So, they started putting constraints on collecting the material and they want access and all that sort of thing. So, these discussions have been international issues, but, the debates have become quite acrimonious at times.

... Much of the interest of the commercial companies depends on being able to sell seed, in order to do research and so on, but, at the same time, there's got to be ... some consideration given to the people ... that live in the areas where these explorations are taking place, like, particularly, the pharmaceutical companies, where they explore in the tropics, you know, in the jungles, look for plants, and they find plants, and they bring them back, and, ... through biotechnology, get the active ingredient, and then, they mass-produce this.

Well, the people in the jungles are saying, "Hey, you found this here, what do we get out of it?" So, there's some of those kinds of issues that need to be resolved in some way. ... They haven't been resolved yet, but, they've gotten into the World Trade Organization, into the biodiversity

conservation, and that kind of thing, and the United Nations. ...

SSH: Was the United Nations involved?

JP: Well, the FAO, primarily, is the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, but, they are a forum for debates, and sometimes I think that the smaller countries like to tweak the tail of the big, powerful countries, you know, and say, "Well, you can't do this, you can't do that," but, it's been interesting with far reaching implications.

One of the things I did after leaving the Foundation in 1972 was to take on an assignment at the National Academy of Sciences, Board on Agriculture. I was the director of a study on, "The Global Conservation and Utilization of Genetic Resources." Six volumes were published from the study.

SSH: Do you have any other questions, Lynn?

LM: I just wanted to go back for a moment. You had three sons that were coming of age during the Vietnam War and you said that none of them served. What were your feelings on the fact that they might have to serve?

JP: Well, I think if they had to, I think they should. I mean, I feel very strongly that, you know, to be born in this country and to have seen the places that I've seen, you can't imagine the [suffering]. ... Really, you should be grateful, [exhibit] the gratefulness of being in a place that gives you the kinds of opportunities that we have. I'm not saying that just to be patriotic or anything like that. I mean, it's real. I mean, you could be born in some places where, I mean, let me tell you, life is pretty tough. So, while I have questions, ... sometimes, about political motives, and all the other world issues that whirl around us, and what drags us into wars, ... I somewhat feel like, was it, "If I have but one life to give for my country?" I think you better do it. ... So, I think everybody has an obligation to defend their country, right or wrong. That's the way I feel.

SSH: Well, Dr. Pino, we thank you very much for your time. We have enjoyed this interview.

JP: Well, thank you.

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

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 6/30/00

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 7/10/00

Reviewed by John Pino 9/00