RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH MORTON M. ROSENBERG

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SANDRA STEWART HOLYOAK

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TRANSCRIPT BY
G. DOROTHY SABATINI

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins an interview with Morton M. Rosenberg on June 10, 1999 in Summit, New Jersey. I'd like to thank you, Dr. Rosenberg, for taking the time today to talk with us. To begin the interview, I'd like to ask you to talk about your parents. Can you tell me about your father and his background?

Morton M. Rosenberg: I can give you some information, but I don't have specific information, partly because my father never did confide in me. I was first born among three. He favored the two daughters, and it's primarily through their knowledge of him that I can answer some of your questions. Why he never discussed it with me, I do not know, unless he was not yet prepared. I do know he was very grateful to be in this country, and more than once he said to me, "I get on my knees every morning and thank God that I have the luxury and the pleasure to raise my children in the United States." So he must have come from a part of Europe where life was not pleasant. He probably came from a place in Europe where he didn't want to stay, because he left at the age of fourteen, and he probably left because he didn't want to get caught up in the Russian Army, which was one of the things so many young Jewish people tried to avoid, because they had no future whatsoever once they were in the military.

SSH: Do you know which part of Russia he came from?

MR: He came from a community called Dougalishuk. I can't spell it. I've never found it on a map. I spoke to someone from Lithuania at a meeting in Washington two years ago who knew where Dougalishuk was, and he assured me it's now in Lithuania. When my father was a child, it probably was in Russia, and then it became part of Poland, and then it became a part of a country called Lithuania. He came from a long history of rabbinic people. They were "people of the book." … I think part of the reason I ended up a university professor was the impact he had on me when I was a child because he would constantly refer to the fact that knowledge was something that no one could take away from you. He left there, I think, about 1904, or at least he came to the United States in 1904. He may have left two years earlier, following his brother, and they came to America together. Then they brought a third brother, and, ultimately, the three brothers brought two sisters, and so the nuclear family I knew as a child was made up of uncles and aunts and cousins, and it was pretty clannish.

SSH: What was your father's occupation?

MR: Well, he had only the training of a fourteen-year-old Talmudic student, so he knew the Bible inside and out. He could speak four languages but not English when he came to this country. Consequently, when he came here, he was literally starting from zero, and even the English he spoke, as I remember it, was heavily accented and was not grammatically correct. I respected the fact, though, that this was his fifth language, and he obviously labored under a handicap. He spoke the languages which so many of the people there spoke. He spoke Polish, he spoke Russian, he spoke German, and he could read and understand Hebrew, because of the Bible. He came to this country, therefore, without any skills, and his brother, having been a carpenter, persuaded my father to go into the building trade. My father became a paperhanger but he never liked it. He was

always dreaming of a time when he could own a piece of land and so, in due course, when he saved enough money, he bought a property in Toms River, New Jersey. That was before World War I, and he farmed it until he met my mother who was a city girl. At that point, they gave up the farm because she wasn't used to kerosene lamps and hand-pumped wells. There were no great conveniences in the country at that time. Even the roads were just dirt roads with horses and buggies. So he worked as a paperhanger. At the time when I first became conscious of the fact that I had a father, a man who would come home late in the evening, leave early in the morning, I'd hardly ever see him except on Sundays, and on Sundays he'd be reading, "The Jewish Farmer." He wanted to be a farmer, and so in 1927, my parents bought another property in Toms River; and that's the place I called home, because that's where my awareness, my social contracts began. I grew up loving the land, just as my father did. To me a farm was just not a place to be exploited but a place to be cultivated, and to this day, you can look at our yard here, it represents a sense of love for nature.

SSH: When your father and his brothers came to this country, you said maybe two years later, did his brother wait possibly in England or someplace like that before he came?

MR: They came by way of England. I don't know the route through Europe, but they were in England for about a year, and then they came to the United States.

SSH: Did they come through Ellis Island in New York?

MR: Yes, they came through Ellis Island and settled in New York City.

SSH: Did they have extended family in New York City that sponsored them?

MR: No, no one sponsored them, to my knowledge. They were not part of any society. They were not part of any land movement. They were not part of any effort to bring immigrants here. They came on their own.

SSH: Did your father continue his rabbinical studies while in this country?

MR: No. To my knowledge, his studies were only so he could learn enough English and to read and write, so he could become a naturalized citizen, which he became as quickly as he could.

SSH: Can you tell me about your mother's background?

MR: Well, my mother is American-born. She was born in Wooster, Massachusetts. Her parents were European. They came from a place called Vilna in Poland. They knew each other and were sweethearts in Europe. I don't know whether they came together, or whether he came first and then brought her, but they raised all of their four children in New York City. So part of my background is an immigrant father, on one side, and an American mother on the other, and, as you might expect, I was torn between different traditional concepts.

SSH: Did you say both of your grandparents came from Vilna in Poland?

MR: Yes, yes.

SSH: How did they go from New York to Wooster, Massachusetts?

MR: I have no idea.

SSH: What did your grandfather do?

MR: Well, I knew him as an elderly person and he was still ironing pants. I remember the very heavy irons which would be placed on a coal-burning stove, and when they were so hot, you'd put your finger with a little saliva and it would sizzle, it was time to press the pants.

SSH: Were they still in Wooster when you were growing up in Toms River?

MR: No, no. At that time, they lived in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

SSH: Did you travel together for holidays with your extended family? I know you said you had uncles and aunts on your father's side.

MR: Well, the siblings of my mother died at a very early age. I really knew only one of the three, and she died at about thirty-five years of age. So my mother really had no one on her side, and then her parents died. Her only family was my father's family.

SSH: How did your mother and father meet?

MR: I don't know. … I can't say. I can only say that my mother married when she was eighteen. She had just finished high school, and her ambition in life was to be married and have a family, so to find a man and get married was a thrill.

SSH: Do you remember when they got married, what year?

MR: Yes, they were married nine months and ten days before I was born, so I can tell you very clearly they got married in April of 1916. [laughter] I have that on my mother's authority.

SSH: [laughter] That's wonderful. Could you tell me then about growing up in Toms River, about your education and your interests? What was it like to grow up in that part of New Jersey as a young man, a very young man?

MR: Well, I had no way of knowing of any other way of living. I grew up on a farm. To me hard work was just the norm, and to this day, I can do just about anything in the way of maintaining this house by virtue of the things we did when we started to build our

farm. It was a commercial egg-producing farm. Basically, my father had bought raw land. I remember him chopping the pine trees, and he gave me a small axe and I lobbed the branches off, and then we'd have fires and we'd burn leaves and trees, because there's no place to haul them. To me living in Toms River was a very satisfying way of life, because I don't recall having any anger or dreams about running away. I do know this. I yearned to be an athlete, and I couldn't for two reasons. First, I was a little fellow. I kept growing until I was about twenty-two years of age. … Secondly, there were farm chores, so you just don't drop the chores to go play football or do whatever. Nonetheless, I had friends. It was not an active social life, but the life was basically the farm.

SSH: How far was the farm from the center of Toms River?

MR: About four and a half miles. It was an easy trip. We would have a township bus pick us up in the morning and then bring us home in the evening.

SSH: Was it just one school system at that point?

MR: Yes, it was a township system, Dover Township, and it was a very good school. We had wonderful teachers. I remember the names of most of them. I can't say I remember the names of my college professors, but I remember the high school teachers, even some of the grade school teachers, because we moved there when I was eleven years of age and I went into the seventh grade. It couldn't be, I must have been twelve years of age, moved into the, I moved into the seventh grade.

SSH: Where did you go from the first through the sixth grades?

MR: Well, we lived in Brooklyn, New York, and I went to PS 175, I think it's called. I had just gone into PS 66, which was the junior high school, when my parents told me we were moving.

SSH: How did you feel about moving at that age, at such an impressionable age for a young man?

MR: I never gave it a thought. My wife calls me a weed. No matter where I am I thrive, and I never look back.

SSH: [laughter] That's wonderful. How much younger are your sisters?

MR: We're each six years apart.

SSH: Okay, because you had just one sister then who is …

MR: No, well, two sisters. One is six years younger, the other is twelve years younger than I.

SSH: Okay, one had already been born when you left Brooklyn.

MR: As a matter-of-fact, that's true, because I remember our grandmother taking me to this, you call it a maternity hospital on Eastern Parkway, I recall, and by standing tiptoe on the floor, so I could look over the window, and my mother waved to me and there was a little bed next to her, so it had to be in New York.

SSH: Was this your mother's mother?

MR: Yes. I never knew my father's parents. … They didn't survive World War I. I recall seeing one picture of my grandfather and not one of my grandmother.

SSH: So all of their children have been able to come to the States.

MR: Well, the grandfather married again and had two other children, so there were two half-sisters. But for reasons I don't know, they never left the old country.

SSH: Did your favorite subjects in school change from Brooklyn to Toms River, or was there a subject that just followed you through that you found most interesting?

MR: No, I just took each day as it came.

SSH: What were your favorite subjects?

MR: The ones which I made good grades in. … I think I made good grades, because I was interested in them. Biology was my favorite, physics was a favorite, and civics was a favorite. I didn't much care for Latin or French, but I learned it, because it was good for me. I don't know of any subjects I didn't like.

SSH: Were there any extracurricular activities? I know the farm really restricted that for you.

MR: Well, I had a very good voice, so I sang on the boy's quartet, the high school quartet, and I sang in the operettas. But that was the only place in the high school curriculum, until I was a senior, that I participated in anything other than class work. My senior year I prevailed on my folks to let me go out for the football team. And this is a little bit of an anecdote. I was small but tough and strong, and lifting a hundred pounds of feed on my shoulder and taking it out in the field was just considered to be part of a day. Mr. Dalton tried to make a football player out of me, but, of course, I was inexperienced. I'd only been at it a month when he said to my mother, "Oh, Mrs. Rosenberg, you have a wonderful son. I'm going to make an end of him." … My mother said, "An end from my son, you're not going to make," and I was off the team right then and there. [laughter] You see, when I became an administrator many years later, I had the background: a mother who was very decisive.

SSH: [laughter] No questions.

MR: If he was going to make an end from me, that was it.

SSH: That's a delightful story. What influenced you to pick Rutgers as the school that you would go to?

MR: You know, I didn't give college any thought even into my senior year. I just did every day as it came along. It wasn't aimless; it just didn't have any particular focus. No one in my family had ever gone to college. No one in my family, therefore, could advise me, or shall we say, point me in the direction of college; and yet my mother said to me one day, it was in very early spring, "You're going to college." I said she was decisive. And I said, "Where am I going?" [laughter] She said, "I don't know, but Rutgers is a good school." We had good contact with the College of Agriculture. Professor Thompson of the Poultry Department would come and give us lectures. The extension agent would come and give us lectures. Anyhow, these were people who were very humble. They learned by their mistakes, but they also learned wherever they could from authorities. I applied to Rutgers, made only one application, had no interview, received a letter saying, "You're accepted," and in September of 1934, I went to college.

SSH: Can you tell me about the Depression? Children who were raised on farms traditionally say, "Life just continued on." Was that the same for you?

MR: I would agree with that. I remember standing in our alfalfa fields looking up at the haze, which was Kansas and Oklahoma dust that had been blown to the eastern seaboard. I remember reading about the people who were in bread lines and people selling apples for a nickel. I remember when I would go into the city, I would see bodies of people lying on the street, and I remember saying to my uncle, "Uncle Miller, that person is dead," and he said, "No, he's not dead. He's a drunkard." But on the farm, we had food. We had a job. We didn't make much money, but as my father said, "When I go to bed at night, I want to be sure that when I wake up what's there is mine." So he never went into debt. Therefore, we were not suffering. I just didn't grow up in the lap of luxury; but, on the other hand, I had simple wants, and my wants were always filled.

SSH: You said it was an egg production farm. Were there other aspects of the farm? Did you do your own farming to raise the feed for these chickens?

MR: No, it's impossible to raise feed for 4,000 laying hens on a thirty-three acre farm. On the other hand, my father was not an egg farmer. He was a farmer. He knew soil, he knew about legumes, he knew about crop rotation. Therefore, every piece of land that was not exactly used for the precise purpose of chickens was green. It was either soybeans, which would get plowed under to increase the nitrogen content of the soil, or alfalfa which he would have cut. … We had a large hay mow because he had a cow and a horse, and he had all kinds of pretty, little, feathered animals, like peacocks and ducks. … He even had a garden. When other people would go by, they'd say, "Oh, that crazy Rosenberg is raising potatoes. He should have another thousand chickens." My father's attitude was, "It's my home as well as my livelihood. It's going to be beautiful." I grew up with that feeling and I owe that largely to my father.

SSH: Did your sisters appreciate being raised in Toms River as you did?

MR: I hardly knew my sisters. We were too far apart, so we had no interests together.

SSH: Did your sisters go to Rutgers also?

MR: No. Irene matriculated at the University of Wisconsin and Roz matriculated at the University of Missouri, so they did not follow me to New Brunswick.

SSH: Can you tell me as a young man coming from Toms River to New Brunswick just what your impressions were and what your interests were?

MR: Well, as a freshman I couldn't eat enough. I was on the *Targum*. I played 150-pound football. I went out for the freshman track team. I went out for the ROTC and the Queen's drill team. I did all the things that I could not do at home because there was no time for me to do those things, and suddenly I had so much time. It was a huge luxury for me. I also found time to wash a lot of dishes, because I tried to cut the cost of going to school. I worked for my meals. In fact, my father gave me a seventy-five dollar account in a checkbook and said, "If you need any more later on, let me know." When I came home at Thanksgiving, he said, "How much do you have left, Morton?" I said, "Seventy-five dollars." He said, "How can you do that?" I said, "Because I'm working my way through school," except for the tuition, and he got very angry with me. He said, "I didn't send my son to college to be a dishwasher." His idea of college was that you elevated yourself to higher things, more noble pursuits of the mind, and not physical. He had all the physical he needed for the both of us, so it made him very angry. As a matter-of-fact, after my freshman year, I never took another penny from my parents. I worked summers, earned enough to pay tuition, worked during the year and still had time for a lot of things in college.

SSH: Where did you wash dishes? Where were you being housed?

MR: I worked in the fraternity house.

SSH: Did you join the fraternity right away?

MR: Yes, I was sort of drafted. A fellow, who sat next to me, said to me one day, "How would you like to join a fraternity?" Well, I hadn't given the fraternities any thought, and he said, "Come with me." I was interviewed by several people, and they offered me a place where I could live, and, "Yes, if you want to wash the dishes, we'll give you a free meal." "Sure, why not?" So I left the quadrangle where I was housed with a young person I couldn't stand, because he stood for everything I didn't.

SSH: Really?

MR: Yes, and I was glad to be out of there.

SSH: When you were first on campus, where were you housed?

MR: I don't remember the name of the quadrangle, but it's very close to where the new library is now.

SSH: I'm not sure where that is.

MR: It's up College Avenue, between College Avenue and Johnson & Johnson.

SSH: Okay.

MR: I've forgotten the name of it.

SSH: I know some lived in Winants.

MR: Well, Winants is on Queen's Campus up there.

SSH: Right, and then Ford Hall was another one.

MR: I don't recall the name, truthfully. It was red brick, very attractive.

SSH: Where was your fraternity house located?

MR: On College Avenue, called Tau Delta Phi.

SSH: Was it a very mixed fraternity? Were there lots of different ethnic and religious backgrounds?

MR: No, no. They're all Jewish boys. In those days, Jewish boys didn't get into non-Jewish fraternities.

SSH: This is true.

MR: So there were only two or three there, SAM and Phi Ep, I think, and Tau Delta Phi, and we accepted that as a way of life. I never ran into anti-Semitism, but I know if I'd gone over to any of the fraternity houses and said, "I'd like to join you," I'd have been told, "You can't."

SSH: As a new pledge, did you have an initiation?

MR: It was no different than any other.

SSH: What do you remember about that?

MR: The only thing I remember was that I was in the library looking up something I should have known. I'd gone to the library, because the finals had just ended, and I wanted to know something that I didn't know. A man called Eddie Hyde, who was sort of a dean of personnel or whatever, came and made an announcement that because of the blizzard the highway between New Brunswick and Princeton had been blocked and did any of us want to go out and earn some money shoveling snow. Well, we earned twenty-five cents an hour, and that was a lot of money, so I said I'd go. I left about five o'clock in the evening, and I didn't get back until eight o'clock the next morning, and I had frozen feet. So I ended up in the infirmary. By the time initiation came, my feet were still so large that I could not wear even the shoes of the tallest, big foot in the fraternity. I went wearing a formal outfit, for the first time in my life, wearing galoshes, and that stands in my mind to this day. [laughter] I walked across the Woodrow Wilson Hotel going, "Slop, slop, slop, slop."

SSH: [laughter] You had said you'd gone out for all the extracurricular activities. Did you stay with them then through your four years at Rutgers?

MR: Track. I earned three varsity letters.

SSH: What did you do in track?

MR: I threw the javelin. See, I love to be outdoors, and track was an outdoor sport. I loved to do things depending on my own initiative. Therefore, track appealed to me. If I didn't run as fast as the next fellow, there was no excuse. He was faster. If I couldn't throw something as far as someone else, there was no excuse. He was stronger. But the truth was there, and that's the way it was. I couldn't hide behind other teammates, and so forth. … Secondly, I could train at my own pace, my own time, because I had many laboratories. Our curriculum had laboratories in the afternoon four or five times a week, and no one made any big demands on me. I went out for the track team, and I remember the then director of athletics, Lawson Little, I think it was Lawson Little. That's sounds like a coach at Columbia. Anyway, his name was George Little. George Little, and Mr. Little said, looking down at me, he was a big, husky guy, "What do you want to do, son?" I said, "I'd like to throw the javelin." "Okay," he says, "There's one over there," and he says, "See that big fellow over there, you watch what he does, and do what he does." That fellow happened to be one of the great athletes of Rutgers, and he could do everything well. I was a little shadow following him, but I learned to throw the javelin by mimicking him. I learned well enough to win two intercollegiate titles.

SSH: Wonderful.

MR: I took first place in the Middle Atlantic State Championships in 1937. Then I repeated in 1938.

SSH: Who was the fellow that you were mimicking?

MR: Oh, his name was Winnika. Walter Winnika, a great football player. He was physical in nature. [laughter]

SSH: [laughter] You had gone in on the Ag program.

MR: I matriculated in Cook College, the College of Agriculture. I thought I would learn to be a good poultry scientist, and I'd go home and I'd breed chickens and sell high-powered egg producers. It didn't work out that way.

SSH: Before we go on to that, can you tell me about football and the *Targum*?

MR: Well, those dropped, because it really was taking too much time, and when I saw my grades at the end of the first semester, I realized that I was in for trouble back home, so I had better cut it out and just do a few things but do them well.

SSH: Besides track, which activities did you continue?

MR: … The ROTC.

SSH: Was that mandatory at that point?

MR: Well, I took ROTC, but I was part of the special drill team. We would drill for some fifteen minutes to music without a single command. I used to love that.

SSH: That's wonderful. Some of the other people that we've interviewed have talked about mandatory chapel. What did you think about chapel?

MR: It didn't trouble me at all. When I was in high school, the boy's quartet sang in all the churches of Toms River. I'd seen the interior of a Baptist Church, a Catholic Church, a Presbyterian Church. In fact, one woman complained to my mother how was it that her son was going to all those churches, and my mother said, "What's so wrong with that? There's more than one road to Rome." … So it didn't trouble me to go to chapel, but what did trouble me was that when I entered Rutgers, I applied for the Glee Club. Professor McKinney was the man's name, and I remember him, because it left a trauma with me for many years. He played some chords, and I sang them. He played some more chords; I sang them. Finally, he turned to me and said, "Son, you've got a beautiful voice. What's your name?" I said, "Morton Rosenberg." "Oh," he said, and with that. Nothing. After what seemed like an interminable period, I said, "Sir, is there a problem?" He said, "Yes, there is. I can't use you." I said, "Why not?" He says, "At Rutgers, the Glee Club is also the choir, and how would it look for a Rosenberg to stand next to a McCarthy and sing *Jesus is My Savior*," and with that, he dismissed me. That is the only incidence in my entire life that I can say that I knew clearly that there had been an anti-Semitic act, and yet it was not anti-Semitic. I don't think Professor McKinney was an anti-Semite. He was a realist, I was a Jew, and that was a Christian ceremony, and it might not go over right. In those days, that's the way it was. I didn't sing another note in the four years I was at Rutgers.

SSH: Regrettably for them, I would think.

MR: Actually, I had a very good voice.

SSH: How often did you get to go home to Toms River?

MR: Only holidays.

SSH: How did you get home?

MR: Hitchhiked.

SSH: Hitchhiked. [laughter] I was going to ask when you got your first car.

MR: Oh, I didn't own a car until I was a graduate student, and then it was a seventy-dollar jalopy. [laughter]

SSH: How did you get from the College Avenue campus to Cook College at that point?

MR: We walked.

SSH: You walked.

MR: It cost a nickel to get across town by bus, so we walked. None of us thought a thing about it. We'd walk there, and we'd walk back.

SSH: Did you attend any of the dances at Rutgers?

MR: Never.

SSH: Did you date any of the women at NJC?

MR: Never.

SSH: Okay.

MR: It isn't that I didn't like the idea. I just didn't have the social graces. I didn't have the money, so I did the things I could do and didn't worry about the things I couldn't do.

SSH: Were there any lectures on campus that stand out in your mind?

MR: Lessons?

SSH: Lectures or musical programs.

MR: Oh, I attended all of the, not all, that's an exaggeration, but I attended the concert series in the old gymnasium. I used to love to listen to music. Of course, I used to watch a lot of the ball games. If I couldn't be an athlete, at least I could enjoy watching others play.

SSH: You did find time on Saturdays to go to the football games then.

MR: Oh, yes. I never missed a home game.

SSH: What did you do in the wintertime for entertainment?

MR: Oh, I'd go to the gym and work out.

SSH: Were you already starting to train on your javelin?

MR: Yes, I'd use a basketball, and I'd throw the ball from one end of the basketball court to the other trying to hit the backboard, which I got to hit very often.

SSH: The aerodynamics of a javelin. [laughter] Going through Rutgers at this stage from 1934 to '38, was there any news coming from Europe causing concern?

MR: You know, I was oblivious. I can't say that I had any strong political positions or that I took any stands. The Lindbergh case probably had more of a pronounced impact on my interest than anything else that was not related to college activity.

SSH: Were politics talked about in your home?

MR: Not much, because it didn't really matter to farming people who was president, and anyway, Roosevelt was president for so long, he had, you know, four terms, that there was nothing to discuss.

SSH: [laughter] What did your parents think of Roosevelt and his policies?

MR: Well, my father was a Republican. He believed that if you work hard and you accumulate something, and if it's yours, you should be able to keep it. He did not have much respect for people who would mooch on others. In his whole life, he never borrowed from anybody. If he could afford it, he bought it. If he couldn't afford it, except a mortgage on property, yes, but then he immediately went about paying it off.

SSH: When you graduated in 1938, what did you do from that point on?

MR: Well, I was recommended for a fellowship at Texas A&M College, and I hadn't even asked for it, but Professor Thompson, who was chairman of the Poultry Science Department, by that time, knew me very well. In fact, he had taken me under his wing and had given me an NYA job, so that I could work on some of the data he was compiling. He taught me how to do a correlation coefficient or a regression equation and

so forth. … He knew that I was not interested in being a farmer anymore, because I had got bitten by the science bug, so, unbeknownst to me, he wrote to Professor Reid at Texas A&M, and the next thing I knew I had an offer for a teaching fellowship. So without any formal presentation or preparation I left New Jersey and went west.

SSH: When did you do this, right after graduation in May or June?

MR: Well, no, I went home and I worked with my folks, because I knew I was going to be away, so I worked with them for that summer. I went off with all my books in one hand and all my clothing in the other and took a train all the way to Texas.

SSH: [laughter] What was that like to go from the lush green of New Jersey across to Texas?

MR: Well, my nose was pressed against the window all the way. For one thing, I've always been an American history buff, and I love this country with a passion, and here it was unfolding. … As we went across to Illinois, I could remember the things that happened in Illinois, and when it came to Kansas, I knew what happened in Kansas, and all the way down, until I got off the "Orange Blossom Special," as they called it, at College Station. Then I realized the impact of what I'd done, because when I got off, there was absolutely no one there. There was just a wee, wee train stop. Off in the distance, about half a mile, was a domed building looking like a capital building, and that was the central building of Texas A&M. Here was this long thoroughfare with the lights on each side that went in a narrow, straight line. There was no conveyance. There was no way of getting there, except to walk there, and the heat was enormous. The humidity was enormous. I felt like I'd been hit with a physical blow. As I started walking toward that building, I began to see young men in ROTC uniforms, and they were drilling. I thought to myself, "That's interesting." I had never even looked into Texas A&M. I knew it had a very fine College of Agriculture. I knew it had a good graduate program, and I was not going there as an undergraduate. Had I gone there, I'd had to wear a uniform. ROTC was very important at Texas A&M. They bragged that they had more generals in World War I than West Point. Graduates of Texas A&M outnumbered West Point. At any rate, I began to ask myself, "What am I in for?" That was the first impression I had. That was the first impression that I had that I had done something very exotic and the implications were almost beyond my concept. "Would I even get out of it alive?" you know. But I had three good years there and a Master of Science, and I became an instructor, until one day I had a phone call from the University of Wisconsin, and Professor Halpin was on the line. He said, "I heard your paper at the science meetings. How would you like to work on your doctorate here at Wisconsin?" I mean, doors were open for me. I didn't apply. "When shall I come?" I said. "Come as soon as you can," and so I appeared at the end of summer, and I started working on my doctorate at Wisconsin.

SSH: Was this in 1941?

MR: In 1941.

SSH: What had your paper been on?

MR: I worked on the inheritance of disease resistance in poultry with a protozoan organism that had never been worked on before. It's truly original research, and I went ahead and used that as my doctoral project, and it was good enough to earn a Ph.D.

SSH: When you were in Texas, coming from New Jersey to this flat country, what did you do? Were you a diligent student, or did you have some sort of a social life at that point?

MR: Well, they picked a point that would be equal distance to Austin, Waco and Houston, in the midst of the Bluebonnets. It was out in nowhere, ninety-five miles from anyplace. So social life was all men, four thousand strong, and, boy, they were strong. Texans were a tough breed of people. By that time, I had earned enough money to buy a little car, so I had some transportation. So the other graduate students would drag me along. But what was the social life? Basically, they would drive across the Brazos River and get drunk, and I would drive them home because I simply would not allow myself to get drunk. I've been very, shall we say, self-disciplined all through my lifetime, and then after a while we began to meet a few teachers and stuff, but it didn't amount to much. The only thing that was important to me was the work I was doing. I had no problem concentrating at all.

SSH: Were the facilities at Texas A&M adequate for what you were doing? Were you impressed with them?

MR: Oh, yes. It was a very, very well equipped, very well staffed, fine professors. … It was a wonderful experience for me.

SSH: Was your sister already at Wisconsin when you went there as a doctoral candidate?

MR: She was a sophomore.

SSH: Did that influence her decision to go to Wisconsin at all?

MR: Oh, no. She was in Wisconsin a year before I arrived there. By the time I completed the work I was doing at Texas A&M, she had already matriculated at Wisconsin and was either a freshman or sophomore. So my choice of Wisconsin had nothing to do with her. It was a totally independent action.

SSH: Oh, okay. I thought I had asked whether she there when you got there.

MR: I'm trying to remember whether she was a freshman or a sophomore. I don't recall.

SSH: Was she surprised to find out that her big brother was coming to campus?

MR: Thrilled, thrilled. See, she had somebody that she could follow. I had no one to follow. Whatever I did, she did better. She was determined to beat me out on everything, and so it worked on her behalf.

SSH: What was she studying at Wisconsin?

MR: Well, she ended up with a baccalaureate degree in art. That is a BA. I think her interest was in advertising journalism.

SSH: Did you get a chance to socialize at all with her?

MR: Oh, I didn't see her but three times the first semester I was there, and then I went off to war, and I didn't see her again.

SSH: That was my next question. Would you have been eligible for the draft, or did you volunteer?

MR: The day after Pearl Harbor, I drove to Milwaukee to the Great Lakes Naval Station, and I enlisted. When they looked at my record, they said, "Well, we'll make you a pharmacist's mate second class," which sounded very nice to me. The only proviso I had, "Could I finish my semester?" and they said, "We have so many people that we can't process you all anyway. Yes, you can." So as soon as the semester was over, I drove home, said goodbye to my folks, went back to the Great Lakes and went into the military service. So about four weeks, you might say, at the most, five weeks after Pearl Harbor, I was in the service.

SSH: You had been involved in the ROTC program and had been part of the Queen's Guard. Why did you pick the Navy and not the Army or the Marines?

MR: Well, I applied for the Advanced ROTC program and went off to work in the Catskills in the summer. As I said, I was earning my own way through school, and Major Croonquist wrote a letter to me and offered a contract to enter into Advanced ROTC training. My mother received the letter. She saw War Department on it. She opened it. She read it and said, "Not my son," and she tore it up. I didn't know.

SSH: Oh, really.

MR: Not until I came back for my junior year and I ran into Major Croonquist. He said, "Rosenberg, we're disappointed that you didn't respond to our invitation." I said, "Sir, I was disappointed I was never invited." So I was, therefore, not automatically a candidate for the Army service. Why did I join the Navy? Because by that time I'd gotten a little smarter. I knew that in the Navy I would take my bunk with me, I would take the galley with me, I would not sleep in sand, wouldn't have fleas to contend with, and I wouldn't be shot at as often.

SSH: I was a little surprised to find that you joined the Navy, after being in the ROTC.

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

SSH: How long was your basic training in Great Lakes?

MR: It was one month, and all it consisted of, basically, was to learn how to make a bed. Do you know, to this day, I can miter a corner with the best of them? You can drop a coin on a bed I make, and it'll bounce. I learned to make a bed very well. But there was nothing to teach us. Everything was in a huge operation. They looked at my record, and they said, "Ah, you've had all of these courses in biology. Fine, we'll send you to Treasure Island Hospital," and I was placed in the laboratory, in charge of the laboratory under doctors, and I learned by reading books every night.

SSH: Really?

MR: I mean, what did I know about materia medica? What did I know about the standard tests that they gave? I had histology. I had cytology. I knew anatomy inside out, but I was not trained as a corpsman. Can you imagine, therefore, how pleased I was when they transferred me after three months to San Diego Hospital Corps School? I said, "Good, now I'll learn how to be a corpsman," and I got there, and I was an instructor. I taught there for three months. Because I taught the way I had taught at college, the captain listening in called me in one day, and he said, "You know, you're the only one that's not telling sea stories. You're teaching." He said, "I've looked at your record. You should be an officer," he said, "Apply for the hospital corps, as an ensign in the hospital corps." Well, I could have been an officer without that. I could have applied for the V-12 Program. I could have been in any number of officer programs. I didn't want to be an officer, because I didn't feel I knew enough to be responsible for other people's lives. But when you're in the service, you say, "Yes, Sir." So I applied, and I got a reply in about a month stating that all the billets were filled, that they were requesting that I apply for line. … Two weeks later, I was a line officer. I was an ensign qualified to go to sea on a ship and stand watch. I never had one day of training in the four years I was in the military service. I had all kinds of responsibilities and I learned on the job, just as I did in the Naval Hospital Corps School. I would be studying every night, and my fellow teachers, the instructors, would say, "Come on, Rosie, let's have something on the town." I said, "No, I have to teach tomorrow." [laughter] I mean, I didn't even know there was a war going on. With me, it was a matter of intellectual integrity. I couldn't stand in front of anybody and teach unless I knew what I was talking about. So I learned a lot, and it stood me in good stead, because I ended up, as you can see, a university professor. [laughter]

SSH: Where were you given the ensign line duty? Where did you go from there?

MR: Well, the orders said, "You will proceed immediately," which meant I had twelve hours to shed my enlisted man's clothing, buy a naval officer's uniform, and I didn't have the money, so I called home and said, "Mom, send me some money." I bought my uniform and within twelve hours was on the train to Hutchinson, Kansas. They were

building a naval air station there to train people to fly, and I was sent there on duty. [laughter]

SSH: [laughter] Did you maintain your sense of humor throughout all of this?

MR: Well, sometimes I almost got in trouble, because when I reported to the captain, who was at that time on the sixth floor of the National Bank building in Hutchinson, Kansas. I mean, there was no naval air station. It was under construction. It had been some eight or ten big, wheat farms. He says, "What experience have you had with planes, son?" I said, "None, Sir." "What experience have you had with engines?" I said, "None, Sir." He says, "What are you doing here?" I said, "I don't know, Sir, but I hope I don't get in your way." He said, "You better not." He'd just come from a large aircraft carrier. He was a captain of an aircraft carrier, a thirty-three-year veteran, talking to a person who didn't even know how to tie his shoelaces when it came to the Navy. So they made me an assistant personnel officer, and for the first three weeks I signed as "true copies" documents that had been piling up in the basement of the place. I signed my name at least ten thousand times. You had to have a Master of Science degree to write your name, and that was my duty, until we moved to the station and I was given other duties.

SSH: How long did it take them to complete the station?

MR: Oh, I don't know. In those days, things were done quickly. I think probably we were in that bank building and adjacent building three months, and they were moved out to the naval air station.

SSH: How many men were under your command as personnel officer?

MR: Well, I had sixty-some yeomen, and I didn't know what I was doing. I couldn't even type, but they would bring me all of these documents, and I would sign them, you know. It's a wonder I didn't end up in jail, because I didn't know what I was signing. … It's interesting, because one of my duties was to go to captain's mast. You may know what that is. That's when the captain dispenses justice for minor infringements of the naval regs. So one day, as I'm leaving, the captain says, "Oh, those damn chickens," and I turn to him and I say, "Chickens, Sir?" He says, "Yeah, they're bleeding." I said, "Well, maybe I can be of some assistance to you, Sir." "What the hell do you know about chickens?" he says. So I said, "Well, I've been an Ag major. I grew up on a farm." "Go look at them." Well, I went off to look at them, and, of course, I knew immediately what they had. It was cecal coecidiosis, and it was caused by a protozoan disease called eimeria tenella. So I march back, and I report to the captain. "Sir, your chickens are suffering from cecal coecidiosis. It's caused by eimeria tenella, and the drug of choice is sulphathiazol." "Where do you get that?" I said, "Probably in a pharmacy in Hutchinson." "Take my car," he says, "Go get some." And so we developed a kind of unique relationship, the captain and the ensign. After each of the captain's mast, as I started marching out, he said, "Stand by, Ensign," and when the door closed, he said, "Sit down, son," and we would talk farming. I was there for fourteen months. Now, I would

say eleven of the fourteen months was after I started talking chickens with the captain. He kept me there, because he, like so many other naval officers, especially mustangs, dreamed of having a farm when they're out at sea, and so he drained me of everything I knew. He asked lots of good questions. He was a very intelligent man. Then on January 2nd of 1944, I remember it like today, he got his orders to go to the West Coast and take command of a new *Essex*-class aircraft carrier. He had no further need for me. I got my orders that same day, too, to go to amphibious command on the East Coast, and I swear to this day, in my mind, I'm convinced that he sat on my orders. I even became a lieutenant junior grade during that time. He sat on my orders, because he wanted to be able to talk to somebody that would be interesting to him.

SSH: Why did the Navy station have chickens?

MR: He had his own private, little hen house. He had the Seabees build him a chicken coop, and he was raising chickens.

SSH: Oh, okay, because I was wondering whether you were raising your own chickens.

MR: No, no. It was his own little hobby.

SSH: That's a great anecdote. What else were you doing besides keeping track of the captain's chickens?

MR: Well, we kept the records of all of the cadets and kept the files up to date, and when they left, we provided them with marching orders, and whatever, to go off to their next duty station. In essence, it was like a corporate headquarters, the secretarial staff or whatever you call it.

SSH: Did you have any interaction with the cadets that were coming in?

MR: None. I didn't know how to fly. What could I do for these people?

SSH: Were there any other incidences that were outstanding at this duty station for you?

MR: Nothing really, except maybe another minor anecdote. There was a great golfer there by the name of Lawson Little, and Lawson Little was also stationed there. One day he said to me, "Rosie, I'll bet I can hit a golf ball standing on my right foot with my left leg off the ground, with only my right hand, with my left hand behind my back, and I bet I can drive a ball further than you can, no matter how you do it," and we bet ten dollars. But before we ever had the contest, we were making our rounds of the various buildings. The cadets were playing fungo baseball inside the hangers, and I said, "Lawson, I'll bet I can throw a baseball out of this building." He said, "I'll bet you ten bucks." I said, "Three throws." The building was a hundred yards long. I threw the ball on my third throw right out of the building, and he never, ever took me up on the other part of the bet. [laughter]

SSH: Did you ever take up golf?

MR: Oh, I played golf for many years, but later on.

SSH: That's great. From Hutchinson, Kansas, where did you go?

MR: Oh, then I went to Camp Bradford, Virginia, where we went into, essentially, Quonset huts. Everything had been thrown together in a hurry. They were building fast, as I said, and, of course, on the second or third day, I presented myself before an interviewing officer, who was assigning us to different activities, mostly small landing craft. When I appeared, I, at that time, had a half stripe. I was a lieutenant junior grade, no longer an ensign. So this weather-beaten officer, who had such tarnished braids, you wouldn't believe it, looked at me and said, "What sea duty have you had?" I said, "None, Sir." "What midshipmen's school have you been to?" I said, "None, Sir." "What small boat experience have you had?" I said, "None, Sir. In fact, I volunteered. I've never been on the ocean." "How the hell did you get to be a lieutenant junior grade?" he asked me. What could I tell him, that I talked chickens with the captain? So all I could say was, "Good conduct, Sir," and he got so damn mad at me for being impertinent. See, he didn't know, and I couldn't tell him. He said, "You're a stores watch officer on an LST." … I was immediately assigned to a ship, which was being built in Boston, assigned to a ship's company, which traveled two weeks later. When we went to sea, we had never been on the water, except three men out of a total of a hundred and twenty-seven enlisted men and seven officers. A hundred and thirty-four people, only three had ever been on the ocean before. Our captain, bless his heart, had been on the ocean on a Liberty ship in charge of one of those little artillery guns that they had in the bow. He had one trip to Australia and back, and that was his sea duty. He was the captain of our ship. I'll tell you, we won the war, but we won it only because we adapted. We had no training at all.

SSH: Unbelievable.

MR: Yes, it's true.

SSH: When you got to Boston, was the ship still being built?

MR: It was in the last stages of construction. So my job as stores watch officer meant that I was responsible for everything on the ship, except water and ammunition, in the way of supplies. So I went into their huge warehouses. I never saw so much beautiful silverware, from this battleship and that battleship. You know, it went back to 1850. Boston Naval Yard is a big and very old naval yard, so they had all sorts of things, and I would requisition for the ship, so we had nice silverware and other things. At any rate, I saw a huge roll of hawser, ten-inch hawser. It's rope, so, therefore, it's the circumference, not the diameter. … When I brought that back, the captain said, "What are we going to do with that?" I said, "Sir, you never know when we might have to tow somebody." Do you know a year and a half later, the ship behind us was torpedoed and we were ordered to stand by, and we towed that ship for fourteen hundred miles with the

rope I put onboard from the Boston Navy Yard, which the captain said, "What are we going to do with that?"

SSH: That's farm training.

MR: "Waste not, want not." That's right. You never know.

SSH: Unbelievable. Going from Virginia, were you able to stop and say hello to your parents before you went on to Boston?

MR: Oh, briefly, very briefly.

SSH: What changes were you seeing now that you'd gone clear across the country and back? Were you seeing a lot of changes in the war effort?

MR: No, because we were always in a naval station. We had very little free time.

SSH: I was wondering if you noticed any changes on your train trips across the country.

MR: When we went to sea, we left Boston Harbor at eight o'clock in the evening. At twelve o'clock the captain said that that was my watch, so I stood the twelve-to-four-in-the-morning watch. That was the first time I ever stood on the bridge of a ship. I could read a compass, I knew what the course was, and I had a speaking tube, so I could talk to the man on the wheel, the quartermaster, and, "It's your ship," and so he goes off to bed, and I sailed through a convoy [laughter], a convoy that was standing into the harbor, all of their lights blazing. You wouldn't think there was a war on, and we had a darkened ship, and I reported to the captain that there were lights on the horizon, and the answer came back, "Very well." I reported to the captain a second time that it now looked like a series of ships in formation, "Very well." My God, the next thing I know I'm between two ships, and I started to zigzag between columns and between ships, and I zigzagged my way across four columns of ships like a broken field runner. The captain came running up to the deck, because he heard me changing the speed of the engines and changing courses and, "What the hell are you doing, Rosenberg?" I said, "I'm trying to save your ship, Sir." [laughter] I was. … I never functioned with greater efficiency in all my life. Every nerve ending in my body was working. My God, all these ships, and I was breaking every rule in the book.

SSH: Was there protest from the other ships that you were zigzagging through?

MR: Well, we were a darkened ship, so we weren't exactly very visible, but nobody, I'm sure, could believe that some idiot was running an LST through a convoy. That was my introduction to the open sea.

SSH: Well, at least you were successful.

MR: Well, I was lucky all the way through the war.

SSH: Where were your orders from Boston?

MR: To the Chesapeake to shake down, so we'd learn how to run our ship, and we no sooner got there that we were shipped out.

SSH: No shakedown?

MR: No. They sent us to Guantanamo Bay to join our squadron or flotilla, whatever it's called, twelve ships under a commander, some unit, I think it's called, and he wasn't there. So we didn't have a shakedown. They sent us to San Diego. We arrived in San Diego, and we were advised he was in Florida, but we were to proceed to Pearl Harbor. So we sailed through the whole war, and we never once ever had any direct contact with our own particular unit. I remember we received a radiogram from him, I don't know where he was, reminding us that it was very essential for officers to maintain appearances, that we should be in proper uniform and that we should see to it that the ship was in proper, shall we say, condition. At a time, I didn't have even two shoes that matched. Our clothing had rotted away in all those years in, well, a year and a half at sea, so we would beg, borrow and steal from every group of people we carried on our ship. So we had fatigue clothing. We had Army boots. I think I had a naval hat, I'm not even sure of that, at that point. It was the biggest laugh of my life, telling us to be sure we had the proper dress uniform.

SSH: Did you go from Guantanamo through the Panama Canal?

MR: Yes.

SSH: What was that like?

MR: A thrill, an absolute thrill. I relived every moment of the book that I'd read before on the French effort to build it, the American tenacity, the ingeniousness to build.

SSH: How long did it take you to go through? Was there a lot of traffic at that point?

MR: No, because, you see, you either go in one lane going or the other lane coming. We went with one other ship through each lock, so there were two ships going through each lock.

SSH: How many ships left Guantanamo together?

MR: We were always by ourselves. We sailed from the Chesapeake to Guantanamo, singly from Guantanamo to San Diego, singly from San Diego to Pearl Harbor, where we became part of a battle group. … Three days after we arrived there, we were told we were going to replace some ships that exploded in one of the lochs, or whatever they're called, in Pearl Harbor, and so we went off to Guam, the invasion of Guam, without our

shakedown. We never beached our ship. We never learned how to use the vessel, and off we went, loaded for war.

SSH: What were you carrying on your LST?

MR: Well, I remember clearly, directly under me, there were artillery shells, because they clicked every time the ship rolled. They'd go, "Click, click." My bunk was directly over it. I lost, in fourteen days, I lost fourteen pounds. All the fat, all the baby fat, was gone when we got to Guam, because I remember a picture of me. Someone took an illegal picture, shouldn't have had a camera, and my clothing was sort of hanging baggy on me. … Then we had tanks, and we had one bulldozer. The last thing that came on was a bulldozer, in case you had to build a ramp to take the tanks off the ship, the bulldozer could do that. So when we arrived, we were at D-day at Guam. The troops were already ashore beginning to move inland, but we were within eight hours of the initial raid onshore, because they were calling on us immediately for those tanks. They wanted them right away, so we sailed into the beach. Now, this is an interesting story. I shouldn't tell it, but the only reason I was able to survive the war is that I kept laughing all the time. Now, maybe it was hysteria, but I laughed. As stores watch officer, my duty station was on the stern, in charge of the stern guns, and when landing, we had a big reel of steel plow cable, nine hundred feet of cable, and a three thousand pound anchor on it, and our job was to drop it as we hit the beach. It would keep the ship from broaching, and it would also help us to withdraw. … You take in on the cable, and you'd pull yourself off the beach. So we, in due course, got the order, "Drop the stern anchor," and we did, and we ran onto the beach, but we ran the cable totally off the ship. The captain came running to the stern, it's his first action. I told you he'd been a great gunnery officer on a Liberty ship, "Rosenberg, how many feet of cable out?" "Twelve hundred feet, Sir," I replied. He called me a name I won't repeat. He says, "You know there's only nine hundred feet on that cable." I said, "Yes, Sir. The bitter end is three hundred feet astern."

SSH: [laughter] What was the makeup of your crew? Were they from all over the country?

MR: Well, I'd say eighty percent of the crew was just kids right out of high school. They were a tough bunch of kids that I loved. If I ever had to go into danger, I'd want them on my side. I wouldn't want to be on the other side. They thoroughly loved the action. They reached levels of excitement that was unbelievable. Did they make anything of themselves after the war? I have no idea, but they were perfect for that job.

SSH: The other officers that you were serving with, where were they from?

MR: Well, one was from Alaska, one was from Texas, two were just ensigns just right out of a V-12 program at Johns Hopkins. Where they were from before, I don't know. Our captain was an insurance salesman.

SSH: [laughter] He probably truly understood the value of insurance when he finished with the war.

MR: The only person onboard who really knew what was going on was our first lieutenant. He'd been an enlisted man, and they had promoted him to ensign, and he ran the ship. If it weren't for him, I don't know whether we would have survived.

SSH: How long were you on the shore at Guam before you pulled back?

MR: We didn't stay long. It took us about two and half hours to unload, and as we backed out, we couldn't pull ourselves off. We got orders to go find the *China Victory* … and to unload some more tanks, because, you know, the island was not prepared for the receipt of goods. It was just open beaches. … We were designed to come in and open our bows and deliver the goods. So we went looking for the *China Victory*. We couldn't communicate by radio, it was voice silence, and it got dark very shortly thereafter. So we would sail from one Liberty ship to another in the Agana Bay. "Are you the *China Victory*?" Well, they weren't, until we hit a ship. We rammed it. It was the *China Victory* [laughter], and then the captain of the *China Victory* wouldn't let us come alongside. He said, "I can't let you come near me. You'll sink me." [laughter] But eventually we did get his cargo, and we brought in a bunch more tanks.

SSH: How did you unload from a large ship like the *China Victory*?

MR: Well, they used their boom and rigging. They have gear onboard. You let out a big pole at a forty-five degree angle to get maximum strength, both up and down, tie it down, then it has pulleys on it, and you have very strong electric winches, and you lift things up and you move them out and you drop them down, just like a crane.

SSH: Were there any incidences where they missed dropping them?

MR: No, but we had a lot of trouble, because we were unloaded, and he was fully loaded, so as a wave would bring us up, he wouldn't move up as fast as we did, and here comes this big tank coming down and we're coming up, bang, and then they'd pull the tank back up. So it took us the longest time to get six tanks onboard. By that time, you'd see the ribs on the deck of the ship. We really pounded that ship badly.

SSH: [laughter] Where did you go from there?

MR: Back to the beach, and we unloaded. We unloaded three times. Then on the twenty-first day, we brought the Marines off the island and took them to Guadalcanal.

SSH: How were they when you picked them up?

MR: Oh, terrible. We were told not to approach them from the rear. "Don't touch them. They'll spin on you and shoot." They were suffering from dengue fever; they were sick. They were a very, oh, a wild bunch of people. They had been converted in twenty-one

days from good, All-American kids to, I don't know how to describe them, but they were just as bad as the Japanese, because the only thing was that they survive, and they were fighting the Japanese inch-by-inch, until there wasn't a Japanese left on the island. It was terrible. I had a very terrible sense of guilt. We were literally living off the fat of the land, and they were inching on their bellies for about eighteen miles until they pushed them all off the island.

SSH: Were there corpsmen or medics onboard to help them?

MR: Well, the corpsmen were under my command. I had the ship's galley, so I had the bakers, the butchers and the candlestick makers. I had the yeomen, and I had the corpsmen. Those were my personal people. We ran the sick bay, too.

SSH: Did you treat the Marines as they came on?

MR: No, no. They had their own doctors.

SSH: They had their own medics.

MR: Yes.

SSH: How many were you able to hold?

MR: I don't know. We took on as many as we could. They were stuffed on the deck and on the tank deck. We were just getting them out of there as fast as we could. They were in terrible shape. It was horrible duty.

SSH: How long did it take you then to get to Guadalcanal?

MR: I don't recall. We only went about nine knots, which is very slow. I mean, that was with the current pushing us. Nine knots would be about ten-point-one miles an hour. Great speed, but it was amazing how many miles we traveled. We did over 50,000 miles on the Pacific Ocean in that old bucket.

SSH: How did your duties progress from there?

MR: Well, the same thing happened to us. We thought we were going to get some rest and recreation, and they loaded us up for the invasion of Leyte in the Philippines.

SSH: Did you think you were going to invade Guadalcanal?

MR: No, Guadalcanal had been secured before I even hit the Pacific Ocean.

SSH: Oh, okay.

MR: That was a war that had started eight months earlier. Guadalcanal was really a place where we took the Marines so they could recuperate.

SSH: Okay.

MR: It had already been secured by the American forces. It was one of the terrible battles of the war.

SSH: Right.

MR: But, no, we delivered them. Then we went off to load up and then to Leyte. Then again it was D-day, and then we loaded up again and went to Mindoro, and that was D-day. We loaded up again and went off to another D-day and that was, what's the main island, Luzon. Leyte was the first, then Mindoro and then Luzon. So we hit the beach D-day at Luzon. We were in and out of the Philippines for nine months, and we hit the beach twenty-one times, but these were re-supply runs. The only really scary trip was the one to Mindoro, because they sent us off, thirty-two LSTs, four destroyers and one cruiser, through the Mindanao Sea to make a surprise invasion of Mindoro. But Mindanao was occupied by the Japanese, and a big chunk of the northern part of Leyte was still occupied by the Japanese. They knew every inch of the way. We were under constant kamikaze attack for the whole two-and-a-half-day trip. It was a great surprise! In fact, when we arrived there, we were on the beachhead. We received an order not to use our guns, because the general in charge, the Marine general, said, "The people you're shooting at are my boys. Stop shooting." We were not very discriminating. If it flew, we shot at it. It was ridiculous. They were coming into a secure airstrip, and that was the whole idea of getting that island, so that they'd have a jumping off point to attack Manila.

SSH: Can you tell me about the kamikaze attacks?

MR: Kamikazes were, as you know, Japanese pilots dedicated to their emperor, and they sacrificed their lives using themselves, essentially, as a guided missile. But for some weird reason, I never understood, they never came after the smaller ships. We got to be almost like a merchant counting beans. If we were in a convoy and the kamikazes showed up, we'd look around to see in what order would we be the largest, because they always went for the biggest ships. So in this particular trip in Mindanao, they went after the cruiser, and I would say the cruiser shot down at least eight or ten of them. They did it in the most unique way, because the Japanese were smart. They came out of the east, when the sun was rising, and they'd come low over the water. Well, the cruiser laid down its guns and fired shells into the water and sent up great, big geysers, and the planes flew right into this solid wall of water, and they disintegrated.

SSH: Really?

MR: Oh, we had a wonderful Navy, I'll tell you. We amphibs were just truck drivers. I mean, the Navy was really first class. We were first class truck drivers, but we were not Navy. [laughter]

SSH: [laughter] You were learning as you went.

MR: Sort of. We performed an important function.

SSH: When you reloaded, were you reloading from some big supply ship?

MR: Oh, no. We would go back to some big depot. By that time, Guam had been built up. You see, things were done twenty-four hours a day in war. There were no holidays. I stood watch for two years at sea and never had one day off, and everyday you stood two watches. Sometimes your watch would be from twelve to four in the morning, the next day from four to six, the next day from six to eight, and then you had another watch, and then you did your duty, whatever it happened to be other than that.

SSH: Did you ever have R&R?

MR: Well, occasionally they would let us off at an atoll. Ulithi, I remember we were there. Eniwetok, we were there. So we had an option to go ashore, but that was all it amounted to. There was nothing there, just a couple of buildings, and they dispensed beer to the enlisted men and whiskey to the officers.

SSH: Did you ever interact with any of the natives of any of these islands?

MR: Never saw them.

SSH: Really?

MR: No, never saw them. All we saw were palm trees.

SSH: How often were you able to get mail and information from home?

MR: Infrequently and usually in batches of fifteen and twenty letters at a time. They were always very welcome.

SSH: Were you a good letter writer?

MR: Yes. I had married a wonderful woman, and I wrote her everyday.

SSH: Tell me where you met this wonderful woman and when you married her.

MR: In Hutchinson, Kansas.

SSH: Was she from Kansas?

MR: Yes. By that time, I began to look at girls differently. [laughter]

SSH: Kansas was not as isolated as Texas A&M.

MR: That's right. Totally different.

SSH: What was your wife's family doing in Hutchinson?

MR: They were Kansans. They'd been there, I don't know how many generations.

SSH: Were they farmers or ranchers?

MR: Well, no. Mr. Barton worked in Hutchinson itself, but his forbearers were wheat growers, and Mrs. Barton's forbearers were wheat growers.

SSH: Was your wife involved in the war effort at all?

MR: No.

SSH: She wasn't a Rosie the Riveter.

MR: No.

SSH: Was she able to follow you?

MR: No.

SSH: She stayed right in Hutchinson.

MR: Yes, she stayed there until I returned. Then we went off, back to Wisconsin.

SSH: Can you tell me what other invasions you were involved in?

MR: Yes. We had one more D-day, and that was Okinawa. That was the biggest and the best of the batch. It was huge. I went ashore and I looked back at the armada, and we had 1,500 ships there. There were so many supply vessels that they looked like a forest of trees in the wintertime with no leaves on it. It was really an impressive sight.

SSH: Why did you go ashore?

MR: Because I'm curious. I wanted to see, "What do the burial grounds look like?" For instance, I'd heard about the little cemeteries that they had on Okinawa. Little did I know that they were shooting at each other around the burial grounds at the time. I had no business being there. I walked so close to the front lines that day that an MP came along and said, "Lieutenant, you'd better get the hell out of here. You don't know how close you are to the front lines." But I wanted to see it. I went over to one of their airfields. I wanted to see what their planes looked like. They were made out of wicker. They were decoys shot full of holes. It's really astonishing how we were counting planes that were

not planes. They were decoys. Towards the end of the war, the Japanese were resorting to all kinds of ingenious tricks to mislead us. But basically it was the same old thing. We'd hit the beach, we'd unload, we'd go get another load, and we'd come in. The only thing unique about us is they picked us as a substitute each and every time we ended up on a D-day operation, so we had five of them. It was enough.

SSH: When you were involved in these landings, did that add to your points?

MR: … No, you didn't get any special credits for that, but I'd been away so long I had enough credits to get out of the Navy the day after they started. There were no replacements. I had to sit three months waiting for a replacement to come to take my place.

SSH: Oh, really? So you had to wait for replacements.

MR: Yes, we sat in Philippine waters for three months, before we were able to go home.

SSH: Did you come back as a crew, or were you being replaced individually?

MR: No, we left one by one. Orders would come in, and you'd never know for whom. One day I had mine.

SSH: When you were going to these different islands, did your crew remain static?

MR: We never had a substitution. We had an extraordinary group of young people. No one ever needed an operation. No one ever got very sick. We had the same crew. Oh, with one exception. We did have one substitution. That was our captain. Our captain broke his back and had to be taken off the ship, so we got a bank clerk to replace him. Because he was older than we were by a few days, he had seniority. He was the captain. No, our captain was a daring kind. He loved the war, he really did. I think it was the most exciting thing that ever happened to him in his life. So here we are at a beach in some friendlier place like Hollandia in New Guinea taking on water, and there's another LST adjacent to us, and our captain visits the other captain and they had a few medicinal alcohols. He comes out, "Rosenberg," I had the duty, I don't know why I always had the duty, "throw me a line from the boat davits." I said, "Sir?" He said, "Throw me a line from the boat davits." I said, "Sir, if I throw you a line ..." You know, one of the reasons we got along so well was always, I say this in all modesty, I could see the outcome of his stupidity. I said, "Sir, if you grab that line and swing, you're going to hit the side of the ship. You're going to perform an arch." "I'm the captain," he says. So I threw him a line. He comes swinging across like Tarzan and slams into the side of the ship, and I had to pull him out of the water, and he had a broken back. So we took him to the hospital, and that's the last we saw of him. Other than that, the rest of us remained on that ship. They didn't take us off for R&R. They didn't rotate us. They put us on that ship, and as long as that ship floated, we kept going.

SSH: How long did you have to wait for this replacement captain?

MR: Not very long. I don't recall, but it wasn't very long.

SSH: Where did he come from?

MR: I have no idea. He just materialized.

SSH: [laughter] How long were you there?

MR: Three months. That was the longest three months of my life.

SSH: What did you do to keep busy? What did the other men do?

MR: Well, you know, by that time, we had learned how to waste time. … An awful lot of time was just spent talking about things of no significance whatsoever, but mostly about women. My fellow officers were experts, and I was not the type that indulged in that sort of thing, so I had nothing to contribute. I learned a lot. I can't verify any of it, [laughter] but I learned a lot.

SSH: [laughter] The big boys told you, right?

MR: Yes, the big boys, yes.

SSH: Did you play cards?

MR: There could have been, but not in the officer's wardroom. What the enlisted men did, I have no idea how they spent their time. But we never had any serious fights. We never had any serious breaks of regulations, and we did have the most wonderful people in the world onboard. We were just typical cross-America, but, boy, they were a great bunch.

SSH: How did you keep the morale up while you waited those three months?

MR: Who knew about morale? You had no alternative. … I suppose it has to be an inner buoyancy, because we had no organized program of entertainment. We didn't have any radios. We didn't have any movies. We didn't have a library. All I had was my six volumes of Shakespeare that I took with me. I read them all, every one of Shakespeare's plays, and reading them under those circumstances, you can't really appreciate those beautiful lines.

SSH: I'm sure. What kinds of things were sent to you from home? Did you get care package?

MR: Letters. That's all I ever got. I never received a care package.

SSH: Was there any news that came to you that was upsetting or that you weren't prepared to hear?

MR: Well, my father died. He died the day before my birthday, and I remember it came by way of a radio message. By that time I was lieutenant senior grade. "Rosenberg, just advised that on the 21st of April your father passed away," signed, "Red Cross." That was hard.

SSH: Were there any chaplains around?

MR: No. We never conducted any services on our ship. On rare occasions, a man of the cloth would be accompanying the transients we carried, but we didn't have any contact with religion whatsoever.

SSH: Were you ever glad that you came from a good, solid religious background?

MR: I just took that for granted. That was me. That was I.

SSH: Were there other things that you were able to study, being a man that was interested in all sorts of subjects?

MR: No, it was a wasteland, but everything was an object of interest to me, the clearness of the water, for example. When we were in Espiritu Santo, I was sure we were going to run aground. We had forty feet of water under us. You could see every pebble on the bottom, just as clear as can be. I was interested in how beautifully the coconut was adapted to the tropical climate. I was interested in the fish. We occasionally saw a fish. I'll tell you a story about fish. I sailed for many years. I sailed my own boats for twenty-nine years. I never brought fishing gear onboard. I was not about to have blood and scale on my teak decks, but I did catch a fish …

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

SSH: This begins tape two of an interview with Morton Rosenberg in Summit, New Jersey on June 10, 1999. You were telling a story about fishing.

MR: Yes. We were in a relatively safe anchorage ... This was an extraordinary luxury to be able to open a hatch and look up at the stars and the light could stream out of your stateroom or wardroom or whatever it was, because we were always a darkened ship for all of that time. Here we were at anchor, and I had the duty again, with the nightlight hanging over the Jacob's ladder, and our small boat was tethered alongside. And little Forester, who was my companion for the moment, he would carry whatever instructions I needed to send off, was looking down and said, "Gee, Lieutenant, look at those fish." In the waters of the South Pacific, you can see them as if they're under a glass plate, beautifully clear. Into our focus came this magnificent, long, bony fish. I think it was a bony fish. It was more than five feet long, a big fish, and it was arrogant. It just moved in, like a battleship, among a bunch of LSTs. Forester said, "Gee, I wish I had that fish."

I said, "Forester, would you really like to have that fish?" He said, "Yes, Sir." So I reached up onto the bulkhead, the side of the ship, and I took a boat hook. Being an old javelin thrower, I finally found a use for javelin throwing. [laughter] I leaned over the rail, and I threw that boat hook at the fish. Now, whether I hit the fish or just startled it, I don't know, but that fish came out of the water, sparkling and jiggling like crazy, and landed in our small boat, and I said, "Forester, there's your fish." [laughter]

SSH: Did you ever try fishing again?

MR: Did Babe Ruth ever try to get up and hit a home run two times in a row? You know when to quit.

SSH: What did he do with this fish?

MR: Well, he probably took it to the galley, and he said, "I have fish for everybody," and it was the boniest thing you ever saw. Nobody enjoyed it, but it was the freshest fish we ever had.

SSH: Did anybody on the LST ever try to catch fish?

MR: No, I don't remember ever seeing a single pole go over the side.

SSH: Did you ever have to use your sidearm?

MR: No, I didn't, but our captain did one time. Like I said, he was a strange man. I was standing the watch right next to him, and we're sailing out of someplace, and the bow lookout reported a mine in the water. … We could see that our course would take us near it, but we were not likely to hit it. So I called the quartermaster to give him instructions, so that others would know that there was a mine in the water, whereupon the captain pulls out a .45, which we were all issued, and he takes a shot at it. … He's aiming again, to take another one, when I pushed his arm, I said, "Sir, you hit that thing, we're all dead." I mean, at that point, it couldn't have been more than thirty feet away from us as we were going by. That was the only time that a firearm was fired, a small arm, was fired on our ship.

SSH: You talked about the kamikazes, but what contact did you have with the Japanese Navy?

MR: We never saw them. No, that was big leagues. That's where our Navy undertook to clear the ocean of their navy. We were not equipped for that sort of thing. We'd be sitting ducks.

SSH: Where did you spend the three months waiting?

MR: At anchor. Actually, off Leyte, Leyte Beach. They had built, at that time, a very large establishment there, and they had everything in the way of supplies, so we were

able to requisition. I was actually able to get a naval uniform there. I was beginning to look like I had a position of some kind that was identifiable. … I once wondered, "When I go home, where do I get a uniform?" I didn't have anything. It had all rotted away long ago. Well, obviously what had happened was that when we were given our orders and went ashore, we were re-equipped, so that we were dressed properly when we went home.

SSH: I understand food was a big topic of conversation. What did you and the men miss the most as you were dining on Navy food?

MR: Well, no one really complained about anything in the food. We had good food, wholesome, and we carried a lot of food. … See, I was responsible for the food budget. As long as we didn't exceed our budget, it didn't matter what we served. But everybody ate the same food. … Officers and enlisted men, we had one menu for everybody. There were no menus that we could pick and choose.

SSH: Was there fraternization between officers and enlisted men?

MR: Very little. … I think the enlisted men would probably pick on anyone who would look for favors, and there certainly were no favors that we could get for them. No, there was no fraternization.

SSH: What about maintaining your ship? As your clothes were rotting away, was there a lot of scrape and paint duty?

MR: Oh, we were just a rusted bucket at the end of the war.

SSH: Yes.

MR: It was impossible, first of all, to really keep it in shipshape, because we didn't have the supplies and we couldn't get the supplies, and, number two, we were underway so much of the time. I remember looking back at my beloved 986, and it just was an old, rusted bucket when I left it. There was more rust than paint on the ship.

SSH: Did it have a name other than 986?

MR: No, just the 986.

SSH: After you were in Leyte Bay for three months, how were you transferred back?

MR: Well, we were placed on a very large ship that went directly to San Francisco.

SSH: Do you remember what ship it was, that you were on?

MR: No, it was just a one of these large troop carriers. We must have had 4,000 persons on it.

SSH: Had it been built as a troop carrier?

MR: Yes, it was brand new. It was the first time it been out to sea, and the people going home knew a lot more about the ocean than the people who were running the ship.

SSH: Were you now the experienced hand onboard?

MR: Well, they were complaining about how badly the ship rolled, and, to us, it looked like a pool table. It wasn't moving at all. [laughter] On an LST, you really rolled …

SSH: What about the weather on an LST? Did you have any experiences with typhoons?

MR: Well, we went through a typhoon. Fortunately, we were in the lee of Samar, and we were at anchor. We had 800 feet of steel, plow chain, and we had nearly every inch of it out, and sometimes we'd have as much as 400 feet of chain just hanging in a straight line and quivering as it came out of the water to our ship. The amount of energy of a typhoon, it's just like a hurricane can exert. We had a lot of windage. We had a lot of freeboard, so our ship was like a big kite. We'd swing a quarter of a mile each way. You'd empty the wind on one side, and you'd catch it on the other and come back, and we stood our watch up there looking in fascination at that beautiful chain. There wasn't a living thing you could do if the chain broke. That was the end of it. Hell, everything about that ship worked.

SSH: What about the other ships that were part of your group? Were they as fortunate?

MR: Yes, all of them survived. If we were in the open ocean, there'd be another story, because then the waves would be very large. You would probably have broken up. But being in the lee of the island, it broke up some of the force, but it was enough.

SSH: What did you do when you got to San Francisco?

MR: Oh, I called my wife, and we had a reunion in Denver.

SSH: Oh, in Denver. Was she able to come by train?

MR: She took a bus from Hutchinson, and I took a bus from San Francisco to Denver.

SSH: Did you get the R&R then?

MR: Yes, four days, and then I was back in graduate school.

SSH: Really?

MR: Yes.

SSH: As soon as you hit San Francisco, were you released?

MR: Yes. I had a certain number of vacation days due to me, so I was on the payroll for a little while, but I picked up the phone and called Professor Halpin and I said, "I'd like to come back." He said, "We've got a place for you." Four days after I hit San Francisco, my wife and I were back in Madison, Wisconsin, and I went back to being a graduate student.

SSH: Was this your honeymoon?

MR: Well, in a way it was.

SSH: Well, I had wondered if you had had time for a honeymoon.

MR: Not really. No, we were married on the 2nd of January, and I shipped out on the 4th, so we didn't have that much time for that. No, I went right back. I just simply couldn't waste anymore time. I'd lost four years, so I worked seven days a week for four more years, not quite, and was awarded the doctorate.

SSH: Were you teaching as soon as you came back?

MR: I was a research assistant in Wisconsin. I was a teaching assistant at Texas A&M. So I helped the others in their research projects, did mine, and ultimately became assistant professor.

SSH: At Wisconsin?

MR: No, University of Hawaii.

SSH: After you got your PhD, where did you go?

MR: I went to the University of Hawaii. By the time I finished the doctoral studies, all of the good positions had been taken, largely by Canadian students who were not drafted. They were able to continue their studies, and so when I came back, I was a beginning graduate student, and they were assistant professors, and they were occupying the better positions in the country. By the time I finished my work, there were only three positions open in the whole country, Texas A&M, which I didn't want to return to, probably would have been, of the three main ones, the best, West Virginia, and I've forgotten the third, and then there was Hawaii. So we decided we'd take the Hawaii position on the assumption that, maybe in two years, I'd write a paper and get a better position on the mainland. Well, I stayed there twenty-five years. I wrote a lot of papers and had a marvelous, marvelous career at the University of Hawaii.

SSH: How big was the University of Hawaii at that point?

MR: We had forty-five hundred students when I got there. We had forty-five thousand when I left.

SSH: Did it expand the same way that Rutgers did?

MR: The same thing. It's a land grant university just like Rutgers. All the pressures that Rutgers knew, we knew. All of the glories Rutgers knew, we knew, same thing. It was a great time to be a professor.

SSH: They say very dedicated students came in after the war.

MR: Oh, they were good students, yes, and I was treated very well. Two years after I arrived there, I was promoted by the university president to associate professor, and two years later, I was promoted by the same president to full professor. So four years out of graduate school I had a full professorship, and, like I say, I had some time to make up.

SSH: You did.

MR: Yes. Then three years later, I was dean of the college.

SSH: Wow.

MR: Were you able to continue with your studies, or did you change direction at all?

MR: No, I was working in the area I was trained to do, and I loved doing it.

SSH: Do you think that Hawaii was intriguing to you because you had just spent all those months in the Pacific?

MR: No, I didn't go there out of any romantic notion. I went there, because there was a job, but it was a job that I could do and I was given a lot of freedom. It's a place where you can thrive if you wish to work hard. In the first seven years I was there, I published seventy papers, and that's one reason I was made dean of the college, because I'd made a reputation for myself. … I found things that were important to do in the way of research. Others thought it was important and gave me a lot of money to do the research. At one time, I was able to get more money for my research than the rest of the university combined was getting in the way of grants. That was before the National Science Foundation came into being. After that, of course, other parts of the university thrived also, and it was a good time for everybody.

SSH: As you were traveling around the Pacific, backing up a bit here, did you ever run into anyone from Rutgers?

MR: Yes, I ran into a fraternity brother. I've forgotten where it was. I'd gone ashore and I went over to the Army dispensary, I guess you call it. I wanted them to check my teeth. I've always been vain about my teeth, and I hadn't had them looked at for a year

and a half, so I said, "Would you be good enough to look at them and clean them?" "Sorry, we can't do that." I said, "Why not?" He said, "You're Navy, and we're Army." I said, "I know, but we're both Americans, aren't we?" It didn't make any difference. They couldn't do it. As I was leaving, grumbling under my breath, I bumped into a soldier, and it was a fraternity brother of mine. The odds of maybe meeting someone you know out there would be maybe one in three million, very small odds, but it can happen.

SSH: Did you get your teeth cleaned?

MR: No.

SSH: Being a fraternity brother didn't count.

MR: Didn't help at all.

SSH: Were you able to see USO shows or anything like that?

MR: Never saw one. I'm not even sure we even knew about those things, because we weren't getting any broadcasts. When we listened in on the news, we were interested in what was happening in Europe, and we'd follow the battles in Europe very intently. We knew until Europe was over, our war was not going to be over.

SSH: Do you remember getting the news about V-E Day?

MR: … No, but I remember clearly the thrill of watching a ship come over the horizon with its lights on. We'd heard that the war was over. We'd heard about the atomic bombs, but we didn't understand it. But, at that point, we didn't care what it was. We were glad, because we were going to go home, but we didn't believe it, and we still sailed with our ship darkened. Here came this little glow on the horizon. We were sailing back to Guadalcanal to load up for the invasion of Japan. That was the last stop for us, and we knew we weren't going to come home from that, because the Japanese would fight until the last child. … That little glow was on the horizon, and it became more distinct, and suddenly we realized it was a ship and it had its running lights on. Well, I must tell you the sense of elation was indescribable.

SSH: What had you been told to prepare for in the invasion of Japan?

MR: We weren't told much of anything. They didn't tell us; they ordered us.

SSH: Had you gotten any word of what your orders were going to be?

MR: … We were en route actually to someplace I don't remember. I think it was Guadalcanal to load up for another invasion, and we assumed it was going to be Japan. There was nothing left to invade. Okinawa had been subdued. So that was the end of the war. I came home with five battle stars … put them away, and I've never looked at them since. [laughter]

SSH: You were too busy.

MR: Well, I reverted into another one of these single-phase activities. My job was to get that degree done. My job was to catch up. My job was this, my job was that, and I stayed with it.

SSH: Did your mother or any of your family get to visit you when you were in Hawaii for those twenty-five years?

MR: Yes, they all each had a chance to come out.

SSH: What did they think of the tropics?

MR: Oh, they loved it, but, "Who wants to live here?" they said.

SSH: Really?

MR: Yes, it's so quiet.

SSH: Did your wife find it difficult to adjust from Kansas to Hawaii? I can't imagine two more opposite places.

MR: In a way. We were divorced after seventeen years of marriage. She said, "I don't know of anyone that I admire more, but we have grown apart. You keep growing, and I'm not changing at all and I want to be myself."

SSH: Did you have children?

MR: Yes, a very wonderful daughter, who has two wonderful children herself.

SSH: Where does she live?

MR: Portland, Oregon.

SSH: Oh, okay. Do you get to go to Portland often?

MR: We try to see each other once a year.

SSH: It is.

MR: We keep in touch. The phone still works.

SSH: You were the dean of the college, and you were at the University of Hawaii for twenty-five years. Did you retire from there, or where did you go from there?

MR: Well, I retired from there and came here. I met a wonderful woman, and we decided that we wanted to spend our life together, but none of our children, hers or mine, wanted to live in Hawaii, so there was no sense in her coming to live there. I had been at the university long enough to have a secure retirement, so I retired. I've now been retired twenty-seven years. [laughter]

SSH: What have you been doing?

MR: Well, I built a boat in Hong Kong. I sailed it quite often for a dozen years. Then we got involved in vacations homes. I built three vacation homes.

SSH: Where did you build the homes?

MR: In Martha's Vineyard, one after another. Some in the Bahamas. … You need a certain kind of structure and then your needs change, so instead of rebuilding, we sold it and built another one, and so that's the way it is. Now we have eight grandchildren, and life is full.

SSH: Did you have children with your second wife?

MR: No. Between us we have four children.

SSH: Did you use any of your GI benefits at all?

MR: Oh, yes. I think without it I would never have been able to go back to graduate school. It was a tremendous help. I think it was a very wise piece of legislation. It isn't because I got 150 dollars a month. I think it was wise, because it gave so many of the veterans something to do. Going back to school is something to do. Going back to school is a way of making up for lost opportunity. Going back to school is a way of advancing. But for most people, it was a way of stopping being an enlisted man and becoming an officer. Getting an education was extremely important, and a lot of GIs took advantage of it. So it was natural for me to go back. Without it, I don't think I would have been able to go.

SSH: What happened to the family's farm in Toms River? Was your mother able to keep it up?

MR: No, no. She kept it for several years, and we finally prevailed on her to sell it. It was clear that I was not going to come back and farm it. My sisters were never farm girls. They didn't care much about it, and my mother was really a city person, so ultimately she sold it. … There's nothing left of the farm. No, just a bunch of houses.

SSH: Really?

MR: Yes, that hurts. … Yes, that really hurts, but you have to accept that.

SSH: Have you ever had a farm of any kind?

MR: No. It would be very difficult in Hawaii to own a large piece of land to farm, and, secondly, being an educator is a full-time job, so what can you farm? It would just be a little, gentleman's farm, a little of this and a little of that. But I remember apologizing to my daughter when she was about ten. I said, "My greatest regret is I can't give you what my parents gave me."

SSH: That's a wonderful, unique way of life. In Hawaii, did you ever run into any Rutgers people at all?

MR: Well, I did meet the director of athletics one time, Red Twitchell was his name, nice man. He was out there, I think, trying to develop a home and home relationship with the University of Hawaii. We had a nice afternoon together. He enjoyed my telling him how I remembered him playing center on the football team. I don't think he was much interested in what I was doing. [laughter] But it didn't matter.

SSH: Have you stayed involved in alumni activities at Rutgers?

MR: Not really. I was away too long, and I don't have any strong feelings for Rutgers anymore. I have wonderful memories of Rutgers, and I have the greatest respect for the Rutgers I remember, but when I go back now, and I've been back for the fiftieth reunion and the sixtieth reunion, I find that it's a very massive institution that's very impersonal, and I don't think the kind of person I was would thrive at Rutgers today. I was just a quiet, country kid that came, wanted to do good, and did well, but would never have had a chance. I couldn't be water boy on the basketball team today, much less be on the track team. But I could walk onto the field, and George Little would say, "Here, take the javelin and watch him," and ultimately I could have a varsity letter. Do you know what it does to a young fellow's sense of growth to be accepted by a group, to suddenly be recognized as a person in his own right, having accomplished something all his own? … But if I went to Rutgers, a hundred and forty pounds, five foot eight, seventeen years of age, where would I fit in? My wife is a trustee at Drew University and also offers some teaching there as an adjunct, and we go there quite often, and I enjoy going back to the campus. I love being in the library. I love the feel, the sense of, shall we say, academic life, but I don't think I'd feel it at Rutgers.

SSH: Do you ever go back to Hawaii at all?

MR: I haven't gone back. There'd be no purpose in going back.

SSH: I notice there's a lot of art around here. Are you involved in art museums?

MR: Well, we are, but it's through my wife primarily. You know, as an undergraduate at Rutgers, we had no electives. I think I had one elective out of sixteen courses. I remember going to Dean Helyar in my junior year when we were enrolling. "I would like to drop horticulture," I said, "and take organic chemistry." He said, "Why?" I said,

"Because I think I'm going to go to graduate school." "Are you sure you're going to go to graduate school?" I said, "No, sir. I'm not sure." "Take horticulture. If you want organic chemistry, you can always take it." I spent a whole year, after I got into graduate work, making up the organic chemistry, the biochemistry and the other courses that I should have had if I wanted to be a PhD learning to become a generalist in the field of agriculture. Of course, that was good, because years later I was director of the Agricultural Experiment Station, and when they talked horticulture, agronomy or whatever, I couldn't be snowed totally. I was no expert, but I knew something about these fields.

SSH: Was this in Hawaii that you were head of agriculture?

MR: Yes. I headed up the Hawaii Agricultural Experiment Station and then the Dean of the College of Agriculture. Those were good years.

SSH: Well, are there any questions that I may have forgotten to ask you?

MR: I think you've asked a lot of questions. [laughter] You're a very good questioner.

SSH: Well, I thank you very much, Dr. Rosenberg, for taking time to share your story with us.

MR: Well, I thank you for the opportunity to remember some of the old days. I've almost forgotten them. You know, I don't dwell on the past. I don't dwell on those things. I don't think anyone owes me anything. I don't go around telling people, "Oh, you know I was an officer in the Navy." I had a job to do, I did it, and I got out as fast as I could, and I went back to doing the things I wanted to do.

SSH: Well, it's been a wonderful interview. Thank you very much.

MR: I thank you.

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

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