RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH F. ROCKY

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Michael Perchiacca: This begins an interview with Mr. Joseph Rocky on November 15, 2006, in Toms River, New Jersey, with Michael Perchiacca and Sandra Holyoak. Mr. Rocky, for the record, where and when were you born?

Joseph Rocky: I was born July 12, 1921, in Carteret, New Jersey.

MP: Okay. In reading your pre-interview survey, I see that your last name has changed. Could you explain the change in the spelling of your last name?

JR: Oh, yes. Well, let me just say for the record, if I may, in case any of my kids ever get a hold of this tape, I have not seen these questions before. I'm volunteering the answers off-the-cuff, and don't hold me responsible for my answers or make me explain them or justify them, okay? [laughter] They're all a challenge, believe me. [laughter]

SH: Well-stated. [laughter]

JR: All right. Yes, the name change; my parents were actually born and lived [for] half their life, in the town of Lovran, which is off the Adriatic Sea. ... During their lifetime there, it was a part of Austria, ... dating back to the Austria-Hungary Empire and dating back even further to the Roman Empire. When they moved here in 1920, ... my parents were in their forties and they came with three boys; Al, who was about eighteen, Tony, who was about fourteen, and Ed, who was about twelve. I was born a year later, here. I was the "new house, new baby." The name was Rochetich, R-O-C-H-E-T-I-C-H. They decided to change it to a more American version—Rocky. I was Joseph Edward Rocky when I was confirmed. We have a comical history of our names, because we kept changing them. When I got married, I realized I couldn't use that, because I was christened Joseph Frank Rocky. So, when you see my degrees in there, you'll see there, still, "Joseph Edward Rocky." That question might come up, [laughter], but I'm not the only one in the family that goes changing names. [laughter]

SH: You come from a long line of name changers.

JR: I could add that part of the reason that my father explained to me, was that after World War I, in 1920, that section of Austria is a beautiful section. Members of the family have gone back. I've never gone, but it's a real resort section of the Adriatic that was turned over, as the spoils of war, to Italy and became, totally, an Italian area. ... Why, just like you have here, various ethnic groups loving and hating each other. Well, the story I remember, as a little kid, was my parents could not take the oppression from the Italians. In specific, I remember that Austrian was no longer taught in the schools, only Italian. My parents decided they should immigrate to the US. ...

MP: That was one of the reasons for their immigration to the US.

JR: Yes, yes, one of them, yes.

SH: What else did they say about the old country? They spent so much of their life together there. Were they both born and raised in the same town?

JR: Yes, right. Well, it was a different life from now. My father was a ship's carpenter, on sail ships, before steamships.

SH: Okay.

JR: He was the guy [that] when they had a bad storm and the mast broke, he had to get another mast and build it, on ship, and put it up. [laughter] So, he sailed the "Seven Seas." There's no question about it. He spoke about seven languages and I've seen pictures of their home. The house still stands, by the way, that they lived in. It's about three hundred years old. I have pictures of it.

SH: Do you really?

JR: Yes, and it's, like, about twenty minutes, up on a hill, from the port. So, their lifestyle was, he said, "Well, ... we're sailing tomorrow and, bye, I'm going to work." ... His wife would probably say, "When you coming back?" and he'd say, "How do I know? Depends on the wind." [laughter] So, I can recall stories of hitting a calm coming to America, and taking six months to get over here.

SH: They sailed over on a sailing ship.

JR: No—my mother and three brothers came here on a steamship—the *President Wilson*. In addition to being a carpenter, my father could read blueprints and he got a job as a foreman for what was then the creosoting plant for the Reading Railroad, in Port Reading, New Jersey, right next to Carteret. ... What they did [was], they pre-cut timber for the wooden trestles. Neither of you would remember them, but ... all the bridges and everything were built out of oak and assembled onsite. Well, he pre-cut those and treated them with creosote.

SH: Were there other family members already in this country?

JR: No, no family members. No, the boys grew up here. They all became craftsmen. My oldest brother became a carpenter and spent his career in what was then the copper works, which was the central activity in Carteret. They smelted down ore and made copper from it and the atmosphere was constantly full of smog. The only time we got a break from the smog was when the wind turned, and then, Staten Island got it, [laughter] but that was the plant. It no longer exists. The area is a big park. The next brother, Tony, became an electrician there, but he didn't go to school. ... Both of them started as apprentices. I should also note that my parents had three additional children before these three boys, but none survived past childhood (the oldest girl passed away at eighteen).

SH: As soon as they could.

JR: Yes, and worked on and learned on-the-job. My next brother, Ed, was a little different. He didn't want to work down there and he took up drafting. He didn't go to high school, but he went

to vocational school, in New Brunswick, and took up drafting and became a draftsman and, subsequently, an engineer. Going to Newark Engineering College at night.

SH: Really?

JR: Yes. So, they were all craftsmen. I guess I picked up some of my handiwork, if you could say that, and ability just from the family, because I was always the little kid, the gopher, "Go to the store for this. Go for that." I remember, one summer, gee, I guess I was only a freshman or so, the owner of the hardware store wanted to give me a summer job, [laughter] to help out in there, because I was always coming in, buying stuff that only adults knew even how to pronounce. ... That's a little aside.

SH: How young were you?

JR: About thirteen or fourteen, yes.

SH: When your mother and father came over, they came as a whole family. Your father did not come here first.

JR: Yes; no, he came first.

SH: Did he?

JR: He had to save some money to get them over, and then, he was here and they came over, steerage, the bottom of the ship. [laughter]

SH: I am always so impressed by people who did that; brave is the only word I can think of.

JR: Yes.

SH: Did they talk about life in their hometown often? Did they find others, in this country, from that same background to interact with?

JR: Oh, yes. They had a lot of friends that did the same thing. There were all kinds of Austrian groups and clubs.

SH: Did they come from the same area?

JR: Oh, yes. In fact, my mother, in addition to the four boys, had, at one time, I believe, three boarders, to help pay [earn income] during the Depression, three boarders. [laughter] My bed was in the attic. I didn't rate a room. [laughter]

SH: You were little.

JR: ... Yes. There were loads of stories that the brothers would get on [to telling]. We were pretty close, all along. We used to play cards once a month, even when I was married and all that.

SH: How much younger are you than your next oldest brother?

JR: Twelve years; it's quite a gap. [laughter] He had a major hand in raising me, actually. He was my idol and my parents were [older]. Well, my father retired when I started Rutgers. He was sixty-five then, and my brother, he was the only brother that insisted [that] I go to college.

SH: Why do you think that was? How did he know that college was so important?

JR: Well, he himself had been going to Newark College, nights, and I thought I'd go nights, like he did, and make it easier. ... He said, "No, you're going daytime." ... Well, you wanted to know the old-time story; the marriage plan, then, not very exciting, like now, [he] married an Austrian girl from Philadelphia, Elsie Radis, who left her family. She had a big family, too. She had three sisters and two brothers, all kind of in an enclave in Philadelphia. She left them, came to Carteret and moved in with our family, and took care of not only her new husband, but Mom and Dad and little brother, Joe. [laughter] That was the deal. So, that's how we lived. ... Let's see, I was a sophomore in high school when they were married. So, all the while I was still in school and while I was at Rutgers, that was the same homestead and Elsie just ran the show for everybody. My father retired; she took care of him, too. [laughter]

SH: Oh, my.

JR: Yes, [laughter] and she just passed away last year. She lived to ninety-six.

SH: Whose wife was that?

JR: My youngest brother, Ed. Ed, yes, lived to ninety-four.

SH: Amazing. That is wonderful.

JR: Yes.

MP: Where were your brothers born?

JR: They were all born in Lovran, in Austria, yes. It's now Croatia, by the way.

MP: Now, it is.

JR: Yes—since the fall of the Russian Empire—it was Yugoslavia under Tito after World War II.

SH: Did they go to school over there?

JR: Yes, they did, over there, and, over here, ... I'm not sure whether the older [brother], who was eighteen, [did]. He may have gone right into the apprenticeship as a carpenter, but the other two went, at least through eighth grade, I believe.

SH: Which language was spoken in your home?

JR: Well, that's another one of my claims. I actually was bilingual when I learned to talk. I learned two languages, I had to, and I'll call it Austrian, because there's so many different dialects. ... I spoke Austrian to my parents and I had to speak English on the street, and my brothers were picking up English. So, we were kind of a mixed breed for a while, [laughter] but I spoke, let's call it; I don't know if it's Slavic or Croatian or what. Croatian, that term didn't come up until they started having trouble with Yugoslavia, and then, the war and all that, you know. I never heard the word, "Croatia," as a boy. It was all Austria, yes. ... My oldest brother's son, Kenneth Rocky, lives in Little Silver, [New Jersey]. ... We're very close and he had occasion to go over and he's the one that found the homestead and pictures of the house and came back with some artifacts. ... He's the one that tells me [that] whatever I spoke isn't spoken anymore. [laughter]

SH: Really? That is interesting.

JR: I held on to it as long as my mother was alive. That was to about 1950, [when] she passed away, and it was still easier, some things, to say to her in Austrian than in English, but, after that, I had no reason for it. Now and then, there'd be visitors from over there and they'd kind of hold me up, "Hey, Joe speaks our language," and they'd start rattling off some of these new things. I didn't know what they were saying.

SH: Did you attend a church where this language was spoken? Were there other Austrian-speaking people in Carteret?

JR: Oh, yes. They were all over, Carteret, we had friends in the Hoboken area, we had friends in Philadelphia. ... Oh, during the summer, they'd have these gatherings and picnics. I went to all of those.

SH: Had they all immigrated for the same reason, persecution by the Italians, at that point?

JR: Right, well, and opportunity, too. I'm not sure how strongly they felt. I know, as a little boy, on occasion, I got in trouble, because I asked people if they were Italian and they took me to the woodshed and told me, "You don't ask people that, not them. You're supposed to know." [laughter] Little things I remember.

SH: [laughter] Who was the disciplinarian?

JR: ... I really don't know. My brother had the biggest say in me. ... As I got older, he took over. I say that because, among other things, he paid my way through college. So, there's no question, I could never repay him for that. He put me through college, and his wife, who tolerated it. But, he also was the reason I play the piano today, because I was like any other kid.

I wanted to play football or something else, but he was the one that, if I didn't practice; well, my mother snitched on me. So, that's it. She'd tell him, "He didn't practice," and away would go the football and the bicycle, and, when I'd start practicing again, I'd get it back. [laughter] I shouldn't say all the way, because I was talking about the piano. ... Yes, I played the solo at the eighth grade graduation and I switched from classical to jazz, and then, about two years later, they formed a swing band in high school and there were about thirteen of us that were eligible. ... A friend, Warren Klose, played the piano better than me, and the accordion, but the teacher said, "Well, Warren, ... you play the accordion. We'll let Joe play the piano," and I'm telling you, I started practicing like one of these [professionals]. Three hours a day was nothing. Oh, I loved that job and I thought, "I'm not going to lose it," because I knew Warren could have it any time he wanted it. [laughter]

SH: Or set down that accordion.

JR: ... So, we had a band in high school. We used to play for various occasions, *bar mitzvahs*, I remember. ...

SH: What was the band called?

JR: I don't remember the high school name, but, then, at Rutgers, my roommate was a Class of '42 [member]. He played the drums, and there was a Bob Scammel, in my class, he played the sax. [His name] is from Scammelware, remember Scammelware? ... It's a high class of china. The company's outside of Trenton somewhere. Well, the three of us played bar rooms and it was, "Music Off the Cob by Joe, Tom and Bob." [laughter]

SH: What was the man's name, from the Class of 1942?

JR: Tom Connolly, my friend from high school, from Carteret. He just passed away [at the] beginning of this year, yes. He was a very dear friend.

SH: Please tell us a little bit about growing up in Carteret, as a little guy who has a big brother telling him to practice the piano. [laughter] What else did you do?

JR: Well, I think it was a nice town. I liked the friends that I had. They both went to Rutgers. They were both, and still are, already wealthy, because one was Sid Le Bow, if you came across that name. He's on the West Coast. We were the closest [of] friends, friends all through grammar school and high school, continued at Rutgers, and the other one was Bob Kloss. He lives in Scotch Plains, now, and he was also Jewish and his father owned the flower shop. Sid's father owned the grocery store, during the Depression.

SH: Wow.

JR: He was a very kind man and made sure ... nobody went hungry and just kept it on the tab, and, eventually, ... he had a business for business, where he just got handed oodles of houses there in town, you know. That's the limit. So, they both ended up very wealthy, they still are, but they were very, very good friends. ... Then, another one I still maintain good friendship with

is Bill Makoski. He went to Rutgers, too. He couldn't quite make it in engineering, so, he switched to teaching and went an extra year, but decided to remain a member of the Class of '43. So, I keep in touch with him. He's in Clark, [New Jersey]. Carteret, well, it was a fun town. I enjoyed it. ... I did all the sports. ... I played tennis, on the high school team. That was the only one. I went out for freshman football and found that was a mistake. I was about 110 pounds and about six-feet tall and one of these gorillas put me on his back at spring training and smacked me against the wall. ... I was out and I like to tell the story, "So, the next day, I joined the band." [laughter]

SH: Intelligent man. [laughter]

JR: But, that was the fun part of it. The band was brand-new to the school, that summer, I think, after the sophomore year. That would be about 1940 and ... they were starting to practice during the summer. I couldn't go, because I started to work in [the] summers then. I was fifteen. I started as a blueprint boy. So, I couldn't attend that.

SH: Where does a blueprint boy work?

JR: In Newark, with my brother, in the Breeze Corporation.

SH: Okay.

JR: Yes. That's a story in its own right, but this was the pioneering days, ... [laughter] boy, it makes me feel old, of air travel as we know it. My dog, Skippy; yes, oh, boy, that's really testing me. The famous flyer, it'll come to me, at the time, from that era, had a litter of chows and I got one of those chows, through the boss of Breeze Corporation. ... So, I didn't make the band. ... I wasn't part of the band and I think it was the ... Friday night before the first game that the band was going to play for, I think [versus] either Neptune or Toms River, I forget which one. I got a call from the band director and he says, "Joe, we need you in the band." I says, "What for?" He says, "The bass drummer's sick." I says, you know, "What's that got to do with me?" like the Lord, you know; [laughter] "What are you bothering me for?" ... I hadn't even met him yet, you know. On the phone, he says, "You have a reputation of being a good piano player and the guy's sick and we can show you what to do tomorrow morning." He says, "Be on the field tomorrow morning, ten o'clock, for our rehearsal." So, my first time ever as a bass drummer, I'm rehearsing with this group. ... There was one other bass drummer. There were two, so, that helped, but [I was] rehearsing and playing the drum [that morning]. In the afternoon, I was [laughter] at the ball game, marching. So, then, the guy was still sick, so, I rehearsed with them that week. ... While I was at it, I started fooling [around]. I was six-feet. My nickname was "Slim," among others, six-feet, about 110 pounds. So, I started doing this, you know—swinging the drum sticks.

SH: Showing off.

JR: Oh, the bandmaster loved it. By the end of the week, I had the job. [laughter] So, to finish, then, what did we do? Then, they formed a symphony orchestra that didn't include a piano. I

wanted to stay with the band, so, I took up the trombone. [laughter] So, I learned the trombone and I played the trombone in the symphony orchestra.

SH: They are not even similar; [laughter] amazing, oh, my word.

JR: And, also, I had it with me when we used to play the bar rooms and, occasionally, I'd give them a little Tommy Dorsey or something like that. [laughter] Oh, well, gee, what an opportunity to recall what I did. The town was good. I don't recall any particular problems. We had all the sports. We were active. I got involved with Boy Scouts. I liked that. All ethnic groups were there. We had about six or seven churches. They still exist. We had a Russian church, a Hungarian church, a Polish church, across the street. I went to St. Joe's. That was considered Irish, ... but none of the Catholic churches had a Boy Scout troop. So, I joined some other friends in a Presbyterian troop. ... By some standards of some people, I should have been excommunicated, that's how bad things were, for ever going over there, going in that church, you know. [laughter] ... As I moved up the ranks there, by the time I was in high school, at least I was one of the instrumental assistant Scoutmasters that formed the Catholic Boy Scout troop.

SH: Really?

JR: Yes. That still exist today, I think, yes.

SH: This was in St. Joseph's.

JR: Yes, St. Joseph's, yes.

SH: Why did your family choose the Irish church when you had all these others to choose from?

JR: Well, none of the others were quite [right]; ... maybe by default. The others ... didn't have quite the ethnicity that they were looking for. Like, the Hungarians were different, the Polish were different, and markedly different, in those days. So, as far as they were concerned, there wasn't any Austrian church. I don't recall if there was an Italian one or not. Probably was, somewhere, but they wouldn't go to that, of course. ... It just happened. I started my piano; maybe that was the early beginning. I started my piano training there, with a ninety-year-old nun, I'll never forget her, my classical training. ... I remember, she would sit there with a ruler and, if I let my hands drop, she'd smack me in the hands. That's why I play this way today. [laughter] ... Yes, she was very nice, though. So, I took classical for five years, that was a long time, and they were Catholic, of course. I started, when I was nine, on the piano, yes, and that piano still exists, believe it or not. It was a second-hand piano, from the Griffith Company. It was a player piano. ... I have a niece in Carteret, Audrey Phillips—and she still has the piano. Her brother, Dick Rocky, who passed away last year, he had it for a while. He was a great piano player, and then, she has it, yes, and, every time I go there, it's all spiffy clean, ... "Uncle Joe, you're going to play the piano?" So, I sit down.

SH: [laughter] That is great.

JR: Yes. She's seventy-four, I think, yes.

SH: You were involved in music and the Scouts. Were there favorite subjects that you had in school? You went to public school, correct?

JR: Yes, yes. I guess the math always appealed to me, and my brother was an engineer by then. ... He was my idol, so, I guess that was a factor, too, and he was very rigid. To him, there wasn't anything else worth doing than being an engineer, so, [that] narrowed my choices. [laughter]

SH: Did your mother work outside of the home at all?

JR: No, no. She was busy with the ...

SH: I mean, she had boarders.

JR: Feeding about seven, eight people, yes.

SH: Right. Did your older brothers move away from home? Did they marry and move away?

JR: No, they stayed there, both of them, yes. The middle one retired and came down here for a while. ... Oh, no, he lost his first wife early and remarried, and then, when he retired, he came down here to; ... it's part of Brick. That's where he lived his last years. He lived to eighty-two, I think, yes.

SH: You spoke about the Depression. What do you recall about its impact on your family?

JR: We weren't in any dire straits, that I recall, because, in retrospect, it couldn't have been too bad, because our proudest achievement was, we got a big Buick, a new Buick, family car. I think it was a 1929, yes, and I was still a little boy, of course. I was eight years old, but the others could all drive it and the Buick was ... considered a pretty classy car in those days. So, we managed that, I do recall, and the copper works never slowed down, so, two brothers were working there.

SH: The Depression did not affect them at all.

JR: ... They kept going full-time and my father went on four days [of work a week]. ... The only specific instance that, as a kid, I remember was, I don't know why, but, at one point, money was tight and I, from gifts and stuff, had saved up a hundred dollars, which I gave them, and they thought that was so nice. [laughter] ... I don't recall, you know, that we were in dire straits, because, somehow, we had the car.

SH: Did you continue to take in boarders?

JR: No. We were rid of them by the time Elsie came. [laughter] I think she drew the line there, maybe a little before that, maybe, I'm not sure exactly when, but we were down to one. That was very nice. ... I had a stamp collection, too. In fact, I was talking to my son about it, because this boarder had a stamp collection and he had a wife in Italy and he shared the Italian stamps with

me. So, I know this collection has as many Italian stamps as it has Americans. ... Well, I talk to all my kids at least once a week, if not twice, so, of course, with the hoopla about the upside-down airplane on a three-cent stamp, I had to make sure Joe, Jr., checked the collection. [laughter]

SH: Did he have one?

JR: [laughter] He said, "Yes, yes, Dad, I checked it. No, there's none in there." I says, "There are a lot of them with the airplane, ... right-side up." He says, "Oh, yes, you left me plenty of those," but, yes, that was another activity. ... All the while, I'm helping my brothers, you know. I used to do electrical wiring, when I was about twelve years old, you know. I thought nothing of putting an outlet into where they wanted it, and carpentry, I always helped them with that. Painting, of course, that was a given. ... I recall, well, I was, what? fourteen, fifteen, maybe, when my brother, Ed, got married. We did the house over, so that ... he and his wife could at least have their own master bedroom. ... She got that for it, and I recall installing the wall-to-wall carpeting while they were on honeymoon. [laughter] I don't know how I did it, but I did.

SH: Did you remain in the attic?

JR: Oh, yes. I moved down to a little room ... somewhere in there, yes. Yes, that's what happened, and the other brother got married and moved out and the room opened up, yes. [laughter] So, by the time Elsie came, there were three bedrooms. So, my parents vacated what was then the master bedroom, gave it to them, moved to the next biggest bedroom. ... There was a little bedroom, a little bigger than the bathroom, [laughter] and I got that, just about the time that the newlyweds had their first baby, Bobby. ... I remember, even though, I guess I was still in high school, yes, maybe starting college, ... I redid that whole room over. I put knotty pine paneling up. I built bunk beds for it and I built a desk for it, yes. [laughter] So, that was the first time and it was a regular room, but very small, a very small desk. Now, to finish that story, Bobby and I were very close. He, unfortunately, was a Vietnam casualty. He was killed at age twenty-six, in an air accident. We're very close. He went to Penn State, seemed to change majors every semester, because his father wouldn't hear of him being anything but an engineer and Bobby wanted to be anything but an engineer. It was that kind of dichotomy going on. So, when he graduated, he decided he's going to be career Air Force and became a pilot. [He] had a lovely girlfriend, Sylvia, a chemist, they were married, and he went to Vietnam as a pilot, completed, I think, ninety-seven missions, was already made a captain and scheduled to go to Germany. ... It was a mid-air collision and he and his co-pilot were the victims. They're in a common grave in Arlington, sad ending, but, yes, I shared the room with him, among other things, and it's his brother that I'm so close with. [Editor's Note: Captain Robert Edward Rocky was killed-in-action on September 17, 1966. His biography can be found at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial and Vietnam Era Educational Center website: http://www.njvvmf.org/]

SH: Was the collision in Vietnam?

JR: Yes, Cam Ranh Bay. They had just refueled. ... There are different accounts of it, but it was this big ball of fire. ... What they found, they couldn't distinguish between him and his co-pilot, so, they're in a common grave in Arlington.

SH: That is so sad.

JR: So, now, what else was Carteret great for? We had the usual rivals. Football was probably the number one sport at the time, yes. ... There were a fair number of colored in Carteret, but I don't remember any problems. I mean, ... there were no racial problems. They were friends, you know.

SH: Did they go to school with you?

JR: Oh, yes, oh, yes, no particular problems.

MP: No segregation of any type.

JR: No, no. They're still called, "niggers," but that didn't seem to bother them. No, I don't [think so]. ...

SH: Was your family political at all after settling in this country?

JR: Not that I recall, other than, I believe, they were staunch Democrats, most of the time, but I'm not sure why. I'm more of an independent, I think. I vacillate.

SH: Did anybody in your family take advantage of or benefit from Roosevelt's New Deal programs, like the WPA [Works Progress Administration] or the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps]?

JR: No, no, because, as I said, they were all employed and, in those days, if you had a trade, ... you had a pretty high rating. ... Even my brothers would look down at their peers that didn't have a trade. [laughter] It's like college, today.

SH: Would hobos come to your house to ask for handouts? Do you recall anything like that as a young boy?

JR: I don't know. I think there was a Chrome section, [a neighborhood in Carteret], that had a reputation of being a little rougher and all that, but I don't recall any serious racial problems or anything like that. No, it was pretty good.

SH: Why did you decide to go on to Rutgers after graduation?

JR: I had a couple of other acceptances. ...

SH: How did you make that decision?

JR: Let me think now; I think it was, first of all, I thought I wanted to be a chemical engineer and ... my choices were, I think, between Newark College of Engineering, as a day student, or Rutgers, even though I was accepted at Princeton.

SH: You applied to other schools.

JR: Yes, but, ... really, at least from my humble beginnings, if you will, I figured Princeton was out of my class. ... Now that I've read up on its history, I know I would have had a rough time there, yes, you know, because of the class distinction. After all, I was an immigrant; my parents just came off the boat. [laughter] So, I wouldn't have made it with these Virginians and what have you. ... Today, of course, I'm particularly proud to have a grandson—Glenn Brown, a junior—at Princeton.

SH: Had you visited the campus?

JR: No, no.

SH: Someone in your high school recommended that you make these applications.

JR: Yes. I think I visited Rutgers and I knew where Newark College was, because I was working in Newark, summers. So, yes, the choice was, I could get chemical at Newark College; Rutgers did not have a chemical engineering course. They had chemistry, but not chemical engineering. So, it was either that or take mechanical engineering. So, I chose to take mechanical engineering and go to Rutgers. ...

SH: Did you and your friends from Carteret that were also going to college ...

JR: Yes, but that was not a factor. It happened that we had a carpool the first year, about five of us from Carteret, the carpool, yes.

SH: Did you?

JR: And we commuted, yes.

MP: Did you live on campus?

JR: Yes. After the first year, ... my roommate that was a year ahead of me, Tom Connolly, Class of '42, he said, "Why don't we see what's available on campus?" and we took a room with Mrs. Murphy. We called it the Murphy [pronounced Mur-Phi] House, [laughter] and there was just the two of us, very small room. My roommate used to say, "It used to be a telephone booth and they took the telephone out." [laughter] So, we did that for a year. It was right on Easton Avenue. It was very convenient.

SH: Did you cook your own meals there or was that part of the board?

JR: No, no, it was just a room, five dollars a week. ...

MP: Did you work throughout your college years?

JR: Oh, yes, yes. Oh, I always had some kind of a job, yes. I had various jobs as a draftsman. See, ... through my brother, I continued to be employed by Breeze during the summers and the war was starting to get serious and they were getting [contracts]. Their claim to fame, of the company, at the time, was, the owner was quite well-known, J. J. Mascuch. He was quite a character and his basic patent involved encasing all the ignition wires, the whole ignition, high-tension ignition system, in metal, so that you could use the radio. That was his basic patent, because they couldn't communicate [by radio]. Well, you've seen [that with] even today's radios, when you go under a high-tension wire and all that. Well, they couldn't use the radio, because that's what was going on with the engine. So, with that basic patent, he built-up quite a business. Wiley Post was the one I was thinking of, if you ever heard that name. [laughter] ... When they started, my brother was his only draftsman. He did all the drafting for him. So, that's how we got an early foot in the door. So, I worked, first year, as an assistant to the blueprint boy. When I came back again, it was a given that I'm coming back, the chief draftsman says, "I'm going to put you on a board." He says, "Last year, when you left, I had to replace you and, all of a sudden, I've got two blueprint boys when I really only needed one." [laughter] He says, "I'm not having a third blueprint boy," [laughter] you know, expand the work, take care of the job, or something like that. So, he put me on a board, I was still in high school, and I did tracings my first year. I guess I was a sophomore in high school, yes, a sophomore or junior. ... In those days, it all sounds so archaic, but we had some Navy contracts, Navy components, and the Navy insisted on tracings in India ink, not pencil, originals, of everything that we built for them, yes, and they were, like, hatches and various hardware ... for the boats, I remember, shelving, doors. These were huge prints, you know. They'd be about eight-feet long. You kept rolling them. So, that was my job. I had to trace that with India ink, trace those with the little pen and the quill, and, if I ever spilled the ink on it, you know; [laughter] never happened. So, I became quite a tracer that summer. Well, then, the following summer; ... oh, meanwhile, my brother's giving courses to his friends in drafting. Yes, that helped. So, as a kid, I thought, "Well, I might as well take this course, see what this is all about." So, I did all the elementary drawing that he had to do at vocational school. So, I got the basics of what was going on. So, by that time, I was making actual working drawings and, by the time I got to Rutgers, I was a fully qualified draftsman, but I still had to take the drafting course. They told me, ... "We don't exempt anybody. We know you've got good experience as we see your initial drawings. You know what you're doing." ...

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

MP: Side two, tape one. How were your drawings used at Rutgers?

JR: How what?

MP: Your drafting experience.

JR: Oh, yes. Like I said, I was a full-fledged draftsman. I think I worked three or four summers on regular working drawings, and, if I say so myself, obviously, doing an acceptable job. It wasn't because of my big brother, ... but I had to take the course ... to get the credit. ... I don't

know if they have exemptions these days or not, but they just said, "No, you take the course." So, I did all the drawings, of course, without any problem and they used them as masters for the rest of the class. We drew on transparent paper and they would just take mine and put it on the others, see if theirs [matched]. ...

SH: Yours was the template, correct?

JR: Yes.

SH: How aware were you of what was going on in Europe in the 1930s? What were your thoughts? What did your family discuss around the dining room table?

JR: I don't recall any strong memories there. We knew what was going on. We knew what Hitler was up to. We all ... had great faith in FDR, of course. I know we were Democrats then, and probably even believed him, ... before his last election, when he said, "Your son and my son will never go to Europe," or, "never go to war," ... and, yet, it came as no surprise, let me put it that way, when Pearl Harbor [was] hit. I guess I was a sophomore at Rutgers. I think, to a man, that was on a Sunday, to a man, I think everybody was down volunteering ... for the services, including myself. I thought I wanted to go in the Air Force, and without any thought about it, you know. I think the whole country was that way, and I was rejected, because you had to be a perfect specimen. ... While one eye was 20/20, the other was 20/40, it still is, and they told me to complete my engineering [degree] and get a war job. So, that's pretty much what I set my sights on then, but, yes, we were very much aware of what was going on then, of course, concerned.

SH: At Breeze, were there any contracts coming into the company as a result of the lend-lease agreements?

JR: Oh, yes. Oh, they were growing like crazy, yes. ... Oh, they had a lock on this whole harness system. If you've ever seen the old internal combustion engines that preceded the jets, there's a big ring around [them]. It is very prominent. Well, that's where all the ignition wires are and that's what we made, that whole harness. We assembled all those wires and there's a metal cap over the magneto and ... over the sparkplug; that all had to be metal. So, that was our product and, yes, I was very much involved, because, to go ahead a little bit, ... shortly after that, we were accelerated ...

SH: After Pearl Harbor?

JR: After Pearl Harbor, and we, the scientific people, ... there were about three hundred in my class, about a hundred took ... this first half of the senior year during the summer, and that was probably my worst year. It was so dead at Rutgers. I mean, it was really shut down. There was absolutely no [social life] and I got back to commuting. I thought, "There's no point in staying here," no social activities, no group, ... except we had to go to class. ... My brother was then in the production assignment. I prevailed on him. I said, "I think I can finish my year and work at Breeze at the same time." He said, "No, no, no, you can't do that." I said, "Give me a shot." So, I took on a job, a full-time job, with Breeze in my last semester. [laughter] I commuted from Carteret. When he went to work, he'd leave me off at the railroad station in Rahway. I'd take the

train to New Brunswick. My classes were all in the morning, fortunately, and there weren't any labs anymore. This was the last semester, just theory and design, and what have you. I was usually done by noon. Noon, I took a train to Newark, got on the trolley and I was on-the-job at one o'clock, [laughter] and I worked over forty hours a week, I know that. I worked weekends and I worked until eleven, twelve at night. ... I felt I was, I know I was, making a contribution to the war effort, because, by then, we had taken over a five-story building, what used to be a piano company on Sussex Avenue. I don't know why I'm remembering all these things today. My kids wouldn't believe it. [laughter] Maybe I will get them the tapes. [laughter] It was a piano company converted just to making these harnesses, and just to give you an idea [of] how this country was geared up for war, ... when I went there full-time, that was about a year later, we had a quota of making one hundred harnesses every day.

SH: Every day?

JR: Every day. It was around the clock. We had about two thousand people working there around [the clock], shift work, and there was only one other company making them. That was Titeflex, in Newark, and they had the same quota. Now, you think, "This goes around the engine," and, "Boy, don't miss that hundred," I mean, you really were on the carpet, and they were going. They had to have them. That means somebody was making two hundred engines a day, combined, and that means somebody was assembling either ... two hundred single-fighters or fifty bombers a day, [laughter] to use up those engines. It was really, [laughter] I mean ...

SH: Just to get them out of there and get them moving.

JR: Oh, yes.

SH: Where were the factories that they were going to, where they made the fighters and bombers?

JR: Well, these went to the main [facilities]; well, there were two. There was Pratt and Whitney and Wright Aeronautical. They were the two big ones that were in the Connecticut area, I believe, but, then, there was Sikorsky and there was Grumman and there were all different types of special airplanes that required it, also. So, there was quite a variety of harnesses that we had to make, each fitted to the engine, of course.

SH: What was your specific job?

JR: I was production engineer and my job was to smooth out problems. We had constant ... manufacturing problems.

SH: With the machinery?

JR: With building the harnesses, with the people. These were all unskilled help that were working on this. We really had "Rosie the Riveters" there.

MP: They were handmade.

JR: Handmade, yes. ... I remember, one of our biggest challenges was, a lot of parts were made on the punch press, if you know what a punch press [is], around the clock now, and people keep losing fingers in it. ... We didn't want them losing fingers, so, we had to devise a foolproof mechanism, almost, and, I remember, we came up with one that we thought would do it. We made it so that he had to have a button [pressed] here and here for the press to go down, so that he could put the piece in, and then, he had to push two buttons to activate it.

SH: Just for the record, on either side, about eighteen inches apart.

JR: Yes, yes. Like, from this mike, he had to push two buttons here. You know, it didn't take them long to figure out that if you stuck a stick under this one, he didn't have to do that and he didn't need that hand and he could put this [the raw material] in, and we found that out when somebody else lost two or three fingers. It was that type of thing and, of course, there were materials ... that we used. A lot of silver soldering went on, a lot of techniques there for plating, because we made these things from scratch. I mean, we fabricated everything right there.

SH: How did you train the people coming in? You said they were unskilled, had never worked in this industry before.

JR: ... Each one's doing a little bit, a little piecemeal job, and [we] just told them what their job is and showed them the hazards and let them watch the other one.

SH: Where did you find your workforce? Where were they from?

JR: Oh, women were very abundant. They were very happy to go to work and do their part. Yes, there were more women than men in there working.

SH: Were there?

JR: Oh, yes, I mean, some people down here in Greenbriar that were silver solderers. [laughter] Yes, they all knew Breeze, yes. ... There were plenty of people.

SH: They did not have to recruit people or advertise.

JR: No, no, no.

SH: Just within that area.

JR: Yes. ... The whole country was geared for war material [production]. So, it didn't matter what you wanted, you couldn't get it anyhow, because that industry didn't exist, you know. ... They weren't building automobiles. They weren't building appliances. ... None of that was being built. ... So, you had to get a war job if you wanted to work. So, it didn't matter, you know. If the woman was a seamstress or what have you, yes, but you can't get any fabric or you can't get any thread, [laughter] you can't get any nylon. ... No, I don't recall any problem recruiting

people, but they were all piecemeal tasks. Our job was to automate it, I guess is the way to put it, so that anybody could do it, safely, yes.

MP: Could you describe your college years prior to Pearl Harbor, your first couple of years? Were you involved in any activities, student organizations, clubs?

JR: I guess.

MP: You said, as the war started, that student life disappeared.

JR: Yes. ... What are you majoring in, by the way?

MP: I am a history major.

JR: You're a history major. Oh, then, you caught that, where ... my grandson's going to be a history professor, okay. Some are even saying that engineering's not as tough as it used to be, but you visualize a class; we usually had four or five majors, which pretty much took up the mornings, and I think, our first year, we only had ... two labs, chemistry and physics. That was two afternoons. Sophomore year, we had four labs, four afternoons, one to five, in the laboratory, and write a report on that, in addition to everything else, what you did in that lab. I'm quite sure it was four, and [the] same with the junior year. I mean, you name it; we had electrical lab, we had hydraulics lab, we had aerodynamics lab, strength of materials lab. They were all full-time jobs. So, it was very rare that an engineer had time to do anything else extra. ... I stayed with the band only two years, I think. I couldn't keep with that and, pretty much, [I] was anxious to just get this over with. We had few, very few, [extracurricular activities]. I had one friend that made the crew. I still keep in touch with him and he's six-foot-five. He had the build for it. I, again, with my little frame, but I was six-feet, thought about the crew and they politely told me, "Don't even think about it." [laughter] ... Now, someone, just lately, was saying, "Well, engineering isn't as tough as it used to be," so, I don't know, maybe you feel that way. Maybe it's a little easier.

SH: I think it has always been known for being a really tough course.

JR: Very time demanding. What I see is, they seem more anxious to help the students get through and help them, even though they're struggling, ... qualify and do the work than they used to be. I mean, we literally got the lecture, I think there were a hundred would-be engineers in the freshman class, one-third of it; no, there were about five hundred in the freshman class. Yes, so, it was about one hundred would-be engineers in the freshman [year] and we were told, literally, the old story, "Say, 'Hello,' to the guy on your right and your left, because they're not going to be here next year," and out of that hundred, thirty graduated, ... as engineers. ...

SH: You had been the top student in your class at Carteret, correct?

JR: I think I was number two. I think a girl always beats the guy out, you know. [laughter] Anyhow, I was number one in eighth grade, yes. I got an award for that.

SH: Did you?

JR: [laughter] You know, I've got a book here. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Please, continue.

JR: Yes. ... In eighth grade, ... I got an award for the highest average in the eighth grade and the award was a total of two-and-a-half dollars, and, I think, more amusing than that is, I had a classmate, Martha Richert, who had eight years of perfect attendance without being absent, and her reward was one dollar. [laughter] ... In high school, I think I was second in the class. ... I should add, we didn't quite have class standings. ... They didn't advertise where you were, but I think one girl was ahead of me and we didn't have valedictorian and salutatorian, although she did say something at graduation. I didn't. So, maybe that was why, but I know I was at least second in high school.

SH: You were class president.

JR: And I was class president, yes. We've had a couple of good reunions since then, too.

SH: When you came to Rutgers, did you have a scholarship?

JR: No. I got it after the first year. Then, I had a scholarship for the rest of the time.

SH: Can you tell us about how you got the scholarship for the first time?

JR: ... Well, I had all "1s," ["As"], except for two "2s," ["Bs"], in general economics and English, yes, which were not my bag, anyhow. The rest were all "1s." So, when Dean Metzger saw this, he gave [me] a scholarship, on the spot, of one hundred dollars, and I was very grateful. ... As the summer went on and I got the papers to reapply, ... coming back in sophomore year, I thought, "Well, maybe I'll try for another hundred dollars," and I told them I was having a hard time, wrote a nice letter, and, sure enough, I got the other hundred dollars. So, the only thing it cost me was, there was a general fee that everybody had to pay. That was sixty-six dollars each semester, that's all it cost me, and I'll just show you my bill, with the dormitory [fee].

SH: You moved into the Ford Hall.

JR: When I moved into Ford Hall, yes. Ford Hall, for the semester, cost sixty-two-fifty, and with all the other fees, my bill was 154 dollars for a semester, including the dorm. [laughter]

SH: [laughter] Hard to believe, right, Mike?

JR: Isn't it? [laughter]

SH: [laughter] At any point, did you ever think of changing your major?

JR: ... Never.

SH: Was engineering just exactly what you wanted?

JR: Oh, there's no question. ... This is what I wanted to be, this is what I enjoyed; ... no, I never gave it any thought at all. Now, while there, I did get into Phi Beta Kappa, which was, then, [the] ten percent of the class, and Tau Beta Pi in my junior year, when they only picked three and made [them] the officers, and then, I was president of Tau Beta Pi in my senior year.

SH: What is Tau Beta Pi?

JR: Tau Beta Pi is the honorary engineering society, and it's very unusual for an engineer to have both, because Phi Beta Kappa is primarily a Liberal Arts society, or I'm not sure if that's the right term, and my courses consisted of, in the arts, ... the English and the economics, that was it, freshman year. ... I happened to have a friend that worked in the office, from Carteret High School, that kind of kept me posted when they were deliberating, because they had, also, a tremendous tradition there, and I was told that the Phi Beta Kappa people were again debating, because I think there were three in my class, three engineers, that were eligible for Phi Beta Kappa. I think that was the number and, lo and behold, tradition won out and we all got the Phi Beta Kappa. It wouldn't happen today.

SH: Really?

JR: Yes. Now, they're separate, because Phi Beta Kappa, as other disciplines got their own honor societies, they started saying, ... "We're strictly, you know, ... an arts organization and each field can have their own societies," but that's how I happened to have both. ... I don't know if any other college did that. Well, I know no one would give it to engineers today. I don't think Rutgers would, either.

SH: Congratulations.

JR: Yes.

SH: Were you also involved with your class officers in college?

JR: No, no, we weren't, particularly; you mean the whole class?

SH: Did you complete two years of ROTC or did playing in the band exempt you from that?

JR: Technically, yes, but we had the option. ... I had the uniform and all that, but, if we were in the band, which I was, instead of learning how to shoot the rifles, we had band rehearsal, and we still got the two credits and served our time, but, no, I was not involved in the ROTC, the war part of it. So, we were content, playing [in] the band, and then, I couldn't keep that up after the two years. That's all that was required. I should say, in fairness to my classmates, we were the hardest hit [of the Rutgers College classes] in World War II. We lost ten percent of our class,

because, ... as a result of being accelerated, we were graduated in January of '43 and these boys were, young men, ... second lieutenants. I mean, they were ready to go on the boat and right on the front. So, thirty of our class, thirty-one of our class, were killed in World War II. ... We're the only ones that have a memorial, up on the Heights now, [in front of the Louis Brown Rutgers Athletic Center on the Livingston Campus in Piscataway, New Jersey]. We have a big granite stone with all their names in it and a beautiful poem, written by one of our classmates, commemorating the thirty-one that we lost, yes.

SH: Irv Pape wrote that poem.

JR: Very sad. Then, I had a little note here, because my grades did drop when I was working over forty hours and the weekend, I got some threes and fours then, but that didn't matter. I know, I remember going to some profs, telling them, "You're ruining my 'cume [cumulative average]." He'd say, "What's your 'cume?" and I said it. He said, "This is not going to have any effect on your 'cume. What are you worrying about?" [laughter] ...

MP: Do you remember the Scarlet Barbs? Were you involved in that?

JR: No. Yes, I remember; what was the society? Refresh my memory on that; I know I wasn't involved in it.

SH: It was almost like an anti-fraternity. The 1943 yearbook listed you as a Scarlet Barb.

JR: ... It did? ...

SH: In other words, in *The Scarlet Letter*, [the Rutgers College yearbook], it just listed anybody who was not in a fraternity as a Scarlet Barb?

JR: Yes, right.

SH: Who was your favorite professor?

JR: I liked a lot of them. I liked a lot of them. I would say my math professor, my Calculus professor, who was Professor [James J.] Slade, and there was another math professor, [Merle] Galbraith. I liked both of them very much. Professor Slade was an associate of Einstein.

SH: Really?

JR: He spent his spare time over in Princeton, [laughter] comparing notes with Albert.

SH: [laughter] Would he come back and tell you what he had heard?

JR: [laughter] Yes, but he never told us they were working on the atom bomb. But he was really a brilliant man and very compassionate. ... I'll just never forget, I think, at some stage, I forget, but it was a new ... phase in the class and he was really breezing along. I'll bet you never had a prof like this. So, we had our first exam, [after] four, five weeks, and he came in the class with

all the papers. He says, "I owe you all an apology. It's obvious I've been going too fast for you. You didn't quite get [it]. I'm going too fast for you to understand what I'm saying." He says, "So, we'll just have to start all over," and he just ripped the papers, threw them in the garbage can. [laughter]

SH: Oh, my word.

JR: He's a big man, to do that. [laughter]

SH: Amazing; what a lesson to teach.

JR: Yes. He was pretty good, but there were a lot of good ones that I recall, that I had. Now, I also had interesting jobs there. ... [laughter] I forget his name; as a draftsman, I worked for a geologist professor that, in the summer, went and measured the movement of the glacier up at one of the Poles or so. ... To him, a draftsman was one that, what did they call them? geodesic maps, the ones with elevations and all. Well, he called that a drafting job. So, I got that job of making these maps for him. That was not my idea of drafting. [laughter] So, we kind of mutually agreed that this was not a good fit and he didn't think I was a good draftsman and I didn't think that was my line, either, but I had an interesting job, though. ... I printed these transcripts for the front office, oh, because that was a hobby I had in high school, photography. It goes way back. ... Up in my attic, I had my own photography lab.

SH: Did you?

JR: Yes, ... but I had no water up there. Now, that's pretty hard to do. So, when it came to washing the developer and to finish off the print, I had to run down the stairs to the bathroom, to rinse them in there, and that whole wall turned black from these chemicals, from getting wet from them. [laughter] ... That was the process. There was a photographic process for making these things, and there were no Xerox machines, you know, and that's what a blueprint machine was. That's why I was a blueprint boy. That was a wet process. You rolled paper under lights and exposed it and you developed it and dried it. Oh, yes, so, this was the same. They had to expose, I guess the negatives were black, yes, to white paper, and this had to be developed, just like a photograph, and then, ... each time, they'd give me a batch of them, I'd print them, take them over to the office.

SH: Where did you do the printing? Was there a place set up for you?

JR: Oh, I had one of the rare, haunted houses at the time, right next to the Engineering Building. There was nothing in it, and this was up on the third floor, but this silly lab. So, that's where I had to go. Like, [at] midnight, I had to go in this building, after [dark]. "I hope nobody's in here," you know? Not a lot of work was done, you know, at the off hours. I don't think it's there anymore, but it was one of the very old buildings that had the lab in it, but, I recall, I was paid, I think, fifty cents an hour, yes, for it, fifty cents an hour. ... I guess I was brash and, after a while of this, and they got a buck a piece for these; I knew that. That was pretty good. So, at one point, I went in and told; that was Professor, what the heck was his name, that was running it? I said, "You know, I don't think this is quite fair. I think I'm being underpaid." I said, "I do about

twenty of these an hour and I get fifty cents for it," and I said, "I take them up to the front office. They ship them out. They get a buck a piece for them. So, they get twenty bucks." You know, he was kind of taken back, "What's this guy doing here?" I said, "I think I'm worth a little more." So, anyhow, he checked. So, they raised me to seventy-five cents an hour.

SH: [laughter] That is a pretty good increase.

JR: [laughter] Yes, a lot of nice memories from there, yes.

SH: Your commencement at Rutgers was in January. Did you have a commencement speaker?

JR: Yes, General Hugh Aloysius Drum. I remember him very well and I remember what his theme was. "Every man should be in the Army," that was his whole theme. He was completely oblivious that somebody had to stay behind and build something and do some engineering, [laughter] but that was his whole theme, "Everybody should be in the Army."

SH: Was he part of the ROTC at Rutgers?

JR: I think he was one of the top generals there. Let's see; no, ... I don't have the front page here.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JR: ... Probably just one of the top commanders. ... This is part of it and there was just our group that appeared, so, I never really got an official reading on where I ended up in the class standing or anything. They didn't make that big a deal over it and I didn't go to the regular one that was in June, for the non-technical people.

SH: The January graduation was mostly for technical people, engineering graduates.

JR: It was technical. Let's see, those taking chemistry, also, chemistry majors, I think, and it was a select group, yes, ... that was considered essential. Oh, yes, one summer, I didn't work at Breeze, [laughter] I taught. I taught summer courses. I guess it was probably after my sophomore year, because there was a shortage of draftsmen. ... Really, that was the emphasis, these were high school kids, to teach them drafting. ... I guess there were several of us that taught these guys drafting, how to be a draftsman, including the necessary back-up courses. So, I taught drafting and algebra, as I recall, yes, for the summer.

SH: At Rutgers?

JR: At Rutgers.

SH: Really?

JR: Oh, yes. It was sponsored by Rutgers. I think we had, oh, I don't know, a hundred students or something like that.

SH: Were they all men? Were there some women?

JR: No, no women, yet. [laughter] No, they didn't qualify for that. [laughter]

SH: What about NJC, just across town?

JR: The Coop?

SH: Why do you think it was called the Coop?

JR: Chicken coop? I don't know. I never thought of it. Everybody called it "the Coop." Yes, we had some friends there. We'd go over, occasionally. Again, time was short, but we had friends over there, ... nothing serious or anything, and I didn't have any serious girlfriend or anything during this time. ... I do remember, one night, the three of us, our band, for some reason, he didn't need us that night and ... I think we were in tuxes, even though. ... Here, we're all dressed up and my roommate was a big bass drum [player] and there was some [place], I forget the name of the tavern, but it was right near the bridge there. So, we didn't have a job. We said, "Why don't we go over to the Coop, see what's going on over there?" So, we just saw a group of girls, like they were gathering for a party, and my roommate was the ringleader. He says, "Let's just go in and set up and start playing." So, we just went in, like musicians, and the girls were kind of looking [at] what this is and we just put up our instruments and started playing, you know. ... Finally, the chairman came over and wanted to know what we were doing. [laughter] Anyhow, we got kicked out of there. They decided, no, they were planning on using the jukebox; they didn't want us there. [laughter]

SH: That was good. [laughter]

JR: But, it was nice. ... Even a female on the campus was a rarity. ... This was no coed school, this was a men's school, and one of the, quote, "thrills" of being an engineer, ... taking a surveying course, which is another lab we had to take, surveying. ... We had these; you see them use these big spyglasses called "eye levels." Well, whenever there was a gal coming down, boy, that thing would go around and you'd get that, "Oh, hey, hey, I've got one over here. Look, wow, ain't she something," but rarely did a girl attend class. If it was something special, they would accommodate them, but this was really a men's town over here.

SH: Since you were in the band, did you have the opportunity to go to any of the dances on campus, like the Military Ball?

JR: Oh, yes, yes, I went to those. We weren't that quality; I mean, we weren't competing with Tommy Dorsey or any of that. [laughter] ... There were some larger bands that were more professional than we were, because they were bigger, but we really didn't have that much time. This was strictly Saturday nights, no real rehearsals. ... At that time, I could sight read anything. I mean, I'm not bragging, but ... I had no time to rehearse. ... The pattern was, now and then, you'd get some entertainers in, no rehearsals, and whatever they're going to do, sing or dance or what have you, they'd just throw their music on the piano, you know, and then, the sax player would look at that music, he'd kind of fake it, and the drummer. So, I had to play the music, first

time, for the performance, you know, and I managed to get through. I remember, my worst one was, they had a Chinese group and I was thrown this Chinese music. Well, the notes are universal, you know, but there's a certain beat or pattern to every music and I had no idea what the Chinese should be. I mean, I was playing it like an American, you know. I know it was terrible, but, no, we didn't go any further with that, ... just no time. I didn't pursue it after, either, other than [through] various groups. Like, I was in the Knights of Columbus, so, I became the organist there and I had to play whenever they had to sing anything. My biggest performance was when my son, I was always involved with whatever the kids were doing, that was my life and I loved it, ... was in the Cub Scouts. We had a musical review, about a hundred Cubs. We had a big troop and the fathers met and the guys running the show said, "Well, we need somebody, some musicians," and nobody raised their hands or anything. ... Finally, I said, "Well, I've been out of it quite a while," I said, "but you're going to have rehearsals; maybe I can get by for your rehearsals," you know. "Yes, yes, that's fine," and then, a couple of other fathers, "Yes, we'll join you." Well, nobody joined me. I ended up doing all the rehearsals with them, and this was odd, because the house we were rehearsing [in] had the piano on the first floor and they were rehearsing in the basement. So, what these guys rigged up for me was an intercom system, so they could talk to me while I'm playing upstairs and they're teaching them the dance routines downstairs, [laughter] and I was right by the door. Then, friends would come to the house and I'm playing away and they'd look at me, "What's this guy doing here?" They don't even know me, you know, [laughter] no idea. Anyhow, it was about two weeks before the show and I told the other fathers, "You know, you ought to get the pro in here and get him accustomed." "Yes, we're working on it, Joe. Don't worry about it." So, meanwhile, nothing's happening and, the following week, I again brought it up. I said, "Who's going to do the show?" He says, "Sit down, Joe." [laughter] He says, "You've got it down so pat, the kids are comfortable with you, you're going to do the show." ... So, anyhow, yes, I think there were three performances that we did, in a big high school, I think about five hundred people each time to come see. That was my last public performance. I got through it, [laughter] and my son was the big hit, because he played a harmonica. He was in a harmonica band. I was in that with him, too. I was in the Cubs with him. I was in Little League. I was the Little League coach with him. Whatever the kids did, I did, and remember the record *Eloise* [by Barry Ryan]? ... Well, he did a pantomime of *Eloise* and he got the job, because ... they got the record and it ended up in my house. So, I played it, to see what it was all about, and he starts pantomiming it. So, he had an edge on the other guys. So, by the time they tried out, nobody could touch him. So, he got the pantomime of *Eloise* and all that. ... It was a great show, great memories.

SH: Was there still mandatory chapel when you went to Rutgers?

JR: Yes, except if you were Catholic. Then, you were excused and I don't know how it checked on you, but I've had no [problems]. I've been a rather ... regular Catholic ever since I can remember. I went to Mass anyhow, either if I was at [home or school]. I went to St. Joe's if I was in Carteret, or was it St. Peter's over there, I believe, yes, regular, and I don't recall how they checked up on you, but it didn't bother me, because I knew what I was doing. ... We had to appear once a month, I think, for a service on a Monday, in; what's the chapel there now?

SH: Kirkpatrick?

JR: Kirkpatrick, yes, but "Whistling Willie," remember "Whistling Willie?"

MP: I do not know about that.

SH: Tell Michael.

JR: [laughter] I can't do it; some of the guys could do it. ... The way he spoke, he had [a sort of speech impediment], and then, a real whistle would come out on some of the words he would say. ... He was one of the guys that was a regular there. I don't know if he was a minister or what.

SH: I think he was an ordained Dutch Reformed minister.

JR: But, you'd see all these guys under there, talking about... [Editor's Note: Mr. Rocky imitates the whistling noise.] No, I might add, to this day, ... yes, it's an interesting part of the story, I now go to Mass every day, every morning. I was there this morning. I had been going during the Lenten season, in lieu of giving something up, like they tell you to do. I've been doing that for about fifty years, and then, since I moved down here and lost my wife, [I] decided to extend it to a daily routine. So, I keep going every day. I find it an excellent way to start the day, very uplifting, and the other part of the story, that Catholics get a kick out of, my kids were all brought up [Catholic]. My wife was Irish. She really went to Catholic schools all the way, and so did the kids. My son even went to St. Benedict's in prep school, and so did the girls, until they were so overcrowded. I remember, ... when they were in sixth or seventh grade, there were brand-new schools going up and they had about fifty, sixty in the class in the Catholic school, so, we gave them a choice. We talked about it. I remember, Jane, the older one, giving me a lecture, [laughter] sixth grade. She said, "Daddy, it's your job, it's not our job, to make these decisions. You have to figure out what's best for us." [laughter] I said, "If I had any feeling on what was best for you, that's what you'd be doing." I said, "We're telling you ... either one is okay with us." So, that was the first break from that. Anyhow, the bottom line is, they all married non-Catholics, [laughter] ... and great ones. That's one thing I forgot to add when I went through the family; my thing I'm particularly proud of [is], every one of those is on their first marriage, no divorces. The youngest one is married over twenty years now. [laughter]

SH: That is amazing.

JR: So, they're the greatest guys, [sons-in-law], but my son was about twenty-six or twenty-seven, going with Tina, whose father happened to work with me in Bound Brook. We didn't know that at the time, until they met on a skiing trip, and he was good enough to bring it up with the family, what we thought about Tina and all that. ... He says, "Well, we seem to be getting serious." He says, "Would that bother you that she's not Catholic?" and, independently, my wife and I said to him, "If it doesn't bother you, it's not going to bother us," and, of course, that paved the way for everybody else. She's been a wonderful girl, too, but that's the way we felt about it. We saw too much of the other way, based on religion, that just didn't add up, you know. So, I have no regrets. I got a great family out of it, but it comes up, every now and then. It so happens that the last marriage, Jill, my granddaughter, married a Catholic boy, I don't even know what the arrangement is, but ... we have two annual memorial Masses for my wife. ... He came to the first

one and I didn't know what he was until he went up to Communion with me. I said, "Uh-oh," [laughter] and so, ... we like to needle each other. I tell him, "I think we're ... making a comeback," and I think this new boy we're going to meet may be a Catholic, too. I'm not sure. [laughter] ... I didn't mean to get off the subject.

SH: That is all right. Did the University and the student body keep track of what was going on in the war? In January of 1943, when you graduated, things were not going very well.

JR: I don't recall. I know there ... was certainly no question; maybe this is the heart of your question. There were no, quote-unquote, "activist" groups. There were no anti-war people. That wasn't going on. The country was united. FDR did an amazing job. So, it was the way of life, more than any dissention or anyone looking to get out of it. There was no question about what had to be done and how we were going to do it. We all had one goal—"unconditional surrender."

SH: I meant, did you keep track of how the war was progressing, or where Rutgers men were serving, specifically?

JR: Oh, yes. Well, we had our radios, of course. We had the news, and then, ... every time we went to the movies, we had the news come up.

SH: The newsreels?

JR: The newsreels, yes. You know, we didn't have the communications that we have today.

SH: You described how you and your classmates tried to enlist and get involved right away. Did you hear from anybody? Did you get any letters?

JR: ... Just my roommate. ... He really wanted to be a pilot because, he was turned down, because he was colorblind, and didn't he, whatever, change his diet? or what[ever] happened, but, somehow, he passed that test. ... He did get in the Air Force, but, unfortunately, he didn't make it as a pilot and he got out all right. Like I said, he just passed away last year, but he ended up as a tail gunner, which is not what he had in mind, see.

SH: They never have that in mind.

JR: I kept in touch with him. He was at my wedding. He happened to be off at the time, yes. Yes, we kept in touch with some of them, a letter, now and then, maybe. ...

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

MP: This continues an interview with Mr. Joseph Rocky on November 15, 2006, in Toms River, New Jersey, with Michael Perchiacca and Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

SH: Please, continue. The tape left off a very important statement.

JR: Yes

SH: We were talking about your senior year. [laughter]

JR: It was my senior year. We graduated in January and the following year was when I fell in love. I had no particular romance going. I had no plans for marriage or anything, really, and it didn't matter too much whether I had a date or not. I was so busy, really, working, and thinking I was doing my part for the war effort. That's what they told me to do, work for the war effort, but, [at] the very end of '43, I had another assignment to another location, which amounted to a research and development type of activity, as opposed to production engineering. ... A mutual friend got a group together for Christmas ... and decided to include the Rocky boys, as we were known, and we just had a luncheon before Christmas. There were some lovely girls there, [laughter] but one in particular caught my eye, and the story is best told by her best friend, who was also there, Marge Hanrahan. She's the only one still alive, with me, from the wedding party and was her best friend. ... Marge has told this many times, how excited she was, because I called Marge after this party and she thought, "Boy;" don't forget, single guys were a rarity, too. They were all in the service. "Boy, he's calling me, of all those girls." My question to ... her was, "What was the name of the girl sitting next to you?" [laughter] Anyhow, that was Mickey Rooney, was her name, Eleanor Rooney, Mickey Rooney. So, I thought she was kind of cute and nothing happened over the holidays. In fact, that New Year's Eve, my mother let me know she was a little concerned, I remember it because of her little concern, because I spent it in the garage, doing something on the lathe. I was on some kind of a project, some kind of woodworking project. She let me know that she was a little concerned that that wasn't the best activity for New Year's Eve. I guess I was twenty-four then, yes. [laughter] So, when we went back to work, after New Year's, I decided to give Mickey a call. "How about lunch?" and she said, "Oh, sure, we'll go to lunch." So, we met for lunch and we had quite a chat, but it was nice, and then, there were a couple of social gatherings, you know. We had an airplane club, we had various patrol clubs and what have you, but there was another one the following weekend and she was there. ... We got [to] talking to each other and we never stopped talking. Everybody was talking about us, because we just kept talking and talking. She was the secretary in the purchasing department. So, among other things, I said to her, "How'd you like to go see *Oklahoma* next week?" Now, you have to appreciate [that] *Oklahoma* was sold out for a year at that time, forget about tickets, and what she didn't know was, ... one of my lab assistants was from Brooklyn. He happened to be a Jewish man, which really has nothing to do with it, but he was also the kind [of person] I knew had contacts. ... I mean, he was there because he didn't want to be in the war and it was a government job, essential job. So, the next day, I told Harold, "You can come in late tomorrow, just don't come in without two tickets; four tickets," I was going to take my brother, "four tickets for *Oklahoma* for next week." He just never batted an eyelash, you know. He came in [at] noon the next day, [laughter] had the four tickets for me. They were fifteen dollars a piece. I know, I remember that, too, scalper prices, and I called her up. She said [that] it knocked her off the chair. I says, "I got the tickets. How about next Wednesday night?" "You what?" [laughter] So, after that, it was really a textbook love affair. ... We saw each other all the time. We were married in a year. We courted all the summer of '44 and were married February 3, 1945, two-three-four-five, [2/3/45], very easy to remember.

SH: Good for you.

JR: Yes, and had a great marriage.

SH: You knew that what you were doing was contributing to the war effort, but did you encounter people in public who wondered why you were not in the service? Did you ever have to explain yourself? Did you ever feel like someone thought you should be in the service?

JR: I'm sure there were those people. I don't recall that it was an issue. The ones who were my friends, that was no problem with them. I'm sure there were people that felt that way, yes. ... I felt I was doing my job, that somebody had to do it, and both my draft board felt that way and so did the recruiters from the Air Force, so, that was fine with me. I wasn't particularly anxious to go over there and get killed, I'll admit that. I didn't think that was the way I should be serving, you know, and I was very, very enthused about what I was doing. The R&D project that I was on, ... really, was a non-[issue], but the war was over shortly after that, so, it didn't matter. This pre-dated jets, you see. They were just on the horizon. I didn't even know they were. So, we're working on an advanced ignition system for the old type of airplanes, [laughter] and it didn't hit me until a couple of years [later], until we realized that these were being replaced by jets that don't have these harnesses and, *ergo*, [these were obsolete]. I guess, Breeze, oh, they were acquired by a lot of people over the years, but I had no control over that. I had no way of knowing. No, engineers were respected. There were a lot of them, you know, in industry, doing the job.

SH: I wondered if you were ever on a train or a bus and overheard a comment. What other effects did the war have on you and your family, through rationing, for example?

JR: Well, yes, there were shortages, of course. They weren't making things. I didn't even have a car. ... The first thing I did after I met Eleanor was buy a car. You know, today, kids have a car to go to high school. I always had my brother's car available. That's the only thing I had. I didn't even have the desire for it until I met Mickey. So, the first thing I had to do was buy a car, bought a nice little coupe, but, yes, there it is, a picture of it, a Ford Coupe, but I couldn't buy a new one. They weren't making new ones. This was, I think, two years old. I think it cost me about five hundred dollars, yes, but it was a cute car, lasted a long time, the Ford Coupe, with opera seats in the back, folding seats in the back. ... Soon as it looked like, "This looks serious," that's the first thing I did, couldn't use my brother's car every night, but, ... like I said, I admit that I was preoccupied with that and my job. ... So, we were on cloud nine, both of us; the feeling was mutual. It was only about a month [later that] I told my mother, "You can quit worrying. If she'll have me, I think I found her." [laughter]

SH: Wow, how nice.

JR: Yes. It still touches me. ...

SH: Was she from Carteret also?

JR: No. She worked in Breeze, but she was from the Oranges, yes. Are you familiar with the Oranges?

SH: A bit, yes.

JR: Well, it's sort of a landmark, the church we were married in. That's our first house. There she is. It's a good picture of us.

SH: She is beautiful.

JR: Yes. That's one thing [that] shocked the family. ... Even though it was conventional to go to an apartment and rent and save your money, just the two of us, we couldn't find anything. ... We got this lead on a new house for sale, only four years old, and there were a lot of people looking at it and we thought we had to act fast. So, we put money down on it. Both families were mad at us. ... "You can't do that. You didn't even have any help. Just the two of you?" "We can handle it." [laughter] Turned out, two others wanted to bid [on] it, but they were too slow, they were too late. So, it was a beautiful house. It was four years old, six rooms, lot was fifty-by-a-hundred, in a better spot of Union, [New Jersey], cost every bit of seventy-nine hundred dollars. [laughter]

SH: That is almost as bad as that tuition bill.

JR: That's right. [laughter] To put it in perspective—starting salary for graduate engineers was about two thousand dollars a year.

MP: Did you work with any volunteer groups for the war effort?

JR: Yes. No, I don't recall anything in particular there.

SH: Any bond drives, anything like that?

JR: Oh, well, yes, we had drives. In fact, that's another thing I did to her. She came in, ... one of the first weeks, ... selling bonds. You know, I said, "Oh, I'll take one for a hundred dollars." ... Now, a hundred dollars was a lot of money in those days. I still have it somewhere. ... She was snowed and it worked. This is St. John's, where we were married. ... You know, it's a beautiful church. I have another relative, from her side, every year, she sends me a Christmas card, for Christmas, of St. John's. Here is the bride picture.

SH: Did she have a large family?

JR: Oh, yes. She's the one that had the four sisters. She was the baby of four sisters and they were all married; no, one wasn't. The one born before her wasn't. Oh, yes, oh, yes, that was a challenge in itself. She talked so much about me that I got a nickname of "Wonder Bread." They called me "Wonder Bread." [laughter] This wedding picture, yes, this is the wedding party and this is Marge Hanrahan. She's the only one that's still alive, yet, from this group. This is my parents there, from the wedding.

SH: Great hat.

JR: Yes. [laughter] So, we were honeymooning in New York. That sounds pretty mundane, but, again, the war setting, you couldn't go anywhere without a reason. I mean, after all, flying was not commercial, and even to go on the train, you had to have a reason. I know, I had some business trips, but that's how I got on the train. I had some business trips to ...

SH: A business strip?

JR: No, trips.

SH: Oh, trips; I am sorry.

JR: Trips, when I got into the research part of it. I had some trips to Dow and to Wright Aeronautical, in Pittsburgh there, and Air Force bases. ... My first plane ride was in 1944, out of what was then Newark Airport. [laughter]

SH: Really?

JR: Yes. ... It was just starting and there was a flight to Boston on a DC-3. ... It was two seats on one side, one on the other, and six rows back, with a stewardess and all that, held nineteen, and there were a lot of skeptics that wondered if the plane would ever get off the ground with that many people in it, [laughter] but I pioneered and it did fine. I think it took about an hour-and-a-half, or something like that, from Newark to Boston. So, I had a couple of those, and then, my first one to Europe was in '54, which was equally early, for Union Carbide. ... At that time, I was sort of a guinea pig, and they told me so. They couldn't understand why it was quite common to fly to the West Coast, even though it took ten or twelve hours, where they had to change crews, but at least we were doing it, but not to Europe, because, every time somebody had to go to Europe, somebody'd say, "Oh, while you're there, ... will you see this company?" ... So, it always took a month and the guy got a nice vacation out of it, you know, touring Europe. ... I was with Carbide by then, of course, but there was a patent that they were offering. I was an assistant director of research and development then. I was only thirty-four, thirty-five. ... They had me go with another guy from one of our sister companies, because someone had a new invention ... involving plastics, from the family that was Mertz threads. It was a thread company named after it. Anyhow, they wanted a million dollars for it and they want a reading on it, a technical reading, on what it was worth. So, I got that trip and they said, "But that's just one assignment. Don't take any others. You're not going anywhere else," and I remember, they said, "We want you to leave on a Monday and you're going to be back Friday." I say, "Oh, come on, give me a break; at least let me take a look at London and come back Monday." [laughter] So, they said, "All right, you could look at London on the weekend." [laughter] So, that was my first flight. It was, I think, fourteen hours over. We had a prop job, of course. We had to stop in Newfoundland to get gas and, [flying] back, I guess, maybe, it was eighteen. I forget which way it goes, but it was four hours longer one way or the other, yes.

MP: When you visited Europe in 1954, could you still see the ravages of war?

JR: Oh, yes, oh, yes. ... It was a very different culture, yes, Britain. You could see that all over the place.

MP: Over here, the American public really was not exposed to what the British were exposed to.

JR: Oh, yes. It was all over the place.

SH: They still had rations.

JR: What was the other story I was going to tell you about?

MP: The Washington trip?

JR: Oh, no, that was the Washington trip, yes. ... I think there were four of us from the class, Chris Maggio, Bill Makoski, Tom Connolly, my roommate, and Charlie Mogensen, I think, yes, oh, and Sammy Piller. He was the star. We drove down for a weekend, I think, to see Washington. That was a big deal and, in the process, we didn't know this, but Sammy Piller; ... it's what everybody wrote about in that book. Sammy Piller was a collector of kind of odd artifacts, like the sign from the East Room [of the White House], and he decided, "That'd be nice to take home." Well, somebody saw him and they start chasing us and we start running and Sammy throws the sign over the fence, figures he'll get rid of it. [laughter] Anyhow, they rounded us up, all five of us. Captain Marcy, I'll never forget him, he was in charge. Boy, did he teach us a lesson, in retrospect, kept us there the full day, waiting, interrogating us, one at a time, making it clear that; what'd he say? "This is a federal offense," which makes it, what, a felony? Is that the right term? This is not petty thievery, this is a felony we're faced with, and [for] all of us, but mainly Sam, actually, it was just a good lesson. He didn't even call the University, but he wanted the names of his parents and the University and all. [laughter] ... Finally, they let us go and said, "Hope you learned your lesson."

SH: My word.

JR: But, we were, what? about nineteen or twenty then, I guess, yes.

SH: What did you hope to see in Washington?

JR: Oh, we saw all the buildings. ...

SH: You were sightseeing.

JR: Sightseeing, that's all, yes, just sightseeing, so, just a trip, to go over the holidays.

SH: While you were at Rutgers, was Camp Kilmer being built up?

JR: Oh, yes, yes. That was the point of embarkation, I guess they called it. Yes, all of that was really building up.

SH: Did anyone from Rutgers ever pass through there that you went down to see or meet?

JR: Not that I recall. I don't recall going there for any reason, no, no.

SH: Were any of your friends also working on war-related projects around that area?

JR: Well, yes. One [that] is interesting was the one that was president of Tau Beta Pi before me, Sam Mason, '42. He was the head of his class in engineering and he went to MIT, to work in their R&D operation, and he worked on radar, which is very common, now. It was on one of my trips to Boston, stopping in to have lunch with him and, when we went to lunch, he wanted to let me in on a secret and he looked around to make sure nobody would hear it. ... He says, "We can see at night. We can bomb them at night now." That was an innovation. [laughter] ... So, yes, we were pretty close at school, but that was what he worked on, that they figured out how they could see the profiles at night, and others, I heard from [them], but they don't come to mind at the time. It was a very, very trying time. We were glad when it was all over, of course.

SH: When the war ended, first, in Europe, then, in Japan, what kind of celebrations took place?

JR: Yes. Well, I remember my own career at Breeze, because we were strictly a war place, I can tell you about the industrial world, so was everybody else, and there weren't any more jobs. The busiest machines, when the war was officially over, were the ones going to purchasing departments, canceling orders like crazy.

SH: Really?

JR: Yes, sir. Everything was canceled. ... We had a consolidation at Breeze, of course, because this was kind of an extra exploration, exploratory type R&D project I was on, but that was all consolidated. I ended up in the main engineering department and I was, at that time, one of about one hundred engineers that they had from different activities and [they were] looking for things for these guys to do. Everything we made, there's no orders for it. I mean, we were in a lot of other things. ... We had a group that made lightweight, bulletproof armor, if you can think of such a thing, but it was for airplanes, and it was enough to prevent the pilot from getting shot up, anyhow. [laughter] We made starters for airplane engines based on a gunshot. I don't know if you've even heard of them, but it was a breach system, where they actually fired a cartridge from a gun, like a gun, and the force went in to kick the engine over and start it. ... They were used exclusively on aircraft carriers, on the planes on them, ... single-props, yes, because these guys are lined up, ready to go, and they didn't want to fool around with an engine not turning over. So, they were pretty interesting items that we made. So, it was a whole slew of things. In fact, our J. J. Mascuch was quite an entrepreneur. He would get these projects and ... we had another manufacturing facility. You probably don't know the area; I don't know if you know Elizabeth at all, but there's a huge Durant Building there, where they used to make the Durant cars, if you ever heard of them. [laughter] It's blocks long and, of course, they weren't making cars anymore. They were all [divided into] little cubicles, rented out, but Breeze happened to be on the one end, where the water tower was, see. So, this guy took a picture of this, an aerial picture of this, and had the Breeze name on the water tower and went to Washington, looking for contracts, you know. There's a picture of where we are, you know. [laughter] What a promoter; so, that's how we got some of these odd things that we were building. ... The bottom line was, I mentioned a hundred engineers, we acquired a stove company and we were treating that like an

airplane part, and that wasn't right, either. That didn't work. We had so many. I had a project, all the while. ... Meanwhile, they're cutting back the force and, every month or two, we had a huge room and the chief engineer would step out of his office and look somebody right in the eye, down the end, and go like this, and that was another layoff coming. So, in the meantime, I had a variety of projects that I had to handle. I remember, I had a blasting magneto, one time, that was turned over to me, actually for use in the mines, and going to Scranton, where the mines were. ... They wanted to take me down, five miles in the ground, to test this thing and I said, "Well, are you sure that's the best place to test this?" you know. "No, we don't have to. If you don't want to go down there, we can do it up here." I said, "Let's do it up here." [laughter] I didn't need that ride. So, it was interesting, but the point was, ... from that hundred, with these layoffs, ... the war ended in '45, by '48 or so, we were down to about a dozen engineers from that group that had anything left. Each time, it was new assignments, and I remember one of those. My wife was still working there. It was before our son was born, in '46, ... right after we were married. I got this [assignment]. As soon as I went in there, somebody on the phone was telling my wife, "Joe's just getting the word now. They just called him in." [laughter] What he didn't know was, the chief engineer called me in because he was laying other guys off and he had some more projects for me to take over. [laughter] ... Anyhow, I think it was over money. They said they couldn't afford it. Anyhow, I decided to change jobs. I realized that ... then, my brother got laid off and that really shook me up, because he had put in about fifteen, twenty years by then. ... The basic thing [was] not that I was that great an engineer, the point is, they used the term "hot slide rule;" today, they'd say "hot computer." I was fresh out of school, so, you could give me any project, you know, engineering, mechanical, "Yes, I can handle it." All these other guys were specialists, like my brother, you know. They only did one thing their whole career, and we don't make that product anymore, so, they're the ones that get laid off, you know, metallurgists and what have you. So, that's really why they kept me on, but we kind of decided that, "I can't hang around here until there's nobody left, you know. We're not going anywhere." So, I started looking for a job and ended up with what was then the Bakelite Company, Bound Brook. I had other opportunities, but that one looked pretty good, in their design group, so, I started there in '48. You want to get into this phase now, what happened? Working in Bound Brook, was the Bakelite Division of Union Carbide, the very early stages of plastics, 1948, and I was in research and development and I started designing processing machinery. That's how early this was. We had a new plastic, but we also didn't have machinery. All we had was rubber machinery. This was not rubber, this was plastic and it was very secretive. So, I was designing processing equipment, mixers and what have you, for plastics, but we didn't want the rest of the world to know about how we make it [laughter] and these machines were designed by us. The parts were built on the outside, so, they didn't know what they were building. There were gears to them, there were rolls, there were bearings, there were frames, nobody knew what we were building, and then, we assembled them. We did the assembly, yes. So, that was the group that I started with and I did all right. I held my own. They liked me, and then, there was an opening in another group, after about a year-and-a-half or so, where there was a slight budget cutback or what have you, but, anyhow, my boss, that I liked very much, says, "There's an opening downstairs, in the vinyl division." They called [it] vinyl, the beginning of Vinylite, and, like a fatherly type, he was a little older, but not much, he said, "You might be interested in doing that for a while, if you like it here." So, sure enough, I got this job. It was really more chemical than mechanical, but I did all right. I managed to invent a few things and to get a few patents and held my own and made this a permanent change, rather than a loan. ... To my surprise, I was

given an administrative job as an assistant group leader. Group leader was the next level, and the reason I was an assistant [was] because the one who was a group leader had some physical impairments and was trying to do something else. ... That was the reason, but, then, it wasn't long before I was made a full group leader, in the same type of activity. I had several processes that went in. It turns out, by then, I was having my son work there in the summertime. He was going to Stevens Institute of Technology and one process I put in was for making a carbon black master batch. That's a concentrated composition of carbon black. ... If you never worked with it, you'll never want to, but it's like blackface powder. Anyhow, this is an aside; ... it turns out, he went with Union Carbide when he got out and they had a strike one day and the technical help was used to run the line. He came home this day, he said, "I can't believe this crazy line, with this carbon black. I wonder what nut ever dreamed this thing up," you know. [laughter] He came home black as could be. I says, "You're looking at him." He says, "Oh, no," a little, funny, in-house joke, but it was very interesting. It was very challenging. I was involved in many things that became household items and, before long, I was appointed as an assistant director, at thirty-four, the youngest one ever. Now, [being] an assistant director meant you ran a particular part of the R&D department, but you were really director of the department. I had forty or fifty scientists under my direction, all doing the same thing, developing new markets for our plastics, yes. ... Well, it was several divisions, but we were involved in activities, like, I had flooring in my basement before it was ever commercial, because we had to make a pilot plant. So, we made it right there. I took a roll home and put it down, see how it wears. ... I have vinyl records, still, over here, from RCA, that the guys would go out to check our material and bring in these fancy records and pass them out, you know, before we replaced the breakable ones, yes. House siding, I personally ran some of the first lines to make house siding. Oh, milk cartons; even before I was an assistant director, I worked with International Paper and coated the cartons that they made. Before then, they were cardboard dipped in wax and they leaked. That was a problem with it, or they were glass, of course, ... and then, all the packaging applications I was involved in, and, you know, the biggest, first application for film, that is so common today, was garment bags, when you got your clothes cleaned. That took off, really, like a wildfire. It chewed up the capacity of the plant that we had. Almost overnight, that replaced paper. So, you could see what it is, it was waterproof, you know, and, oh, we couldn't make it fast enough. When hula-hoops came out, there weren't enough extruders. In the extrusion lab we had, under my direction, we had about a dozen extruders, which was bigger than many of our customer's, you know, more than our customer's, [lab]. I was propositioned to rent them to them. We were only using them from eight to four and they'd like to come in and use them and make hula-hoops [laughter] and clean it up for us, particularly the weekends. So, it was so many of those things that I was involved in down there. It really was a very exciting time. It was just amazing how [plastics mushroomed] and, up to that point, the only thing plastics, as such, was in was in toys, and they were cheap plastic, because they broke. I remember going to affairs with my wife and they'd be complaining that their drawer broke in the refrigerator. It was just starting to get in there. "It's a cheap plastic," and I would give them a lecture. I said, "No, somebody's not making it right. Go back and make them do it right and get a replacement, just like you would with metal." We kind of knew, on appliances, that our first efforts were too [insufficient]. It had to feel like and sound like metal, and we were using a lot of [styrene]. Styrene was the plastic of choice then and they wouldn't hear of it unless it felt [like metal], and that's what people were accustomed to, you know. Pretty soon, they started to appreciate the fact that, you know, it didn't break as easy, it didn't chip, you know, it was lighter weight, it was cheaper, you know. ... Pretty soon, they

realized, "No, what we really want is plastic." [laughter] That's when things started moving, and then, electrical applications. I was involved with Bell Labs at the time. ... You wouldn't remember when all these black cables that go from pole-to-pole ... were lead covered. They were coated with lead. That was the only thing they had to protect them on the outside and their poles were a lot more frequent and they were a lot heavier and we came up with polyethylene for that job, which, in its own right, can't weather at all. It won't last six months, but, if you mix it properly with this same carbon black I was talking about, we guaranteed it for twenty years, which was pretty good, since it was only about five years old then, but we had ... an accelerated weatherometer test, we had stuff out in the sun and everything. ... We took responsibility, but we guaranteed it to Bell Labs and Western Electric. ... That was the first big electrical application and I think, to this day, people are still trying to duplicate how we make that, for that particular application. ... So, they were fun years, you know, and I got rewarded. Let's see, well, 1960, like I mentioned, I was the youngest assistant director, but I was holding my own and I was awarded a Sloan Fellowship ... and a year's sabbatical to MIT, as a Sloan Fellow. ... I think what made the difference [was], well, of course, my age and, scholastically, you had to have the grade, you had to have the background to handle MIT, of course, but I was never; you've heard of the longhaired scientists that just work for science, you know, the guys that want to get to the moon, and then, get to Mars? That was never my cup of tea. I always felt I was being paid to make money for this corporation. So, that was always my second question, "How do I make money on this?" and I think that's why I got this scholarship, because I was one of few money conscious engineers, and we had guys working on polymerizing cement. Polymer means you make molecules go together; see, that's all, ... and why do you want to do that? "Oh, well, technical accomplishment, these are inert materials. They have no activity. You can't make them go together." "Well, why would you want to do it?" It was that type of question. It was common for me, when someone would come in with a great idea, ... I'd say, "Gee, that does sound good. Now, what are you going to do with it?" Now, he's telling me how he's going to solve it. I said, "No, don't worry, you've got it, you've got it. ... Now, where do we go with it? ... Are we going to start making them? We're going to license it? We're going to form a new company? Where is it going to go?" you know. So, I think that's why I got this job and that's what my assignments were, after that, [after] I got back, you know.

SH: What were you studying at MIT?

JR: It was their regular course in industrial management, ... equivalent of an MBA, except they put a little more emphasis on the math and the engineering. There were forty-four of us in the class from industry. There were two from Union Carbide at that time, and we went through a screening process and interviews and all that, ... but we had, mostly, people from the country then. We had Westinghouse, General Motors was big, Ford, DuPont, you name it, they were all there. But, there were forty-four of us from industry, but a very exciting year, when we met with very notable professors. Paul Samuelson comes to mind. He was Kennedy's advisor, economic advisor. New philosophies, new ideas on management; [Douglas] McGregor comes to mind. He was the foremost guy. So, it was a great year and the kids were a great age. Our son was just starting high school. In fact, we went to his eighth grade graduation on a Friday night, ... the girls were, I think, about eight and nine and Ellen was a year old, and, from the graduation, we went to Penn Railroad Station in New York, the five of us, [laughter] and ... took a train ride and were picked up by another Sloan Fellow. ... That morning, ... then, eight o'clock that morning, I

had my first class at MIT. [laughter] We rented a huge house up there and it was a great year. ... We had a party in the faculty club every Saturday night, as the group. Yes, well, it was just a wonderful year. We learned a lot of great stuff, but, now, it's so international. I still get their literature. It's worldwide and it's more government, more other countries and less from the US. It was a one-year program (three semesters—starting in the summer). I received my Master's Degree in Industrial Management.

SH: In the 1950s, were you still working at Breeze?

JR: No, no. At '48, I went to ...

SH: Union Carbide.

JR: Yes, yes.

SH: I was going to ask if the Korean War had any impact on your work.

JR: No. ... Well, we sure had some interesting guys in the group, [laughter] because a lot of them were ex-pilots, you know.

SH: Really?

JR: Oh, yes. So, there'd be war stories. ... We had field trips to Washington, to IBM, and I guess it's Endicott, New York, and a New York field trip, and to Europe. We had two weeks in Europe, too. But, I remember, one trip, ... I think it was to IBM, just a short trip, and one of the guys called the stewardess over and he says, "How come he took off with only one magneto working?" She says, "What?" He says, "Yes, he's not supposed to do that." When he tried it out, you know, he could tell. So, she ran up to the captain and said something, gave him some explanation. Then, he pointed to another guy from our group that was from Vancouver, very British, wore a brim hat, like this, and he says to the stewardess, "See him? He's an FAA inspector. He knows it, too," and the girl went up. [laughter] She said, "Oh, Captain;" a lot of fun. So, yes, it was a great group. When I got back, briefly, ... if I were to sum up my whole industrial career, it was very exciting, because it was always something new and something with the future. I never had a job that dealt with the mundane, here and now, other than the production job during the war. That was different. ... So, that's pretty much where I spent my time. I was in R&D a few more years, but, again, I was in charge of new business, technology for new business opportunities. For example, ... under my direction, we made the first plastic fender for Ford.

SH: Really?

JR: [laughter] Hand-fabricated it and, in their policy, they have a purchase order and a lot of red tape, I remember this one, and a lot of fine print on the back that had to go through the law department. ... I have such exception with the law department, and, I remember, he made it sound like I'm gambling the total assets of Union Carbide if something happens here, you know. ... I finally said to this lawyer, "Well, what is your role? ... Do you have to approve this purchase

order or what?" He says, "Oh, no, no, I'm just an advisor. You're the only one [who] can approve it." I says, "Oh, thank you very much." With that, I grabbed the pen. [laughter] I said, "Let's get the show on the road." But, anyway, it had all these clauses, ... you know, "In case of that, we're liable." We had so many opportunities in this. We had a huge building products operation and they had an opportunity, from the guy in the field, to put up, it was kind of a pebble-type of surface, it was new then, you see them now, but held [on] by epoxy, that was the interesting [part], on a huge building in Pittsburgh, you know. ... I had to veto that one. I said, "Geez, I don't know what we're going to do with this, but we'll be forever responsible for this thing." [laughter] ... A lot of it was that type [of activity]. I didn't earn myself any favors of friends, because we had a policy; anybody that wrote an idea to the research and development department got a written reply that was from an assistant director, like me. So, this was a big part of my job and I had to give these things serious thought. ... The challenge was, I knew the odds very well, because it was well-known, it was published, that out of a hundred ideas, only ten are worth even considering and only three are worth spending any real effort on, and, I don't know, two of those [go on] to a pilot plant, and then, one might be successful. So, naturally, I had to reject ninety percent of the [proposals] and give them reasons. So, that was challenging.

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

SH: At Breeze, you were involved with ...

JR: The last assignment was in a research and development type of operation, where I was working on advanced systems and working with synthetic materials, with DuPont. Like, Teflon's a common word now, [laughter] but I was working on Teflon compositions and on silicone compositions that, later, became better known as certain implants. ... [laughter]

SH: Was some of this technology developed because of the war?

JR: Oh, yes, a lot of it, yes, yes, a lot of it. Oh, yes, the whole thing of polyethylene; don't get me started. They claim it saved the war, because it made radar possible. It was invented prior [to the war] by the British. ... It's just the ethylene molecule and "poly" just means you put them all together, that's all you do, and the process is very simple. Everybody knows it, that's in the business. You just pump the gas up to thirty thousand pounds and force them together. Thirty thousand pounds is the pressure when you shoot a rifle bullet. That's what our reactors were. [laughter] That's how we made polyethylene, and I'll take a minute, for the record. The story is a classic. It was invented by the British. This had to be, probably, in the '40s or so; ... no, not the '40s. Trying to get a timeframe; well, yes, it was during the war, probably around the '40s, and they were looking for an American source and the British representative met with our representative in Washington, to explain the process, just as I did, "Just pump it up to thirty thousand." So, he said, "Oh, we have reactors like that. We'll take a shot at it." It was our Linde Division, at the time. Linde was our gas division. They were working on synthetic jewels. You ever come across a synthetic sapphire?

SH: I am sure they are there.

JR: They're there, yes, one of the first synthetic jewels. I still have some that I got for my wife, but ... that's what they were working on, and the thirty-thousand-pound unit was their low pressure unit. ... Their high pressure [reactor] was a hundred thousand pounds, to make the sapphires. [laughter] So, this guy said; this was on a Friday. It makes a good story, anyhow. He said, "Well, I'll talk to our boys in Linde, see what they can do." He went in, told them, "Hey, pump some polyethylene through this, see what comes out." So, they did and they got this white, solid stuff. They were surprised. It was solid, kind of crusty, and [they thought], "This must be polyethylene," and it was snowing, as they tell the story. ... They found that it was pretty tough and they could put it in the snow and it wouldn't break, you know. ... "Well, this must be it." So, the same guy goes back, the following Monday, to Washington, says, "Is this what you want us to make?" [laughter] and he couldn't believe it. It's a classic story. By week's end, that plant was surrounded with the National Guard and that became the first polyethylene plant in this country. ... At that time, it was essential, and, I don't know, ... so many materials, if you were in the material end, ... any innovations with the war, they'll claim *that* saved the war, but the people on radar claim that was the only material that had the proper balance of electrical properties for whatever they needed for radar.

SH: You talked about the "Rosie the Riveter" types working at Breeze during the war. Were they unionized?

JR: As I recall, we had a union. I don't recall any particular problem in dealing with it. ... I do recall, we were all encouraged to be on the lookout for unusual things, for spies. ... Before I graduated, I also worked in the machine shop, ... when I had a few weeks off, and I worked with a guy, I think his background was German, and he seemed to be lecturing me on how, from the Bible, I'm really trying to remember now, ... it says, "Nations shall rise and fall." He seemed to like that phrase, you know, enough that they were telling us, you know, "Go tell the authorities." I said, "Well, I guess it's my job." ... So, wherever I had to go, I said, "You know, this guy doesn't sound right. He's preaching how nations shall rise and fall." Next thing, he was out of there. So, I don't know what happened. They didn't tell you. [laughter] ... So, it was that type of atmosphere, you know. Everybody was very conscious and, yes, we had, you know, blackouts and we had people watching at night and all that. ... Unions were reasonable. I don't recall any particular problems with them, yes.

MP: Was there any anti-German or Japanese sentiment?

JR: Oh, I would say definitely. Oh, yes, oh, yes. Well, "Jap," that was very popular. In fact, in college even, a quiz was a "Jap quiz." Did you ever have a "Jap quiz?" No? That's when it's not announced, that was a "Jap quiz." [laughter] Oh, yes. The prof came in, "I'm going to quiz you today. Here it is." You know, we didn't expect it, "Jap quiz." Oh, yes, and the same with the Nazis, yes. I don't recall any particular incidents that I was involved in, but, you know, at the time, ... what choice; you're going to get me with my politics. You know, they condemn how we rounded up all the Japanese and put them all in the concentration camps. ... You know, it's fine to second-guess, now, and say what a bad thing it is, but what choice did we have? How did we have a choice? They just bombed Pearl Harbor on us. What are we going to do, let these guys go around and say, "Oh, that's all right, you're not one of them?" How did you know? So, I always feel people make the best choice they know at the time, and then, the politicians come

along and start ripping it apart and want to compensate them and say they're sorry and all that stuff. I was never that way, not my way.

SH: Were there any incidents of sabotage that you were aware of?

JR: Yes. ... Nothing comes to mind. There may have been. I'm sure there were, at times. You knew it was going on. I know, in R&D, ... we still haven't figured out how, but someone stole; like I said, we had all these extruders. ... We were experimenting with wire coating and someone stole two reels of copper, copper wire. ... The plant was all guarded and each one weighed about a ton, so, we couldn't imagine how they ever got these reels of copper out. Never did find out, [laughter] but the whole plant was under guard, yes. Well, one interesting sidelight [of] that was, I was proud of the place, because, even then, they were emphasizing that, you know, we were all equal and race was not a problem, and trying to get equal opportunity and all that going. ... It was right around, I guess around, 1950 or so when this quota starts coming out and we had about three, four thousand working in Bound Brook and the equal opportunity people, whoever they were, wanted to know how many blacks we had. We literally had no record. ... It was not on a piece of paper. We didn't keep a record of it. I was proud of that.

SH: This was in the 1950s.

JR: Yes, and they insisted; they wanted to know. ... Fortunately, we were guarded, so, you had to go through a gate. So, our guards had to count the people, ... to satisfy them, as they came through the gate, to give them a number, yes. ... Pollution, I was proud of the plant, we took water out of the Raritan then and we returned it cleaner than we took it out. We were pretty proud of that at the time. We had all the cooling towers, ... in spite of the fact that, you know, we were dealing with some pretty crummy stuff and pretty toxic materials. ... In Toms River, they're still trying to clean it up there; yes, part of those mountains of stuff that we didn't know what to do with. In fact, one thing, one example of what type of thing I was involved in; now, garbage bags are so common, all right. Well, we went through a lot of pains getting there, because they always had to look like something else. ... We had garbage bags to go replace grocery bags, ... but they had to stand up like paper, see. So, we had a composition. You know, it wasn't price competitive, but we made it. We made it stiff enough so that [it stood], because they say, "They stand it up, and then, they throw the stuff in." ... Then, it was pretty well along and, when it came to trash bags, everybody was making these. These were easy to make. There were no specifications, off-grade material, and we had mountains of off-grade polyethylene. By then, we had about four or five polyethylene plants making it and, when you make off-grade, there's nothing to do with it but throw it out, you know. So, we had mountains of this off-grade [material] and, literally, it wasn't toxic or anything, it's just, "What are we going to do with it?" So, I was part of a group that set up a program [in which] we're going to make trash bags out of it. It's good enough for it. It doesn't have to be clear. [laughter] It just has to be tough enough. It doesn't have to last; if it degrades, so much the better. So, we set up a program where all the plants were shipping all their off-grade to one location. We said, "It's going to be one product, no choice of colors, it's going to be black, and no bags," you could buy stuff in fifty-pound bags, you know, "only hopper cars, hundred thousand pounds at a clip. Now, if you want them, they're going to be two or three cents cheaper than anything else," and we cleaned up all those piles, just shipping all this polyethylene, it was to Texas City, actually, and in short order. Our goal, at the

time, was to cover Texas with plastic. [laughter] So, anyhow, ... when I got back, [of] all my assignments, again, some of the things that still persist, structural foam was developed during that period. I was in charge of the technical aspects of new opportunities and we had a process that we ended up licensing. My son ended up being one of the guys licensing [it], when he got going, but it's known as structural foam. I coined the term, but it's a composition where it's for big pieces and, when you mold it, you blow it up, so that there's a heavy skin on the outside and the inside is porous when you mold it. ... It has all the strength, but it's half the weight and, now, ... in big pieces, you see it on park benches, you see it in playgrounds, the slides and all that stuff, chairs, and that was under my jurisdiction, structural foam, and it was licensed. So, one of the problems was, we had to make opportunities for materials, but our job was to sell materials, not to go in the molding business. That was it and that was developed in our labs and, like I said, it's quite common now. Anything big is probably structural foam. Then, paper, we had a product, PolyPaper, that didn't quite get the commercialization it deserved, but, as a specialty paper, it was pretty good. ... At the time, they were making children's books out of it, because the kid could take it in the bathtub, take his book in the bathtub, and it would still be all right. From the fender, we had an active ... joint company with Pittsburgh Plate Glass. See, there was one phase where, in this job, I had to prepare and put on a demonstration for automobile executives, to show them how we made plastics, and we had the equipment for it. We had General Motors in, we had Ford in, Chrysler, just to educate them, "This is how you make plastics."

SH: This is well after the fender that you made.

JR: About the same time, because they were strictly metals people, yes, about the same time. ... You know, we showed them how you mold and how you extrude, and they weren't impressed. So, they invited us out and they wanted to show us how they made cars. So, we got exposed to these battery of punch presses, where you take a sheet of metal, it goes down, like, boom, boom, boom, punches the holes, boom, boom; here's the fender. ... So, we made this composition that really worked in there. He says, "All right, if that's what you want." It was a combination of a rubber-modified polystyrene, along with glass, and it was a joint venture with Pittsburgh Glass and it was what's very common today, just a glass-reinforced polystyrene.

MP: Fiberglass?

JR: Yes, fiberglass type of composite, yes, very common today. ... It went for a while as a sheet, but they've come around to the plastic fabrication. ... So, they're doing great things with cars and way ahead of us. It took a while, but that was there. I was involved in the first disposables for hospital use. ... They had these big laundries. Everything had to be washed and sterilized. ... I was involved in the first "birth kit," they called it, that was complete, completely disposable, and it was the plastic sheet and the plastic needles and whatever they needed. ... The idea was that when the baby's born, you throw it out and use the next one, you know, pre-packaging, very common today, but that was pretty new at the time. You got me started. I'll tell you an aside, one idea that didn't work. ... We had all kinds of new polymers to contend with. Everybody was polymerizing everything, you know. ... So, we had one, ... handed to us by our sisters down in South Charleston, West Virginia, the chemical company, Carbide and Carbon Chemicals Company, called Polyox, that was water-soluble. It was just like polyethylene. You could make the same kind of film, except, when you put it in water, it would dissolve. We thought, "Well,

there ought to be a lot of use for this." So, we had the bright idea, "We'll start with the hospitals and they can put the laundry in this and throw the bag in with the laundry and it disappears." [laughter] That one backfired, because we didn't take into account that much of that laundry is wet [laughter] and the bag never made it to the laundry. So, that one didn't work, but it never got quite commercial, like they would have hoped to. ... It was interesting type of work; maybe you have some other questions.

SH: Did you think that your Rutgers education prepared you well? You were moving forward quickly with brand-new ideas and materials.

JR: Absolutely, oh, yes. I was well-prepared with my education there, and combined with MIT. I can sum up the balance of it. I ended up being transferred to New York, because it was apparent that I was one of the futuristic guys, worrying about the future, and I was put in charge of a market research department. I don't know how familiar you are with them, but we had twenty-five people and that was a big market research department, but it was new to everybody. I mean, Carbide had about eighty thousand employees then, I think, or more than that, but the whole idea of planning was new to everybody, you know. Carbide got big because they were used to discovering, you know. Remember, they were the discovery company, remember that? That's just what happened. That was their history. They discovered things, but they didn't do too well at making a big business out of them. They're known for the Prestone and their Eveready Batteries and their Sevin insecticide, you name it, ... and Bakelite, of course. So, I was always one step ahead of that. So, I had these market research people that I was proud of, that was the first assignment, and the early part of computers. ... Well, two things on computers that come to mind. We had a system, that ... if someone was going to lunch with a customer at the higher level, the vice-president level, and told us by noon, this was about 1964, very early in the computer stage, ... the day before, we could have him a printout ... for his lunch date, the next day, of what that customer buys in the way of plastics, how much he buys from us, what he buys from the competitor, what brand, etc. We got the data from our salesmen. ... Twice a year, we interviewed them and asked them these questions, salesman by salesman, and then, we all fed it back to the computer. ... At the interview, his boss was there, who, previously, had the same account, you know, so, the guy couldn't get off and say, "Oh, well, he only buys a couple of million pounds. They're small." "What do you mean, small?" you know, those types of things, and a lot of stuff was [handled by] hopper car. So, you can't hide a hopper car, so, the salesmen, that was their practice; they'd watch a competitive hopper car come in and see how long it's there and whose it is and ... what [the] turnover is. ... You get a pretty fast read on how much he's using and who he's using. So, yes, this was all computerized, for all our five plastics. So, it was pretty elaborate. ... Carbide, that was one of their goals, not well-defined, they were going to be number one in computers. They dedicated a whole floor to computers. They were all vacuum tube computers, special air conditioning, and they weren't fast enough. We went out to a little entrepreneur there that would run our reports for us the same day, with our data. So, that was pretty good, and the other thing that was interesting was that I had occasion, probably around '63 or '64, to bring in a futuristic computer firm that was working on systems for our top officers. ... This was the idea they advanced, and they had photographs and things, how they're going to [do it], the idea that you could have a computer here, in your New York office, and one in Chicago and one in the West Coast [office], all with the same data, and you could all bring it up, yes, and that was the introduction. Well, these guys [the Union Carbide executives] patted me on the

back, "Well, that's very nice, Joe, good show, you know. Not for us, of course, you know, that's not us." [laughter] That was really futuristic. I enjoyed that.

MP: Do you remember the name of that company?

JR: No, I don't know. They were small at the time. I don't know. Do you have anyone in mind?

MP: I was just wondering.

JR: ... No, it wasn't an IBM or anything like that I know, the idea that, and they said [it] then, ... "Every desk is going to have a computer." [laughter] Then, as we went along, and I guess this made me a bit of a maverick, because I didn't like the path they were taking. They were hiring, they called them "operations managers," but they were computer guys with PhDs and all they wanted to do was models, build models. ... I wrote my thesis at MIT on models, so, I had a little head start, on computers, on them, you know, and I says, ... "Why are we hiring these people?" I says, "the IBMs? and they're going to..." "No, no," and these guys were all over the place, like flies, interviewing people. The old term, "Garbage in, garbage out," that's what we were living with, you know. ... Oh, they wanted a model of polyethylene, how to make it more ... cost effective and, well, not to bore you with it, but the cost of the processing plants, for everything, was the number of pounds they did in a year [and] what the total payroll was for a year. They didn't care what the product was, [laughter] and it didn't matter if, out of Bound Brook, ... one guy was turning out a thousand pounds, all by himself, or if he was turning out a hundred pounds. So, it was my example of, "What's your model going to do?" Now, to their credit, they had one that really was unique, and it's, again, our Linde Division, who supplied gasses, and they had a model for supplying gasses for the space program. Now, that's different. There was a handful of companies making these gasses to begin with. The capacities were well-known and there was really [only] one customer for them. [laughter] ... So, I don't know, there were stories about it; ... I didn't get that close. There were stories that they were told they had to dissolve the model, because, ... this is what they were accused of; they would wait until they knew the capacities of all the others and they would wait until a big fat contract would come out that they knew the others couldn't handle. [laughter] Then, they would pick their own price for taking that on. [laughter] But that was different from something like, you know, polyethylene, but it was exciting and, from that, ... Carbide had a lot of reorganizations and I got ... what was considered a promotion. I was made a director of marketing, which, if you think about it, is quite a switch for an R&D guy, research and development, director of marketing, and, again, I was mainly concerned with the future. I don't know if you remember Hudson Institute; I worked with them. They were a futuristic firm. They had a TV show. A doctor used to come on and bore the people about future things going on and I had a study group that I initiated, five people that worked for a year on what Carbide should be doing twenty years out. Now, that was unheard of, to be studying what to do twenty years out, and our report, in a nutshell, was, "Stick to your petrochemicals. You're a pioneer here and stick to what you know," and that went over like an iron balloon, frankly. Now, we had a CEO, you may remember, I don't know, we were going to go in the diaper business and he actually said, "If this doesn't work, I'm going to resign," and it didn't work and he resigned. ... Again, it was just the wrong thing, because it was well-known, at the time, that Kimberly-Clark and Proctor and Gamble had the market sewed up. ... Before us, even a household name like Johnson & Johnson couldn't get in the diaper business, but he

wouldn't hear of the fact that you sell diapers by buying TV time and spending ... eighty million dollars a year on advertising. Our mindset, in Carbide, was, "Oh, if it's such a good product, why do you have to advertise it?" You know, "They're going to come knocking at the door." So, yes, it was that kind of controversy. Anyhow, finally, I took early retirement, because I figured, ... what do they say? [I was] shoveling sand against the tide here. [laughter] It's not going to work. ... Meanwhile, my son carried on rather well. He had a nice career there, but I went into and became a private consultant with a consulting firm for twelve years, Skeist Laboratories for the plastics industry, and we worked, again, with new materials, new ideas, but age sixty-three-and-a-half came along and I decided to retire, twenty-two years ago.

MP: Now that you are enjoying your retirement, what kind of hobbies are you interested in?

JR: Oh, well, all right, now, we're getting into my ...

SH: You spoke of your woodworking hobby.

JR: Yes; let's see if I missed anything here. ...

SH: We are looking through a Creative Memory album.

JR: Yes. Well, this is one that's all of me. See, that's what Ellen had me do, and I made one like this for each child.

SH: There are photographs of all your family members, going back to your mother and father.

JR: Yes. They're all artists. All the kids are artists. That's what I used to do. ... We had big mirrors; I used to outline the pictures and ... let the kids paint them, on the mirrors. You see a lot of those, and Scouting and the babies. ... This is my career. This was my beginning. I started at Carbide, 410 dollars a month, boy. [laughter] I changed jobs for that, and this is when I was appointed assistant director. Yes, this was the typical [press release]. I mentioned all the people. ... There was a director up here, but this was a group of people that were under me in the organization chart and they, of course, had assistants. ... I had a pretty interesting routine. I met with every group leader one day a week, first thing in the morning, and I was brought up to date one day a week. A couple of patents that I got, one of these was on the making of inflatables; remember inflatables, swimming pools and all that? I came up with a way of avoiding the pinholes. They used to leak and the problem with plastics was, see, we sold it for a nickel or a dime a pound, but, by the time we got the complaint, somebody [had] made a swimming pool out of it that cost ten bucks that's leaking. Then, they don't want a dollar a pound, they want ten dollars a pound, yes. So, this was the process of making two layers, anyhow, on the theory that you're not going to get these holes on top of each other. If you make two sheets and glue them, stick them together, they won't leak, and they didn't. ...

SH: I could have used that. I had to blow up a lot of those inflatables.

JR: Yes. This was our year in Boston, that's the big house we lived in, and our trip to Europe. Oh, yes, I was one of the few Democrats. There were three Democrats up there at the election.

This was a typical party. There'd be some guy, and, here, they got headlines printed, and the headline was, "Nixon, President of Union Carbide." [laughter] That was a typical Saturday night, playing the piano, yes, and this was when I was leaving, and the tie they made for me when I left Bound Brook and went to New York.

MP: During the war, what was the public's perception of FDR? Were they supportive of what he was doing?

JR: Oh, very supportive, oh, yes, yes. He had those ... Sunday night "Fireside Chats." He was such a master at that, yes. Oh, I think they were very supportive. I don't recall anybody really giving him a hard time.

SH: Was there confidence in Truman?

JR: Oh, I'd say no. No, he just surprised everybody. He was just a haberdasher, ... and he wasn't even in on what was going on. He didn't even know about the atom bomb, that whole project, which Carbide masterminded, you know.

SH: Did they?

JR: They ran the Tennessee plant, yes. I don't think they still have it, but ... that was such a secret. I talked to people that worked on building that plant and they said they couldn't believe it. ... One guy was in the construction business and all he knew [was], he said, "Every time they thought they were done, they said they decided they had to go deeper, and we had to go down deeper," and he said, "We didn't have a clue why or what they're doing here." So, yes, then, they made the uranium right there. Oak Ridge was the plant, yes, but that was a separate entity from the corporation. ... So, Truman didn't even know that existed, that's how big a secret that was, the Manhattan Project, but he sure turned himself around very quickly. ... Well, it's coming up now, because Rudy Giuliani's got his ring in, [running for President], and I remind the kids that; oh, boy, don't tell me, I'm going to get stuck on the name, the one that ran against Truman, Dewey. Dewey, I'll have you know, was the Giuliani of our day. I mean, he was no small competitor. He was highly identical to Giuliani. He fought the Mafia. He brought them to task. He wasn't a mayor of New York, that I recall, but he was a prosecutor and he was loved by everybody in the East, just like Giuliani, [laughter] and that was the biggest surprise to everybody, including me. In fact, I voted for Dewey and I had a brother that said FDR was going to win and he took ten dollars from me.

SH: That Truman was going to win?

JR: Yes, yes. He was a union guy. ... This was some summary I had to write up, but this is interesting. I put this together for the sake of [posterity], because Carbide was taken over by Dow. That's when my son took early retirement, I guess about three or four years ago, yes, I forget. So, this is kind of starting with Bakelite and this was from a book and they had this tragedy, Bhopal, you've heard that. [Editor's Note: Mr. Rocky is referring to the December 1984 disaster at a Union Carbide, India, Limited pesticide plant in Bhopal that resulted in three thousand estimated deaths initially and fifteen thousand estimated deaths since.] Some say that

was the downfall of us, and I don't think they'll ever believe the truth, at least. I'm biased, of course, but it was really sabotage by an unhappy employee that caused it. Because, ... technically, what happened couldn't have happened. It wasn't piped for any kind of a mistake, but the government was so secretive. Our chairman went right over. They wouldn't even let him in the plant. He couldn't get past the customs. No, they didn't want any Carbide people there and they found that the guy intentionally took a hose and put water in with a chemical that couldn't handle water, intentionally did it, and that's what created the gasses. So, this was some of that history here, unraveling. That's one of our own talking about what really happened, and then, this was the building that I worked in. I had an office on the forty-third floor that was very nice, overlooking the Pan Am Building. ...

SH: Did you commute into New York?

JR: Yes. Oh, everybody did, from Cranford, yes. Everybody commuted for an hour, it was about an hour, took a train in. Then, when I became a consultant, I've got more publicity here about our management and another couple of our studies on the end. ... This is typical. ... This was a multi-client study and this would be, like, ... thirty-six man months of effort. See, a company can't afford to do this for themselves and the idea [was], we would sell that to all the companies. They'd all get the same data, you know, and we would sell it for, well, seventy-five hundred dollars; that's what that book would cost in the end, and, you know, we'd get about a hundred clients, so, that was a nice income. ... We had several of those, but I brought [in] some new ones. They were primarily coatings and chemicals, and then, I brought in electrical ones and the film ones and had a nice twelve years. I enjoyed it and I retired from there. ... When my wife passed away, that was the saddest day of my life. That was down here. She was here a little over two years and doing fine, but, anyhow, she was diagnosed with lung cancer on Labor Day Weekend and passed away December 1, 1994. It was that quick, just one of those fast-moving lung cancers. She was a smoker. To her credit, I had quit, oh, some twenty years before, I guess, yes, and she would not, but [she] would not smoke in front me. ... I don't know if that was good or bad, but she never smoked in front of me. She didn't want me to go back. Oh, well, so, that was retirement and this was a little something of the eulogies. ... That's the book over here, *Mom's Letters*. We had four kids. She had four people in school, three kids and a husband in school, and a one-year-old baby, [laughter] and she attended all the social functions and managed to write to the family at least once a week, and kept carbon copies. Now, every kid has one of those and I made copies of it all and all it is is the carbon copies of them growing up and all the little tidbits, yes, that she did. ... I don't know what else I have here. ... I could show you the actual book, this, Ellen put together for my eighty-fifth, too. ... This was pretty good. She put the whole thing together, *Eighty Greetings For Eighty Years*, see, and then, that was the cover page of hers, "Dear Dad." That's Ellen, with me, and little bits of herself, happy birthday and what have you. Anyhow, they all made these pages. See, they put my face on these different people [laughter] in this book, in here, making their jokes, see. ... This was my family's contribution to this, see. ... You asked me about hobbies. ... Anyhow, this went on and on, but, then, others started sending [in responses]. This is from responses to the letters, see; different people came, turned in eighty [cards], "It's your eightieth birthday and eighty years," and people from Greenbriar and all over the place. It was a total surprise, but, in addition, she sent this. She put this book together. ... You asked me about my hobbies, and this is strictly a hobby. I never made a nickel on this, but it's always been my hobby, woodworking, I guess because my father

was a carpenter, and my brother. ... I started right on our very [home]. One example, when we moved in our house that I said we bought, seventy-nine hundred dollars, I think it had about fifteen windows. ... It had shades, [but] it didn't have blinds and blinds were about five dollars a piece then, you know, and I thought, "Fifteen [times fives equals] seventy-five dollars; I can make those." So, that was my first big project. I floored my wife. My brother helped me get a hold of the slats. They were leftover from a World's Fair or something in New York. So, I got the wood. I cut it up to size. I set up a spray booth. I sprayed them. I bought the hardware and I built fifteen blinds for all the windows, thought nothing of it. [laughter] So, it's been a hobby all along. I always had a saw, and I started building for the kids. Well, I built for ourselves, and then, I started building furniture for the kids. Now, all nine grandchildren that I have sleep in furniture that I built for them, yes, and I still do it. My latest project was, when I was only eighty, I built a kitchen for my daughter in Cranford. I built her eighteen cabinets in that garage and installed them, and the kitchen is about twelve-by-twenty. She has a twenty-foot granite drain board. She says [that] she went for the granite because the labor was so cheap. [laughter] Yes, that was my last big project and, prior to that, I built nine cabinets, bedroom cabinets, for the gal in; she was in Columbus, Ohio, then, for her daughter. They moved into a new house. So, this is from Ellen and what she did [was], she wanted ... to get me written up and she actually sent this out to all these different magazines. That's what she means, "These are the letters we wrote to all these companies about Dad," and that's what she wrote, "I want to tell you about my family handyman, my father, Joe Rocky; turned eighty in July; not only Mr. Fix-It to his four children, four in-laws and nine grandchildren, but, also, a fabulous furniture builder. He just completed construction of his ninth set of bedroom furniture," and so on, she goes. "Please, let me know," ... and these are the magazines that she sent this to, yes, each one of them. We've got a couple of nice [replies], and couple of not ours. One picked it up. That was *The Pine Cone* [*Press*], down here, see, and these were all the letters. That's our magazine [for our development]. That's the one I sent you. That was written up in our autumn publication and here's the story that she sent, see this? ... This furniture still exists. I built this, originally, for her around 1970.

SH: It is like a wall unit.

JR: Yes, yes. Ethan Allan, I was copying Ethan Allan, until I got better designs of my own, [laughter] but I built this for her and, when we moved out; you can see our house. We had a big split-level, on the end there. When we moved here, more stuff went to Ellen. She was ... still in Atlanta. It came down here. She took everything that nobody else wanted, including her set, of course, if I refurbish it. So, that's what I did. It was white; I painted it pink for her. It's now yellow. I refurbished it again, but [it] still exists, yes, still together pretty good. Then, this was the one I built when I was seventy-nine, for her older daughter.

SH: This is amazing.

JR: That was a choice I gave her. I said, "I'll either build a new one for Melissa or for Julia, whatever you want." Well, Melissa's the older one; she pulled rank. She said, "I want the new one." So, that was that, and these were for other granddaughters, that I built after I had built them other furniture. They wanted desks. They all wanted desks. So, I built that. These guys wanted desks. This is still in use. This is in Cranford, so are those, and they had a small [room],

because ... my daughter is an artist, so, she's got to have a room for her thing, you know. So, even though they have four bedrooms up there, they had to bunk together and they wanted desks. Well, the room was too small for all that. I said, "The only way is to build bunk beds." So, I built the bunk beds, so [that] they could get their two desks in there. ... This is my grandson, drew, in Connecticut, ... that got married. That was for his room, and that's his sister, Jill, that just got married, yes. ...

SH: Your grandson.

JR: Yes. These are little things. That's my son, actually, that I made the computer desk for there. He's got that. These things, I bat out whenever they want one. I got one myself.

SH: It is ...

JR: Like a hobby table, craft table. I'll show you mine. ... This was the living room in my daughter, Jane's, home in Livingston.

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

MP: This continues an interview with Mr. Joseph Rocky on November 15, 2006, in Toms River, New Jersey, with Michael Perchiacca and Sandra Stewart Holyoak. When did you move down to the shore, to Toms River?

JR: May of 1992.

MP: Do you go to the beach often? You mentioned that ...

JR: I travel quite a bit, to all my children, yes, including wherever Ellen is living. I used to go for longer periods, but, now, the kids are grown up. ... Particularly, there's a lot to see in Florida and I don't have the grandchildren that are happy playing tiddlywinks and "go fish" or what have you, although they all do love to play games with Grandpa. ... The woodworking, I've cut back on. I'd like to think I could do it, but I don't know. Things do slow down; I played golf down here for ten years. I did run into health problems ... four years ago and I had some blockages and, at first, I had angioplasty, had four stents put in, in Morristown Memorial. That only lasted a year and they plugged up, and then, I had to have a triple bypass, three years ago. So, since then, I've, of course, gotten older, but I have a constant dialogue with my doctors; they want to blame my age and I refuse to. I always find something that they're doing, like their medication, ... blaming them for it, and I haven't changed, yet. ... I know I had to stop golf, because I couldn't take the heat. They say that's common, both with age and with heart problems. I was doing well, also, at table tennis. I played table tennis regularly, twice a week, but I won't go to that. They have five tables going and I think it's a little much for the room and I've seen other guys go off balance, and I don't want to go out that way, so, I'm not that sure of myself to be doing that. I used to do more gardening, and I hire people to do it now. I have a housekeeper, comes in once a month. That's one luxury that my wife never had, [laughter] but that happened my ... first winter she was gone. ... I didn't even come back here. She was interred in a mausoleum in Rahway, in St. Gertrude's, and I went right from there to my daughter's, to Atlanta for about a

couple of months. ... When I came back, it was spring and I spent about two days cleaning up the house, while the other guys were going golfing already. So, I sat down, talked to myself, as I often do, and said, "Why are you doing this?" So, I got some housekeepers [to] come in. They've been coming ever since, [laughter] once a month now, and what I like about it is, I'm fussy. I like it looking nice and that's the part that's hardest to get to, you know. They'll polish everything once a month. I know, if I was taking care of it, I'd just take care of what had to be done, ... but I have plenty to do. I was, up until recently, very active in the administration down here. I was part of what is known as the ARC Committee, Architectural Review Committee, that controls any external changes. You cannot make any external changes out here without their approval. You can't take a tree down, you can't put a tree up, can't change the color of your house, your roof, or anything. It's very well-controlled, very controversial, very rewarding. I enjoyed it, but I gave that up. Again, similar, ... I found I was kind of a maverick in my attitude on some of the points and I decided, "Well, I'll work somewhere else;" mainly, I'll tell you briefly, over trees. People on the committee, a majority of them, felt they were dedicated to saving every tree down here and got it written up, so that unless the tree was dying, you couldn't remove it, and I thought, "If somebody wanted to spend ten thousand dollars to make their yard look more beautiful, they ought to be allowed to do it." So, I got shot down every time. [laughter] I don't know what it is now. ... So, it was that type of thing, but, still, great, wonderful people, you know, that I worked with. I became involved with building [sets]. I became involved with the drama group, I'll have you know, who built sets for the shows. We have quite a drama group down here.

SH: Really?

JR: ... Oh, they're terrific. ... Oh, they put on *Oklahoma* and you name it, *Hello, Dolly!*, all of them, and we've got a crew that, they have a woodshop up there, that would build the sets for them, build the sets, and the guy that ran it did this for a living. That's the beautiful part; you name it, somebody here has done it. They're pros, you know, whatever it is. So, I enjoyed that for quite a while, and then, I guess ... I got my back up again. We had a case where; you keep inquiring about activists. ... I don't know if he's still here. We had a blind guy here that insisted on, they finally [gave in]; for insurance purposes, you had to take a course to use the woodshop. He demanded on taking the course, and that's what he was, this was his right, and you had to have a lawyer and this all cost money. ... Finally, he actually took the course, closely supervised, and they allowed where, "Yes, he can go, if someone's with him. Someone has to sign that he's going to be with him and watch his fingers all the time," obviously, which he never took advantage [of]. It was just another [thing], but, in the process, they said that we all had to sign waivers, that the organization and the community are not liable if we get hurt in that shop, and I refused to do that. I always refuse that. ... I treated that as an insult. I don't think it would ever stand up in court, because that's what a judge is there for, and so, I quit the drama group, you know. Some of the others did, too. ... Plus, I didn't need the shop. I never used it, except for the shows; I'll have to show you my shop. ... So, that died down, but, in the meantime, ... I've helped out with the library. Then, it got to [be] that whenever they ... had some ideas for improving the clubhouse, they were getting our crew [to do it] and, finally, we got our back up. I said, "Look, you want plumbing, you get a plumber in here. You need electrical, you get electrical in here. You want carpentry, you get a carpenter in here; [laughter] not our job to be building your shelves and your storerooms," but I've been active all along. Like I said, I do a lot for, well, it's a

lot, I help out all the neighbors. They know I'm here and anyone can come in and they know they're going to get help. So, I fix chairs and I fix furniture for them and build them something, now and then, you know, not too big, and I got a lot of requests when I was written up in *The Pine Cone*. I had to be prepared for those, a lot of calls, "Oh, Joe, why don't you come on over?" So, I spend a lot of time, still, with cards. I have three bridge groups that I play with. I have a poker group that goes back twelve years, once a week, and I have a pinochle group that meets off and on, regular, and I have one bridge group that goes back twelve years. We play every Tuesday. Duplicate is our most challenging one. That's every Friday afternoon. ... I don't know if you play bridge. Are you familiar with it, no?

SH: My entire family plays bridge and I do not.

JR: No. It's a dying game. No, ... we're the last generation. Anyhow, duplicate, ... it's the tournament bridge; it's [where] everybody plays the same cards. ... You only shuffle them once and you put them back in holders and you rate it on how you do with the same cards, and we have ten tables, twenty couples, roughly, on Friday. I have a partner that's three years older than me. He's eighty-eight. We have a string, now, of coming in first or second the last ten times we played together, [laughter] pretty proud of that. It's sad, because he goes to Florida and ... Friday's his last day. So, I don't know if I'm going to bother with anybody else over the winter or not, but I've really been enjoying playing with him.

SH: You need to teach it, then.

JR: Been doing very well at bridge, and all lovely people. I'm somewhat active in the church, in addition to going to Mass, I'm part of the crew that takes care of what we call our food pantry, where we have food collections, and distribute it. ... Well, we have a garage for it, actually. We have quite a bit of food, and it's nice activity. You get some sad cases, people a lot worse off than we are, and I'm supposed to exercise at my age, so, I either walk three or four times a week or I go to the gym up here. We have our own fitness gym. I do that. It's getting a little harder; I don't know why, not my age. [laughter] ... Of course, the kids are [keeping me busy]. I'm in on ... all these colleges, I go to all these affairs. I've cut back, voluntarily, on my driving, and they're glad to hear that. ... Actually, I took my third driving, senior driving, course at AARP, down here, and the statistics for octogenarians were alarming. [laughter] Whether you like it or not, they were. So, I've arbitrarily [cut back], for my own sake, and they're relieved. I don't want to give the kids a hard time on anything. "The way you get along with grandchildren is, you do whatever they want." [laughter] I have no problems. My other line is, "I have now eleven women in my life, so, why do I need another one?" [laughter] I'm actually a women's advocate here, with my family. You know, the girls love it. ...

SH: Good for you.

JR: Even my son, ... when he first got married, he said, "Geez, I had three sisters; I thought that was bad. Now, I have a wife and she's the same way." [laughter] So, that keeps me very busy, like I said. I'm on the phone with one or the other almost every day. We have all kinds of projects cooking. My son's going to be the next big event. He's going to be sixty in December. It's typical of what my family does; my daughter in Naples, Florida, arranged a surprise party for

him in New York, in one of the hotels in New York. It turns out her husband, who, as I said, is a senior VP with Chico's (women's clothing—retail), ... around this time, has some kind of convention, meeting of his peers, in New York and Chico's owns an apartment there for their use. So, she's using this occasion to get the whole family together, at the Chico apartment, for a surprise birthday party for him. So far, he doesn't know about it. ... She made it very casual, how she's just coming in town. It's all on e-mail and everybody, except me and June, replied that, "We're sorry, you know, [we have] other things going," [laughter] and he's bought it so far. So, he's going to be there thinking he's just going to be [with] a couple of us and there's some ringers coming, there's some friends of theirs, and his youngest daughter's going to have a new boyfriend, then, there. ... They've got twenty-five people at this thing, in New York.

SH: We will not give the tapes out until after that.

JR: [laughter] No, ... but, even for that, see, well, my limit, that I imposed on myself, [is], I'll drive as far as Cranford, which is an easy drive, and I'm having fun observing the speed limit, really. I'm not going to exceed [it], and then, if you ever go over the Raritan Bridge there, where it goes to fifty-five, it's a riot to go fifty-five, in the right lane, of course. ... I mean, you just feel like you're being run over, you know. [laughter]

SH: That is your excitement, correct?

JR: Yes. So, that's working out okay, so far, and so, now, last Christmas, we all, all but one family, the Connecticut people couldn't make it, ... gathered down in Naples for Christmas. So, there were about eighteen people down there. This year, Ellen and family are going to Hawaii. So, we're kidding her, "Well, I guess that was too much for you. You're telling us you're going to be out of here." ... I'm very, really, blessed with a great family. ...

SH: I can see that they are as well. Thank you; we have been blessed by having you talk to us today. I truly appreciate it. Thank you very much.

JR: Well, I enjoyed it, too. I don't know when I've talked so long. I'll have to call my daughters back. I think I used up all my words. [laughter]

SH: This concludes the interview with Mr. Rocky. Thank you.

[Editor's Note: I would like to add the following summary about my family, which now totals twenty-one, to my interview for the record and clarity:

Eleanor and I started our married life at 477 Stratford Road, Union, NJ, on 2/3/45 and lived there about fifteen years. Our four children were born there: Joe Jr. ('46), Jane ('50), June ('51), Ellen, ('59).

During my year at MIT ('60-'61), we all lived at 40 Carl Street, Newton Highlands, MA. Shortly after our return to NJ, we moved to a larger home at 12 Yale Terrace, Cranford, and lived there about thirty-one years.

All four children received their college degrees and were married during the period. Eleanor and I moved from the "empty nest" in 1992 to an adult community, Greenbriar Woodlands, in Toms River, where I am currently located. Eleanor passed away on December 1, 1994—two months short of our fiftieth anniversary.

Joe, Jr. (BS Chemical Engineering—Stevens) and Tina Moore (AD Art—Vernon Court) were married in Bridgewater, NJ, on June 9, 1973, and have three grown children—Drew, Jill and Dawn. Joe, Jr., spent his industrial career in chemicals and plastics with Union Carbide (thirty-three years). The family moved from Lebanon, NJ, to Brookfield, CT, when Carbide headquarters moved to Danbury, CT. He chose early retirement when Carbide was acquired by Dow and is currently with McCaffrey Realty in Brookfield.
Drew (BS Mechanical Engineering—Lafayette & MBA—U Conn) is employed by Torrington Research in Torrington, CT. He and Jen Freed (BA Economics, BS Animal Science—U Conn & MBA—Conn State) were married August 14, 2005, and had their first child, Claire, on January 5, 2007 (also my first Great-Grandchild). Jen is a buyer for Boehringer Ingleheim and the family lives in Sandy Hook, CT.
Jill (BS MS Physical Therapy—Northeastern) is employed by Danbury Hospital—Pediatric Dept. She and Matt Kenyon (BS Finance—Suffolk) were married on August 4, 2006. Matt works for Boehringer Ingleheim (Sales) and they live in West Hartford, CT.
Dawn (BA Sociology & Anthropology, MS Sociology—Lehigh) is a buyer for Ann Taylor & lives in Manhattan.

Jane (BA English) and Bruce Whitehead (BA Business & MBA—Farleigh Dickinson) met at Marietta College and were married on August 2, 1975—two years after graduation. Jane is Director of Mendham Nursery School and Bruce is in sales with Empire Blue Cross in NYC. They live in Randolph, NJ, and have two daughters—Lauren and Kate.
Lauren (BA History & Business—Muhlenberg) just graduated in May 2007 and is looking forward to teaching elementary school in Newark, NJ, in the Teach for America Program.
Kate is a sophomore at Bucknell University.

June (BA Art—Marietta) and Paul Brown (BA Phys Ed—Montclair State & MA Education—Keane) were married on November 20, 1976. They live in Cranford and both teach in the Cranford Public School system and have two boys.
Kevin Conor (Casey) (BA History – Bucknell and MA History – Carnegie Mellon) is a Graduate Assistant at Carnegie Mellon working on his Doctorate in History.
Glenn is a Junior in Fine Arts at Princeton.

Ellen (BA Foreign Languages—Muhlenberg & MBA—Georgia State) met Mike Elleman (BA Communications—U of Missouri & MBA—Kennesaw State) in Atlanta while attending Georgia State. They were married right after she completed her MBA requirements on September 3, 1984, in Cranford and currently live in Naples, FL. Ellen was a banker prior to starting a family and is currently associated with Swoozies. Mike is in real estate with Chico's in Fort Myers. They have two girls—Melissa is a Junior at Community High School and Julia is in sixth grade at the same school.

Joe Rocky '43 7/19/2007]

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

Reviewed by Jake Morano 3/3/07
Reviewed by Ashley Greenblatt 3/3/07
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 6/28/07
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 6/30/07
Reviewed by Joseph F. Rocky 7/19/07