

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH B. SALDARINI

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Mr. Joseph B. Saldarini on March 27, 2000, with Shaun Illingworth and ...

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: Sandra Stewart Holyoak. Mr. Saldarini, we would like to begin by thanking you for sitting down for this interview. To begin, could you please tell me where and when you were born?

Joseph Saldarini: I can do that readily. I was born in Union City, New Jersey, on the 10th of January, 1925. I'm now seventy-five years of age.

SH: Congratulations. [laughter] Could you tell us a little bit about your father and his family?

JS: Sure. My father was born in this country, also, and his family background is from the northern part of Italy, near the Lake Como, and his father came over here, as best I can figure out, it had to be in the early 1880s, because he was born in 1856. He was a silk weaver and that area of Italy does a lot of silkworm growing, back then, and, also, the weaving itself. So, he had a ready position, or work, more than a position, in New Jersey, where there were several silk mills in and around New Jersey, in Union City, which, incidentally, ... was called West Hoboken at that time, and, certainly, in Paterson, where there were a lot of silk mills, and, eventually, ... some of those silk mills even went up into the Phillipsburg, New Jersey, area. So, that was the background of my grandfather's coming here. He married, over there, a young girl from the same town, and, in fact, he went back for her, 'cause he was here first; [he] established himself, and then, went back, married, and came over. ... All of the seven children in that family were born in this country, my father being the second one of the group. The first one was in 1885 and my father was born in 1887. Now, I can embellish more on what my father has done. Okay, my father was very interested in architectural sculpturing work, as a modeler of plaster ornaments, which was common in that time, and he was an apprentice and going along well, and then, suddenly, World War I came along. ... He was in the World War I Expeditionary Force, from the United States, that went over to France, and it must have been in the '17 [to] '18 [period], because ... we did not come into the war until later, if you recall the history. He had a couple of things going for him here, because he not only could speak English well, he could speak Italian well, and he could also speak French rather well. So, that was just great for him, because he could, and did, become an interpreter for one of the majors or colonels in the Camouflage Corps, which he had been assigned to, which kind of fits into the type of work that my father was being an apprentice for. So, that worked right well, and I think, even before he did this Camouflage Corps, he was in the First Aid Corps, and, of course, they were in some bit of fighting up in that area. After the war, he came back and completed his apprenticeship work, and it seemed that, at that time, there was a firm which was in the business, and the company decided to sell, because they were advanced in age, and my father took the opportunity, and he bought out an existing firm in New York City, ... on 38th Street. The shop area is still there, between 9th and 10th Avenues, in New York City, and, from there, he conducted a very nice business, because [the] ornamental plaster business was extremely popular in those days, but, doom was awaiting, [laughter] and the doom, of course, was modernistic ... buildings, modernistic designs, and all the so-called "gingerbread" disappeared. ... [The] ornamentation that you see in many older, absolutely beautiful buildings, that are now being restored, is the type of work he did. He was actually a modeler. He modeled in clay, and then, from the clay, they started making the plaster

casts, and then, finally, the finished products that were then hung into ceilings, or whatever was involved. He did a number of important work in the various parts of the country, [and], of course, in New York City, too. ... During the early days, and this is shortly after the war, when he went into business, it was very profitable, and he did make out very well, but, then, as the Depression came in, things died down. The modernistic trend in buildings ... came in and it dried up the type of work that he did. So, there were tough years in the early '30s, and up until about '35, '36 or so, when one thing very important happened; the New York World's Fair came into being at that particular time, and there was a lot of work then, where large figures were made, and then, set up into, as I recall, the Hall of Nations, which was a big mall, more or less like our mall, right here, [Voorhees Mall], ... where these huge figures were situated around this area, and that saved my dad, I guess, in many ways, financially, because they did do a lot of work during that time for the World's Fair of 1939-40. ... It was great work that they were able to do, taking small models, maybe, let's say, man-size, and blowing them up into huge figures of probably twenty feet or so. So, it was really, really interesting. After that, the business continued on. He expected me to join into it, but, I decided, no, I really didn't want to do that, because I knew it was a tough business for him, right now, ... to even scratch out a little living for himself. So, I didn't want to burden along those lines and it was just about this time that I decided that ... I wanted to come to Rutgers; I wanted to come to school. ... That's basically it. My father continued the business until, oh, I think it must have been somewhere in the middle to the late '50s. An important thing, he was always known, he and his shop, and, in fact, the final job that he did is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. There were two rooms, and he had heard, through the industry, let's put it that way, and people he knew, that there were a couple of interesting mansions with beautiful rooms in them, like one, if I recall, is a dining room, another one is a living room, and these were houses in London which were, if I recall the date, might have been into the early 1800s, somewhere in there. Adams style, incidentally, was one of the common styles at that time. So, he found out that he should go to the Metropolitan Museum and just talk to the people and see what to do, because they were ... in a quandary as to, "How are they going to get these things made, and hung up, and set up?" So, my father went in, interviewed with them, and he said, "Yes, we can do what you want. You just set up a little makeshift shop for us in the basement of the museum, I will get to my former employees, and we will do it," and they did a magnificent job, and it's still there today. So, that, basically, ends my thoughts of my father. ... He died in 1968.

SH: Can you tell us about your mother and her background now?

JS: My mother is another situation. She was born in Italy, in the northern area of Italy, in a little town called Camogli, C-A-M-O-G-L-I, it's really next door to Portofino, and I think most people know where Portofino is. It's a beautiful, beautiful town. When she was about ten years old, her mother, she and her two sisters, came over to this country, because they, I guess, didn't feel appropriate there anymore, [that] things weren't too good; so, over they came. ... My grandmother, at that point, had a brother in New York who had already come over this way. So, it was a fairly easy transition to ... come over. My grandmother's husband was a mariner, because all the people in that part of Italy are mariners, still, today, and there's a Cristoforo Colombo Institute in the town, which is a merchant marine academy, still exists today, and it turned out some of the big navigators of ... that era, and, also, currently, today, some of the big ships you'll see. ... We went over on one of them, one of the Costa Lines, we went trans-

Atlantic a few years back, and, by golly, the Captain, the Commandante, if you will, was right from that school. ... Of course, we have ... distant cousins over in Camogli right now who have attended the school themselves, know these people, but, never followed that particular line of business. They did other things there, but, getting back to my mother, she came over here [at] about ten years of age, and, of course, she was an Italian subject, at that time, because there was a king at that time, if you recall, and she found work readily, because she was very good in doing beadwork ... in the garment center. Today, I can always remember the firm she worked for, it was called Max Cohen, and they did a lot of this beadwork that, you might recall, ... goes back into the '20s, the flapper age and prior to that, and this is beadwork, which ... uses a type of needle which goes through cloth and follows patterns with various types of beads and various colors of beads, and she worked at that for X amount of time, after she had a small amount of education, as far as schooling was concerned. I really don't know how far my mother went, education-wise. In fact, I'm not too sure my father did too much education-wise, either. I think my father might have gone through seventh, eighth grade, you know, and my mother might have done the equivalent, or maybe even less, I'm not really sure. ... At any rate, my parents met, since ferry boats were [the] common ply between New Jersey and New York, and we're reviving that a little bit now, ... and because it was in the same basic location where they lived at that time, because my mother's original place of living was in the Sullivan Street area, in Greenwich Village, which still exists today, of course, ... eventually, they did move to New Jersey. ... They were right up on the Palisade Avenue area of what was then West Hoboken, as I mentioned before, which is now Union City, and looking over the river. I think it was a lot more comfortable to live there than it was in Sullivan Street, at the time, and, ... with ferryboat travel, my mother eventually met my father on the ferryboat, and, eventually, they, of course, got married, and, eventually, I came to be. ... I'm an only child and it's unfortunate, because my mother died when I was three-and-a-half years old. In 1928, she died. ... It was not a very good thing for me, as I look back, because she was a pianist, she also played the mandolin, and that bit of music came to me. ... I started to take the piano, after she was dead, of course, because I was five-and-a-half years old when I started taking piano lessons, but, I'll always remember the experience of my mother and the piano playing. ...

SH: Since he was so young when your mother passed away, did your father ever remarry?

JS: Yes, he did remarry and he married my mother's older sister. So, in 1932, he married my Aunt Mary, who was six years older than my mother. She was born in '89, my Aunt Mary, my stepmother, my father was born in 1887, and my natural mother was born in 1895. I might mention that, maybe you know this or don't know this, but, I have established a scholarship for my mother. So, that is basically it. As a matter-of-fact, I'm very interested in the dedication of the Steinway, which will happen this coming Friday, and I'll be over there, and our number three scholarship holder will perform, and there will be a couple of others later, one on the 14th of April and there will be another one on the 16th of April, and we always look forward to that.

SH: Congratulations.

JS: Yes, ... Catherine Mortola Saldarini is the scholarship's name for the study of classical piano. ... Basically, that's about all I can tell you, except, if you want to know something on my stepmother, who brought me up as her own child, and I owe a great deal to her. She was really

good to me and encouraged me to go to college, continue piano lessons, all the things that I really have liked.

SH: What do you remember about the Great Depression? You touched upon how it affected your father's business before.

JS: Yes. The Depression, actually, didn't have an adverse effect on us. My father always had sufficient money to move along well and without deprivation of anything, so, that was not a particular problem, as far as I, personally, was concerned; I'm talking, now, [at] maybe ten years of age. ... I never had any refusal of this, that or the other thing. I do recall, we always had a car, for example, so, that was good. We lived, in that particular time, when my mother died, it happened to be in Union City at that time, and then, we moved to Weehawken for five years, and then, we moved to North Bergen, in New Jersey, part of Hudson County, as you probably know, because my grandmother had foreclosed on a two family house over there, because that was the time wherein foreclosures were taking place. ... So, my parents decided to go up there and that's where we lived for quite a bit of time. A couple of interesting notes, though, as far as my living in Weehawken was concerned, we lived on top of the cliff. At the bottom of it, today, is the entrance to the Lincoln Tunnel, but, even more important to that was the building of the big skyscrapers at that time, particularly the Empire State Building. I saw that building getting built and I can recall levels going up and up. We were on a straight line, exactly, into it, and it was magnificent the way this building went up, and it went up, ... "Zip," really, like that, because people needed the work, and steel was coming in, and there's this one documentary that I saw lately, they even had steel, still warm, coming [laughter] from the factories, as they were starting to hoist it up. Other interesting buildings, of course, was the Chrysler Building, which preceded it, and then, the building that was after it was the RCA Radio City Center, as it exists today. That's one that came in, if I recall correctly, probably in the middle '30s. Another interesting thing there was the fact that some of the greatest liners, ocean liners, in the world plied in front of our apartment, [laughter] and I can recall vividly, the *Normandie*, the *Queen Mary*, the original *Queen Mary*, the *Bremen*, the *Europa*, of the North German Line. I can recall the old Leviathan and some of the Cunard White Star Liners on those very same Chelsea piers where the *Titanic* was supposed to come in. [laughter] It was in that area, too. So, I love ships; don't forget, our heritage is from the shipping ... part of Italy, in Camogli. So, I had a lot of great times, also, drawing and sketching things when I was, oh, gosh, I must have been six, seven, eight years old, sketching ships as they were coming in, and you had a lot of ships. I think I have them, still, [at] home. [laughter] So, that was an interesting part of that time.

SH: Did any other family members come over from Italy?

JS: No. That was it. It was just them.

SH: Were your parents involved in politics in the Hudson County/Union City area?

JS: No. They really weren't. They were, of course, aware of the Hague regime in Jersey City, at that time, which seemed to go on and on forever. I think we have an equivalent, today, ourselves, in Cliffside Park, where a fellow Cliffside Park High School graduate, Class of '43, I

happen to be Class of '42, is currently the mayor of town, and that's Jerry Calabrese, who you might know from St. John's basketball days. He was a great basketball player of that era.

SH: Did your parents ever discuss Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal programs in your home?

JS: I think there was, generally, an interest in it. There was talk of it, yes, ... some of the things which were done, which were really very good, because, case in point, my father's brother, who was an exceptionally good, mechanic is the best way I can call him, doing the installation of the plaster ornaments in buildings, didn't have a job, because my father didn't have a job for him then. So, he was benefited by the Works Projects Administration, WPA, at that time, and I think a lot of people were helped in that regard during the Depression. I think another thing that was helpful was that, during Roosevelt's first term, he said, "Well, we have a lot of World War I veterans who could use some money." So, there was a bonus paid at that time. I remember, my father had gotten a bonus of, X, whatever it was, which then prompted him to say, "Shall we buy a new car or shall we buy a new piano?" Now, what did I do? [laughter]

SH: As a young man, that would be a tough decision to make.

JS: Without hesitation, we got a new piano. [laughter]

SH: Where did you go to elementary school?

JS: ... I started school in Weehawken and my first three years were in a little elementary school in Weehawken. Then, when we moved to North Bergen, I went to schools in North Bergen, fourth grade through eighth at one school, and then, we had one year of high school in North Bergen, at another school. We had no high school at that time, because the town was bankrupt. So, now, I had completed nine years and I had to make a choice, "Where do I go to school afterwards?" We had a choice of Union Hill High School in Union City or Cliffside Park, and a few of us decided, "Well, let's try Cliffside Park," and that's where I went, and I graduated in 1942; I guess it was sometime in June.

SH: Did you have to commute to Cliffside Park High School?

JS: Correct, I did, and I would walk over from the Hudson Boulevard, where we lived, to Bergenline Avenue, which was, oh, I would say, a ten minute walk, wasn't a big problem at all, and, there, we would get a Public Service, as it was called at that time, bus to take us right up to the school. It's a regular-run bus, it wasn't a school bus, but, we did have bus tickets which we used, instead of five cents. I think we paid three cents or two cents. [laughter] ...

SI: Growing up in Weehawken, what was your neighborhood like? What kind of backgrounds did your friends have?

JS: In that time frame, which was, really, from year three to year eight, let's say, five years in round figures, I did a lot of playing on my own. I don't recall too many friends in that neighborhood. There just didn't seem to be many of the same age. So, there might have been

one or two that I [have] kind of forgotten, but, there were only one or two, and it was a residential area, a very nice area, still is a nice area; the location, the view, is fantastic. ... I recall that my father had planted an extensive part of the wide and long garden that we had in back of the house, facing the river, and he was great on planting various vegetables, flowers, and what have you. ... In fact, he even had made me, at that time, an Indian tent and he used various pieces of hide to decorate it, which he obtained when he went hunting, you know, small game hunting, in New Jersey with his shotgun. So, that was an interesting part. That was my amusement there. In school, yes, I certainly did make some friends at school, but, very honestly, I don't recall any lasting friends in those early days, better during later days, when I did have more friends, and many continue [as my friends]. Well, they're dying off now, too, but, many have continued through the rest of our lives from those early days.

SH: Were you ever involved with the Boy Scouts?

JS: Yes, I was in the Boy Scouts and went to camp [for] a couple of years, and I achieved the Life Scout Award, at that time, which is [just] shy from the Eagle. I guess, maybe, the reason I didn't get Eagle Scout is the fact [that] I wasn't very good on swimming, so, I don't think I could have done the lifesaving course, ... which was required to become an Eagle Scout.

SH: Where did you go to camp?

JS: The camp was in Stillwater, New Jersey, up in that part of, I guess, it's the northern part of, no, it might be into Sussex or the southern part of Sussex, Camp Towadina, at that time, and I still recall the site. A couple of years ago, Lita, my wife, and I went cross-country skiing in that area, and we found the campsite, still, basically, as it was. Of course, it's all gone and dilapidated from years ago, but, this was in the '37, '38 era, because you became a Scout when you were twelve years old. So, yes, we did that. Now, away from Weehawken, of course, I'm here in the North Bergen [area] at this time, and that's where I developed quite a number of good friends, starting with fourth grade at Horace Mann Grade School in North Bergen and continuing with many of those friends from Cliffside Park High School, and at least three, four of them, that I know of, we're still very close in touch. One did die a year ago, but, I mean, those have been very lasting friendships.

SH: Did you ever consider going to a Catholic school?

JS: No. I never thought of a Catholic school and, of course, we are Roman Catholic, by name, probably not in any other fashion. [laughter]

SI: Did your parents preserve any Italian traditions within your household?

JS: The tradition was virtually non-existent, that I can recall, some special things in the food area, and perhaps with my grandmother, who was a dressmaker, incidentally. So, she had a nice, little business of her own going on in Sullivan Street. She did a lot of dressmaking work, and really good work, ... but, the one thing she didn't do, she never learned English, because she was always in the house, working, working, and she never got it. She could understand me, since I learned English and Italian at the same time. So, that made it, as far as she was concerned, and,

of course, my stepmother, at this point, her daughter, her oldest daughter, my father, all [were] fluent in Italian, ... but, my father insisted [that] English be spoken. ... When he was home, we spoke English. The only time I would speak to my grandmother in Italian was when I had to talk to her, basically, at any point during the day or night, but, other conversation was in English. My father insisted upon it, and, of course, my stepmother spoke English, and, of course, my mother had spoken English, also.

SH: Did your relatives ever discuss any difficulties that they had with learning English?

JS: Not to my knowledge. I never heard that.

SH: What were your favorite subjects in elementary and high school?

JS: I always liked history. I always liked geography. I liked some of the sciences, not all of them. I liked language; for example, I took French in high school. I'm trying to think of some of the other subjects that were of an interest then. I think some of the courses we had on what you would call political science, or current events, that type of thing, that was of interest to me. I liked the technical type of studies that we had, you know, in an academic course, of course, which was math and which was chemistry, those basic ones, and, of course, biology or zoology, whatever we had then; I think they called it biology at that time. ... As far as sports were concerned, I enjoyed playing sandlot football with my friends. It was a lot of fun. I was born with a club foot, so, that impaired me somewhat, but, never to the point where I felt that it was something that I couldn't do, as far as baseball was concerned, or football. I did most of the sports and I bicycled. I did everything. Fortunately, it was operated upon, one month after I was born, and it was a successful operation, and, really and honestly, it hasn't given me any trouble, but, it gave me other troubles when I was at Rutgers, and I'll tell you about that when we get into that phase of it, okay. Now, you asked a question of any traditions that we had at home. I think some of those traditions would be, well, certainly, the main days of feasts were always celebrated, certainly, Christmas, Thanksgiving, starting with Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter, and that was basically it, and all my family, on my mother's side, are extremely good cooks. They know how to cook and very, very excellently. ... So, we always had really good cuisine.

Lita Saldarini: St. Joseph's Day.

JS: Pardon.

LS: St. Joseph's Day.

JS: Yes, St. Joseph's Day; which is March 19th, that was always a particular day, because my father was Joseph Dominick and I'm Joseph Biagio. ...

SI: What kind of entertainment did you enjoy when you were growing up? Did you go to the movies or any professional sporting events?

JS: Professional sports ... were rare. A friend of my father's was an avid baseball player, so, I think I went to Yankee Stadium with him once or twice, and, of course, [we] had a minor league group that played at that time in Union City, so, he brought me to some of those games. I liked and attended the sports that we had in high school, basketball in particular. We were a powerhouse, at that time, in basketball. Football [was] not good, but, basketball was good, and I like that a lot. ...

SI: Did you ever go to see the Newark Bears?

JS: [The] Newark Bears were in existence at the time, but, I never saw them. I heard baseball radio accounts of them, and, also, at the time, the Jersey City Giants were in existence, and they were also on-the-air.

SH: Did you have a job while you were in school, either on the weekends or during the summers?

JS: No, I did not. At times, my father would ask me to come over to the shop and give a hand on various types of things.

SH: Did you ever have to travel with your father?

JS: No, no, my father didn't do any traveling of any extent, because most of his work was connected with architects in New York City. He was the president of the firm, and his contacts were with the development stages of various things that they were doing, and this, generally, was with architects. Some of them were very well known.

SH: Did you ever go on family vacations?

JS: That's a pretty neat question, because vacations, *per se*, going off for a week or so, I would have to say, "No, we didn't," but, we always did something on a weekend. On a Saturday or a Sunday, we might go to the Jersey Shore, for example, or we might go to Jones Beach on Long Island, or something of that sort. So, vacation, *per se*, I can't recall that we ever had an official, lengthy vacation, no. Part of that was my father's business, too. He was always attentive there.

SH: Did your stepmother continue to work outside of the home after she married your father?

JS: No. My stepmother worked at the same place where my mother worked, in the same type of work, with this type of rhinestone and so forth embellishment to ladies' dresses. She continued that, I guess, until she married, in 1932, and then, she stopped working at that point. Occasionally, the company would call and say, "Can you do some work at home for us?" because she had all the equipment, still, at home. So, there would be some minor type of work that she would do, yes.

SH: After your mother passed away, who was your primary care giver?

JS: Well, my aunt, Aunt Mary, and my grandmother; [my] maternal grandmother.

SH: Did your father drop you off at their place every morning?

JS: No. When we moved from Union City, it was a combination of two families. My father and my grandmother and my aunt, they decided to join forces in one apartment and that's what happened.

SH: Did your family ever discuss the situation in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s at-the-dinner-table, so to speak?

JS: Yes, yes, of course. We were concerned of the coming war. We could see that. You knew that the predecessor seemed to be the Spanish Civil War, in which there was a lot of, shall we say, armament, ... experimental, it seemed, in some ways, as a predecessor to the big war. Then, we could see, very readily, how things were going with Germany and their annexations, and it was a concern of, you know, "How soon ... before we get into it and how soon will the war be over?" because it seemed, at that point, that Hitler was unstoppable. Our concern, of course, and particularly of my grandmother, who was still [an Italian subject] and never became an American citizen, my aunt did, my stepmother, and, incidentally, my mother became ... a citizen, but, by the fact of marrying an American, which was still law in force at that particular time. That was changed later, but, at that time, if you married an American, you became an American, okay, but, my aunt became a naturalized American citizen somewhere in the mid-'30s. Then, when Italy joined the Axis and declared war against France, primarily, and all the other countries, there was ...

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JS: ... Then, my grandmother, who was an Italian subject, had to register as a foreign alien, and she really did, and [she was] fingerprinted and the whole bit, and, at this point in time, she must have been about seventy-five years of age or so, but, needless to say, her patriotism, as far as the United States was concerned, was always with this country, which was very definitely proved when, a short year, year-and-a-half later, then, we, the United States, entered into the world war, and then, we knew very well that was going to be the end of Germany and Italy, there was no question in our mind, and also Japan, that that was going to happen.

SH: Since your grandmother had to register as an alien, was she, or yourself or any other family member for that matter, ever exposed to any harassment or prejudice because of her Italian heritage?

JS: No. I never had that experience at all, nor did they. No, we had very good friends, I had very good friends, they knew what we were and how we lived, so, I never experienced that type of thing at all, no.

SH: How did America's entry into the war affect your ability to correspond with your relatives in Italy. Had your family kept in touch with those relatives over the years?

JS: Yes. There was communication with Italy, and I'm talking about my maternal side, particularly my grandmother, who had a sister in Camogli, and they did communicate, by mail, of course, and, in fact, she happened to die, her younger sister, on the very day that Italy declared war against France and the other Allies, on June the 10th of 1940, and that's the reason I can remember this date so very well. Continuation of communication to that part of Italy was continued by a woman who was friendly to my great-aunt, at that time, and this same family, and we, Lita and I, got to know very well. We still go there rather frequently, to that part of Italy, which is so beautiful. We were there a couple of years ago, and we do communicate, by phone, mainly, now, more than any other way.

SH: I know that your musical education was very important to your mother, your stepmother, and your father. What expectations did they have for your academic education?

JS: I think, very definitely, there was a stronger feel on my maternal side, specifically, my grandmother, and, even more important, ... my stepmother, my Aunt Mary, and my grandmother, to a lesser extent, but, also important. My father, after high school, was more concerned about the possibility of my eventually coming into the business and I think that was somewhat of a blow to him, in that regard, my decision not to come into the business. Don't forget, I'm an only child, and, therefore, he was disappointed with that, but, as time went by, he did recognize what I had done, and he said, "Yes, I think you probably did the right thing here," and, especially, when he saw that, when I started work, I was advancing with salary rather readily for those times, probably nothing today in comparison, but, he seemed to be satisfied and placated at that point.

SH: Did he encourage you to continue with your high school education?

JS: Oh, yes, he wanted me, definitely, to go to high school. He questioned whether I should or should not go to college, in view of the fact that the business was there.

SH: Did he want you to complete an apprenticeship or did he simply want you to start working for him?

JS: Oh, I would have had to learn the business more thoroughly than I knew [it] at that point. Additionally, he was a modeler, and I'm not a modeler, [laughter] and that's a major difference there.

SH: In high school, were there any teachers who really encouraged you to go on to college?

JS: The high school teachers knew very well that we who were in the academic course have the intention of going to college, so, there was never any particular doubt in the minds of those teachers as to what route we were going to take. We were going to college and that was it. There was never any great encouragement or need to do that, because it would have been a fact that was already known. So, we were learning to go to college.

SH: What extracurricular activities did you partake in during high school?

JS: In the high school, I belonged to the French Club, for one thing. I also was, ... they called him a booster, I suppose, going around, selling tickets, ... season tickets, to take you to all the games, basketball, football, and so forth, and so on. That was basically it. Don't forget, we were commuting, so, we were not that inclined to spend too much time in Cliffside, because, now, we have to get home, do studying, and get back the next day, too.

SH: How did Rutgers come into the picture?

JS: Yes, I can tell you that readily. In high school, my father met a man that he knew when he used to go to work from Weehawken. They were, essentially, next door, in the next building to us, in Weehawken, and, in conversation, he said, "Oh, what is your son doing?" He said, "Oh, well, he's going to Rutgers. He's in agriculture and dairy manufacturing." So, he comes home and he says to me, "Oh, I met So-and-So," and so forth, "and his son is going to Rutgers." I said, "Well, I wouldn't mind doing something like that," and, at this time, he didn't have any objection to going to college. Later, he started to think about it a little bit. So, lo and behold, ... I guess it was in my junior or senior year of high school when this happened, and, before I knew it, I had an invitation from this fellow, who happens to be George Brightenback, George would be Class of '43, and George invited me down for, let's call it a weekend, at the fraternity house, which, at that time, was the Raritan Club, which is now Sigma Phi Epsilon, and, lo and behold, I enjoyed it, and I said, "Yes, I think I wouldn't mind ... going to the College of Agriculture, just like you, George." I said, "I would like to do that," and that's the beginning of the whole series of events which led to my coming to Rutgers.

SH: Could you tell me about some of those events? You still had to finish out your time at Cliffside.

JS: Yes, let's say it was the senior year, if I recall correctly, and then, the next event was that Professor Frank Helyar, who you might recall, there's a Helyar Woods, in his name, over there, was the administrator of the College of Agriculture, and I had an interview with him. He wanted both parents over with me. We came down by car. I saw him and he went through the whole thing, "You've got to do this," and so forth, and so on, but, ... "You have to work on a farm." I said, "Well, I've never worked on a farm, ... but, I can go on a farm," because we had distant relations of ours in Warren County, still, today, [who] have a dairy farm. So, he said, "All right, that's what you [have] got to do. You got to go and spend the summer," or whatever time frame, and that's what I did. ... After graduation from high school in 1942, then, I went and worked at the farm, maybe four, six weeks, whatever, and that was basically it, and that qualified me to come to the College of Agriculture, and that's how that happened, and I enjoyed the work very much. It was a dairy farm and everything, basically, was pretty much different, totally different, than what the dairy farm is today, because I saw it then and I see it today, because it's still, today, existing and one of the few existing dairy farms in the State of New Jersey. It's in Warren County, in the area of Asbury, New Jersey.

SH: Do you remember where you were when Pearl Harbor was bombed?

JS: Of course.

SH: What were you doing then?

JS: I think what many people were doing, listening to the football game, the Giants and Washington, maybe, I forget exactly the one, but, I was listening to that professional football game on that particular station, and then, this thing came through on the radio.

SH: Where were you listening to the game?

JS: It was a Sunday, to my recollection, and we were at home, and that was it.

SH: What was your family's immediate reaction to the announcement?

JS: Well, I think, like the entire country, we were shocked as to where the attack came from. If we had expected an attack, I think it would have been from the other side, you know, but, ... I don't think anyone expected anything to happen in the Far East, and that was the main issue, of course.

SH: Did any of your classmates enlist the next day?

JS: To my recollection, ... and this was in, ... yes, it had to be in my senior year of high school, ... I think one or maybe two fellows did enlist from high school, but, none of our class of, let's say, the academic group went. These were ... other students.

SH: Did you visit Rutgers prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor?

JS: That's a tough one, because I don't recall. It could have been after Pearl Harbor. I think, but, I'm not positive, my feeling is more after Pearl Harbor, yes.

SH: How did the onset of hostilities affect your corps of friends and their plans for the future?

JS: Well, it changed some of my good friends at Cliffside Park High School as to their college choice, where some of them started at So-and-So College and, in turn, one, at least, came to Rutgers, and another one went to Rutgers, to my recollection, in Newark. ... In one case, I think it was influenced by me, but, in the other case, I think it was just an event.

SH: You enrolled in the Ag School in the Fall of 1942, after only one summer of working on a farm.

JS: Correct.

SH: What was it like to enter the college at that time?

JS: ... When I came to Rutgers, first off, there was no room in any of the dorms or even at the fraternity houses for me, so, I had to find a place out in Highland Park and [find] the families who were renting out a room in Highland Park. This, again, was found for me by a good friend of my grandmother's, who lived in what is now Edison, New Jersey. So, for X number of

months, I had to live there, and then, commute down by bus from Highland Park [to] here. So, I had that. ...

SH: Was the ASTP program responsible for the lack of room?

JS: No. ASTP was not in at that point. It was just the fact that it was crowded, because, now, we had the freshman class, which was the highest freshman enrollment in the college's history, which was all of about 600 people. We had now a roster of about 2000 people, of the four classes, and that was Rutgers at that time. It was not a state university, as you know, at that point and the rooms were not available. None were available until later on, when I was able to get some room at the Raritan Club.

SH: Did the burden of commuting hinder your involvement on campus?

JS: ... I think the important part was that I had to study more than I had ever before studied, because, when it comes down to the real facts of it, and I noticed and I realized it later, my high school education wasn't as strong as it should be. I found out that many of my classmates in the freshman class were much stronger, more strongly prepared, to go on to college than I was, in math, in [the] sciences, in virtually everything. So, it was a real chore for me and I never became a good student, I think, because of that. My record proves it. ... I just have a marginal, passing record, and I do relate [that] back to the high school days, which weren't sufficient, in my view; better if I had gone to another high school, where I would have had better, shall we say, ... classes, better teachers, better everything. To prove the fact, we were evaluated by some group, [which] was called, at the time when I was in high school, Atlantic Conference, or something, for accreditation. Well, we failed, the high school failed. So, that's why I say these things; I don't say it just because of that. So, I had a heck of a tough time, especially in my freshman year, in my courses. I didn't have too much time for much of anything else.

SH: Did you have to attend mandatory chapel?

JS: I did. [I] went to chapel, as required, yes. I did that. That was no problem. In fact, even in my freshman year, I did do some things. I became the freshman, what did they call them? assistant manager for the basketball team, when you went out with the towel and the water, you know, that type of thing; I recall that. Importantly, referring back to my club foot problem, when I was given a physical, at the time, it was in the Quad, in the medical office there, I was interviewed by the doctor and he said, "No, you cannot be in the ROTC because of that." I said "Oh, gee, ... I'm really disappointed. ... I really would like to do that." He said, "Well, it's going to give you trouble and you wouldn't be able to march," and blah, blah, and so forth, and so on. ... So, then, he took a little bit of pity on me. He said, "Well, I'll check with," I think it was Col. Koehler, at the time, "and I'll see how he feels about it." Well, lo and behold, they said, "Yes, but, if you have a problem or if you get turned ... down by the Army when you go for your physical, when you become eighteen years of age, you are out, immediately," and ... that's what happened, when I was called into the draft, at some point in my eighteenth year. I went to Newark for the physical and induction into the Army and one of the tests was the hop on your foot. I couldn't hop worth a damn on my left foot, and I still can't, and a naval doctor walked down the line. He said, "What's the matter with you?" I said, "Well, I really can't hop on this

foot." He says, "Come over here." So, he brought me over and he said, "What's the problem?" He looked down, he said, "Give me that left foot," and he saw right away what the problem was. He says, "Okay, finished." He said, "You go back to college," and that was it.

SH: By then, you had already completed one year of ROTC.

JS: Yes, I did. I did probably a year and maybe a touch more, yes, that's right. ... So, I was in school.

SH: Many Ag School alumni have noted how difficult it was to take classes at the Ag School, and then, make it across town for ROTC drill.

JS: ... This is true, because I rarely used the bus to come across town, I did at times, especially in inclement weather, but, I managed, somehow, to do it, and, now, with the war now starting to really escalate, because, now, we're looking into 1944, I would say, and, now, they're doing the big push to get into Continental Europe, and, now, the college is becoming really depleted, completely, completely depleted.

SH: Was this at the end of your sophomore year?

JS: I would say about then, yes, right, because a lot of the members of the Raritan Club and ... many, many other people in various phases of their years in college were taken into the Armed Forces. So, I continued with my room at the Raritan Club, until the Army says, "Hey, we're taking every fraternity in here, we're taking every dorm in here, and you guys are out." Of course, there were only a handful of us, at this point, disabled or whatever; that was basically it. ... My next step was to find a room at the YMCA, over there by the State Theatre, and another roommate and I, who had a disability from paralysis, in those days, paralysis was bad, ... we went and had a room over at the YMCA, and then, from there, [after] we stayed X amount of time, we decided, "Well, let's go over to [the] College of Agriculture, the old Economics Building," and they had some rooms upstairs, and, lo and behold, they had a room for us. So, that's where we finished the rest of our college career, on the Ag Campus, and, there, we had to work X number of hours per week at the Ag Farm, and I did various things, haul manure, put in silage, you know, that type of thing, bed out, fed the calves, and all that type of thing.

SH: Did you ever consider changing your major?

JS: ... No, I didn't, because I found that the courses were pretty general. I particularly liked things like bacteriology. You may recall, Dr. Murray was a great bacteriologist and I really enjoyed his classes tremendously. So, I didn't change, because it was dairy bacteriology and everything involved with that. I also liked some of the animal husbandry courses. I liked dairy manufacturing; that's the work I was going into, not farming. I had no intentions of being a farmer. It was the dairy manufacturing end, and it was Forest Button who was our professor, who was exceptionally good, and I enjoyed that. So, I didn't change that course because I felt, in the food field and especially into the dairy manufacturing, there would be plenty of opportunity, other than at a farm, so, I stayed that way. ... I can continue to explain how I went along with

that after I graduated, because I speeded up, during the summer, when courses were in session, during the war years.

SH: Could you explain how the accelerated program affected you?

JS: It must have started with, ... I know, after my freshman year, I did work at a foundry in Jersey City and in the shipping department. I didn't work in a big foundry, you know, pushing steel. [laughter] This was shipping journal boxes for ... the subway cars in New York City and that was the time that I had the last vacation from college. ... So, that had to be in '43. So, it started in ...

SH: The Fall of '43?

JS: Yes, in there. Then, you went on; there were four semesters of three months each, you see, at that time. So, I continued, and instead of graduating, which I normally would have done, in May of '46, I actually graduated in October of '45, and I had the option of being with '45 or not, and I decided, "I'm going to stay with my class," and I decided to stay with '46.

SH: You actually finished your course work in October of 1945.

JS: Correct.

SH: Did you consider staying in school for an advanced degree?

JS: No, I didn't, because I didn't have the grades to begin with and I felt that this was the end, as far as I was concerned. I did take some supplementary courses at Columbia in subsequent years, however, in chemistry and math, but, ... I had no intention of going any further. These were courses I wanted to have.

SH: During your freshman year, you were absorbed in your studies. You were unable to participate in many activities, other than assisting the basketball team.

JS: That's right.

SH: Which activities did you see fade away as the war progressed?

JS: Certainly the big affairs, ... various types of balls, at the college were still in existence ... in the balance of '42 and all of '43, and probably into a little bit of '44, but, definitely in '43, with the big bands, you know, of that era that we had over here, and in the old gym, of course, and I recall that very well, but, eventually, that all phased out, certainly, as the war escalated. ... Of course, the fraternity diminished totally when the ASTP came in, but, we used to have little parties there at times, and, being a piano player, I always wound up playing the piano. [laughter] ... I recall, one time, I was asked to play at the College of Agriculture in one of their auditoriums, and this was the entire College of Agriculture class, which might have been five or 600 people, I forget which, and I played there, and, at that point, I had already pledged to the Raritan Club, so, I had another half a dozen proposals to join other fraternities. [laughter]

SH: Your stake went up.

JS: Yes.

SH: What was the general feeling about the war on campus? Particularly during your freshman year, did anyone question the United States' involvement in the war? Were there any pro-war activities, such as bond selling, on campus?

JS: I don't recall bond selling here at all. The only extracurricular thing in reference to [the] war was, ... oh, my gosh, what do you call the clubs where they ...

SH: USOs?

JS: USOs, and there was one down here in town, I think nearby St. Peter's Church. ... We went down, a couple of us who could play instruments, and we played for a service group, and then, since I'm really a solo pianist, I never was very good with a band, ... I played individually, and I had the whole dance floor dancing at that point.

SH: Did you continue your musical studies here at Rutgers?

JS: No. Well, yes. I can say that. My music studies were in the music appreciation type, which was very interesting to me.

SH: In high school, did you play at dances or hold solo performances?

JS: No, not at all.

SH: Were you involved with music at all in high school?

JS: No.

SH: So, your musical skills are the result of your own, extracurricular, studies.

JS: That's right, exactly.

SH: Did you always study under the same teacher?

JS: Yes, I had a great teacher, a woman. She was born in this country, of German extraction, and she was excellent. She was an NYU graduate in music and she was a very solid, classic teacher.

SH: How long did you study for?

JS: Twelve years, before I went to college. ... During the war years at Rutgers, when I was here, the impact, of course, was the ASTP taking over, basically, the entire campus. However,

we did have the administration over here, which included, at the time, President Clothier, we had Dean Metzger, if I recall, and one who was a particular favorite to everyone, that was Howard Crosby. You might recall all of those names. ... Before, we had spoken a bit on music appreciation, well, certainly, we had Professor McKinney and, of course, Soup Walters, ... who is renowned even today, [laughter] all of them, and it was really great from that viewpoint. As far as changes are concerned, I would say, we had a major change, because a great place to eat was ... in Winants Hall, where we had the cafeteria, a nice set-up, nice food. Those who wanted something different went down to Albany Street, where there were a ton of, basically, as I seem to recall, they were all Greek restaurants, which were storefronts and went right through. All of this is gone today, of course, but, those are things that happened. There was a dairy going across George Street. In fact, oh, golly, there was a series of dairy stores these people put up, I forget the name of it right now, but, there was one there. The campus, *per se*, ... the focal point was really around the Rutgers Gym, as I recall; there was no Brower Commons, or [Records] Hall, or anything of that sort, at the time. The stadium was new, in '37, if I recall, or '38, so, therefore, that did exist, and the teams that played during the war years were really kind of makeshift, in many ways. ... Eventually, if I recall correctly, we dropped all intercollegiate sports because of the war, but, the campus, as I see it today, and which I knew it then, had only the stadium, in its old mode, [laughter] and, of course, ... where we are, here, today, [Van Dyck Hall on Voorhees Mall]. Oh, yes, Seminary Hill, over here, has changed completely; that looks like a big establishment to me, compared to what it was when I was here. Ford Hall existed. ... There have been updates of the Chemistry and Ceramic and Engineering buildings on this side. Certainly, the library has expanded. It was a great place to go in, in its current form, which is, basically, the front end, on this side, and studying there quite a bit, and going down the stacks, and looking for certain things that you wanted, and do your studies. That was a good place for me to go and have a quiet time, to study, really, and those are the changes I readily recall. There was none of this fast food facility across the lot, which never existed in that fashion before. The food was, basically, more of a minor item than it is today, it seems, and you went, and you had dinner, at some point, over at Winants, or, as I said, you went ... to the Greek, I call them Greek, restaurants on Albany Street. As far as lunch [is] concerned, it kind of escapes me a little bit. I forget precisely what we might have done on lunch. We had something, ... but, it must have been a kind of run-and-fly type of thing. [laughter] ... So, the campus, as I knew it, was basically this College Avenue Campus and that was it. I recall the old football field, ... where, now, you have the parking lot by Brower Commons; that was where the first Nielson Field, I think it was called, was, there. Professor Nielson, incidentally, was a zoological professor, and a great one at that, well known. Over on the other side of town, where I had a number of courses, also, there are tremendous changes. Waksman, I can recall Waksman went riding on the bus, going across town with him, and he was being congratulated by everyone for winning the Nobel Prize for his streptomycin. I recall that readily, and, of course, there, you still have some basic buildings out there, the Poultry, the Dairy, the Administration Building, Economics Building, where I stayed, the old Home Economics, wooden building, facing Passion Pond, up on the hill a little bit there, and behind that, of course, is Waksman Hall and all ... the other facilities; the Food Technology, I guess, is another thing out that way. The basic farm, *per se*, looks pretty basic, still, and in the same fashion as I remember it. There have been some updates, of course, but, the basics are still there. I can remember the silos, the dairy barn, the milk producing plant and the ice cream producing was all in one, and I really haven't been there that recently, or that closely to it, to really talk about it, as to its current status, but, those are the type of things I do

recall. I also recall, there was a group of fellows who lived at [what] they called the "Towers." Now, if you ask me where the Towers are, I know they were kind of south of the Agricultural Campus, in that area, but, what this whole Tower thing was, I forget exactly.

SH: How much interaction did you have with the women at NJC?

JS: Yes, we dated with girls over there. ...

SH: Did you ever play the piano for any activities at NJC?

JS: No. Whatever I did was at the fraternity house, and, no, I had never [played there], but, we did have dates with the girls over there, and ... I'm trying to think where the devil we went, but, we went someplace. [laughter]

SH: You were quite young when you arrived on campus; you even finished your course work before your twenty-first birthday. What was the job market like for someone of your age, especially with all of the returning veterans flooding in?

JS: Okay. The job market, at this point, was still good, and my first job was in Hoboken, New Jersey, with the Janssen Dairy Company, in Hoboken, and the reason I got this job, Professor Button had spoken to a former Class of '29 graduate, who was Dick Dougherty, about me, and he said, "[Do] you have a job?" and Dick said, "Yeah, he can come over; ... he can work in the lab up there," which was fine. This is a dairy plant, a Fluid Milk Dairy Plant in Hoboken. He said, "But, we do have a man coming back from [the] war and he gets precedence, of course." So, that job lasted about six months or so, and then, I was out, because this fellow, indeed, did come back, which was only fair. From there, I worked for Sheffield Farms for, I guess, a couple, three years or so, at their plants in New York, one was on 57th Street, New York, one was on Webster Avenue, in Brooklyn, if I recall, and another one was in Newark, New Jersey, and I was the night supervisor, which was my main bit of work with them, in Newark. ... Eventually, I decided, "I really don't like this business of working nights. I really don't like this business of working every day of the year, including Christmas and the whole bit." I said, "I [have] got to do something else." So, in due course, I said, "I'll see what else I can do," and I did just that, and I wound up with Canada Dry Corporation. [At] Canada Dry Corporation, I started in the beginning of 1951 with them, because I had about five, six years of work with dairies, and then, I spent the rest of my working life with Canada Dry. I was there [for] thirty-four some years, thirty-four or more years, and, eventually, became director of quality control and production for the company, which, when I left, was a combination of Canada Dry, Sunkist, remember when Sunkist had their soft drink, and, also, Hawaiian Punch.

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

SH: This continues an interview with Mr. Joseph B. Saldarini on March 27, 2000, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Shaun Illingworth has left the interview. We are now joined by ...

Stephanie Katz: Stephanie Katz. ...

SH: Mr. Saldarini, you were telling us about how Sunkist was a part of Canada Dry.

JS: That's right, and those three brands were, at this point in time, owned by the Del Monte Division of the RJ Reynolds Company, RJR-Nabisco, in fact. So, that's where my working days ended, at that point, and, at that time, we had about fifteen to twenty people working in the field in this type of work. My career in Canada Dry was a most interesting one, because I did quite a bit of international travel, during the years of '58 to '61, basically, and that took me to many interesting parts of the world.

SH: Where did you have to travel?

JS: Well, the company, at the time, which was then, solely, Canada Dry Corporation, had franchise agreements in England, several in Germany, one, to my recollection, in Switzerland, one in Northern Italy, in Turin, and we were building another plant in Lisbon, Portugal, but, our big thrust was mostly in Africa and in the Middle East. In Africa, we had, at that point in time, ... about twenty-four, twenty-five plants ... throughout Africa, starting with Morocco, at the north, and winding up at the end in Cape Town, and our big thrust, with new plants, however, was in the Middle East, where we had a lot of facilities going up in Iran, and in Bahrein, and in Lebanon, and, in '58, going back a little bit on history, the Lebanese had a civil war, and, at the time, I was in Lisbon, taking a look at where the construction of the new plant had developed, and it was agreed, with the office in New York, that, before I go into Beirut, they would have assurances from the man there, ... the owner there, that everything was fine to go in, despite the war and what have you. So, I waited patiently for the cable to come, and it came in, and it said, "Perfectly fine to go ahead. You go ahead." So, after my work in Lisbon, I decided to get my flight via Rome, no jets were in use at that time, and then, from Rome, I would go ... directly into Beirut. These were Pan-American planes at the time. So, the trip to Rome was great. Then, I had to transfer on to another plane to go into Beirut. When I got on that plane, I knew I was in trouble, because, here's this huge DC-7, which was the biggest plane at the time, is now going to Beirut, and there's nobody on it, except me and a bunch of, two or three, reporters. [laughter] So, we get to Beirut, and, sure enough, we land, we go through customs, immigration, we're all checked out with our passports and what have you, and they said, "Okay, now, the four or five of you all get together in one group with your luggage, and, now, we're going in with an armored car and a tank to take you into town," oh, jeez. [laughter] This was at night, and, I'm telling you, it was something that you could really write home about, so to speak, and we had a couple of checkpoints; we had to show our faces, show our passports again and what have you, and, finally, we wound up at the hotel downtown, which was the famous St. George's Hotel, which was really a class act unto itself. It was really great, and then, things were somewhat hectic, as far as the war was concerned. I can recall sitting on the balcony on a Sunday, ... outside of my room, and watching dive-bombers coming down, fighting into the Muslim quarters, because it was Christian versus Muslim. The country was divided. The president, at that time, was a Christian and there was a lot of conflict on that score. ... I was there for a couple of months. I also took a side trip, at that time, to see how our plants were going on in Teheran, and, also, in Abadan, both in Iran, and then, I finally returned back. I went into Kuwait, I guess, and on to Bahrain, and then, back, and we were just about ready to operate at the plant, and I was grateful to my, still today, good friend Kameel Shabb, who was an electrical engineer graduate of the American University in Lebanon, who really was able to work miracles to get the place going,

and it was really marvelous of him to be able to do it. ... One day, ... this was close to the end of the work that was assigned to me, because, now, I had to go back to Lisbon to finish up at Lisbon, and, one day, we decided to go to lunch. ... We come along the shore route to lunch, because the plant was out a bit, and, suddenly, I'm looking out, [and] I said, "Kameel," I said, "you know, there are ships out there that are in excess of what I ever saw," I said. "There must be a lot of traffic going in and out of the port," because the St. George's Hotel was right near the port. He said, "Yeah, I suppose so." So, we had lunch in that area, close by the sea. We come out after lunch, and we go out, and we look. I said, "Kameel, those are destroyers out there," and, as we looked closer, the American flag's on them. This was the time President Eisenhower had been requested by, I think the President of Lebanon was Camille Chamoun, at the time, ... that the Marines come in, and we saw the entire landing of the Marines, coming into the International Airport of Beirut, by, you know, landing craft, and then, forming a column, coming up to the very point where we were at, where the Lebanese Army now joined, and they met, and they shook hands, and so forth, and so on, and then, came in and took over patrol positions in various parts of Lebanon. That was quite an experience, and I used to be kidded by some of the people at Canada Dry in New York, ... because they used to get the *Life* Magazine at the time, you know, depicting all the war that was going on there and what have you, and, at one time, they could see one civilian type running like hell down the road, and they said, "It must be Joe going that way," [laughter] and then, the next time was another picture where all the elite of Beirut came to the St. George's to swim, and, I'm telling you, there were pretty nice looking girls at the St. George's pool. So, I was teased about that, too.

SH: Did that convince you to learn to swim?

JS: I learned. [laughter] Actually, the teacher is Lita, right back here. She's the one who's encouraged me to really learn how to swim and I have.

SH: How and when did you meet Mrs. Saldarini?

JS: I guess we knew one another for quite awhile, and we never really got together very much until in the early '60s, and then, we decided to get married in '61. So, that's what happened. I first met Lita at the Jersey Shore, at my aunt's place, in what is Point Pleasant Beach, yes.

SH: Had you known her in high school?

JS: No, no.

SH: Was this in the 1950s and early 1960s?

JS: Yes, probably. The first time I knew Lita was probably at some point in the '50s, and then, we got married in '61.

SH: You were traveling around the world by air at a time when commercial air travel was still a novelty. Did you ever have any hair-raising experiences during your travels?

JS: Well, ... I'm amazed that I never had a close call in an aircraft. Some were pretty scary, but, they resulted very well indeed. I traveled on many different types of planes. It's incredible the number of types of planes I've been on. I even flew [in] an Argonaut, if you know what an Argonaut is; it's unbelievable. It's got propellers in the back wing part, and this doggone plane gets to a height, and it sort of stops, and then, they switch something to make it go the other way, and, oh, God, that is a bit scary, but, it was safe. It was perfectly good. One time, in my travels in Saudi Arabia, because we had a couple of plants going in, in particular, the first one was in Riyadh, in ... the summer capital of Saudi Arabia, and that was an experience in itself, because when we came to Dhahran, which is the port leading over to Bahrein, which we were heading toward, we got there and find out that the planes were all taken up and the only way you can go over there is by dhow, and I was with a Chrysler Motors representative; ... he was from Iran, I think, from Teheran. So, we got together and I said, "I'm not going to wait here." I said, "I want to get back over to Bahrein." So, he said, "Well, let's go and see if a dhow is there," and they told us [that] there's going to be a dhow ready to go any minute. Sure enough, we go down there, we get on a dhow, and we went over, took us four, five hours by dhow, great experience. Another time, when I was going from Dhahran, again, to Bahrain, our representative in that area was a big, fat guy. He was about ... 300 pounds. So, we flew what was called a Dove, if I recall correctly the type of plane, which was Gulf Aviation at that time. This was a small plane. It would take about, say, eight, ten people, that's about all. So, we check in, they weigh you, check the baggage and everything, get on the plane. The Captain comes out, looks at the manifest, goes through, he doesn't come up to count, keeps looking, and, suddenly, my friend, Farhan Sharuff, also known as Happy, says, "Ah, they counted me twice," [laughter] and that's exactly what happened. They counted him as two people. So, these were some of the funny and some of the harrowing experiences we had going into Bahrein. ... I've been to the various areas of Iran, been up to the Caspian Sea, where the roe, where the sturgeon, the caviar [is harvested], you know, in that area. ... The summer palace of the Shah, ... was, really, a hotel at that point, was really magnificent, went through all the Royal Enclave in Riyadh, which was fantastic. It's like a suburban, beautiful place out here, with trees, and grass, and the whole bit, with their own power plant, including water filtration and treatment, and their own air-conditioning for everything, even a lake, where you could go speedboat riding on it, unreal, you know. You can't believe this stuff until you really see it. So, I had some great experiences in that respect, and, basically, this is where I always worked, in this area of production, quality control, and that was it.

SH: Since this was during the Cold War, were you ever approached by anyone from the CIA or the State Department about gathering information?

JS: No. That never happened. At one time, I did want to go into the so-called Iron Curtain country, at the time, which happened to be Czechoslovakia, and I specifically wanted to go to see the Skoda Factory there, which makes very good equipment, and, particularly, they were doing some soft drink equipment, which was being imported into Iran. I wanted to see the quality of it and what they were doing. So, I went to the consulate in Frankfurt, and they took my application, but, it never came through, and I never got there. It probably came much later than I was able to stay in Frankfurt, although I was in Frankfurt at that time, probably, a good two weeks or more. So, that's basically what I've done in my working life, as there's not really much more to add to it.

[Interviewee's addendum: After I retired, I worked for two years as a consultant for Del Monte in soft drink production and quality control assignments - primarily with their Hawaiian Punch beverage.

Subsequently, I joined the International Executive Service Corps, a volunteer program started by David Rockefeller, which assigns experts to render technical help to clients in Third World countries in their particular field of work. I was assigned to soft drink companies in Egypt and Morocco - both gratifying experiences; the Egypt assignment was during the Desert Shield phase of the Gulf War in 1990. Additionally, I have done a number of interviews on prospective volunteers.

Travel has always been one of my interests, as I had done a lot of it during my career, and Lita and I have been to many interesting parts of the world in addition to Europe; for instance, Africa, India and the Far East.

We have been investigating our family roots and this has led to some interesting discoveries. One was when I found out that my maternal grandfather, Biagio Mortola, a mariner from Camogli, Italy, is buried in the oldest cemetery in Pensacola, Florida. I never knew him and had always assumed he died at sea. We made a special trip to visit his grave. I also learned that the Archbishop of Turin, Italy, and a Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, Giovanni Cardinal Saldarini, is a distant cousin of mine. We arranged for an audience with him on our last visit to Italy.]

SH: Was your involvement with Rutgers continuous or did you "return to the fold" at some point?

JS: No. My involvement with Rutgers came rather recently; I would say, probably, within the past fifteen years or so that I started to really become active. Before, I really wasn't, and I've been very happy about that, because, now, I am the president of our class; I'm the correspondent, also, on the *Rutgers Magazine*. I always try to get some interesting commentary from one of our classmates, and, now, I'm a Loyal Son of Rutgers, which make me very happy, and, currently, [I'm] on the President's Council. I'm a Colonel Henry Rutgers Society member, and, of course, my pride and joy is the scholarship for my mother.

SH: Thank you very much for taking the time to join us today.

JS: Thank you very much, Sandra, and Shaun, and Stephanie. It was a pleasure, thank you.

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Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 6/14/01

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 6/15/01

Reviewed by Joseph Saldarini 8/01