

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JEROME SELINGER

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and

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NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Sandra Holyoak: This begins an interview on October 7, 1999 in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Dr. Jerome Selinger. We thank you Dr. Selinger for taking time out of your day. The interviewee is someone who is very important to the project. Today interviewing is Sandra Stewart Holyoak and

Joseph Ciccone: Joe Ciccone.

SH: To begin the interview, Dr. Selinger, I would like you to tell us where and when you were born and then we'll start asking you questions about your family.

Jerome Selinger: I was born in New York City, New York on January 1, 1925.

SH: How much flak have you gotten for being born on the first day of the year?

JS: That's a long story. Some. [laughter]

SH: Can you tell us about your father and mother? Let's start with your father.

JS: Yes. Well, my father was born in what was then Austria-Hungary, and at the age of fourteen he came to America by himself. He had an aunt living in New York City, and he came and stayed with her. And then he worked in various jobs. There were other relatives, cousins or so forth, that were here, but his father, mother, brothers, sisters were back in Europe.

SH: Do you know why he came [to America] at fourteen?

JS: Well, he never really stated it but I think it was because he wanted to come here and see what he could do to better his chances of livelihood.

SH: Did he ever talk about his family background?

JS: Very little, very little. He had a picture I can remember, a picture that was a photo that was very large, of his brother from World War I who was an officer in the German Army. And he always was proud to have that picture, 'til what happened to Germany.

SH: Do you know what year he came to this country?

JS: I'm trying to think. I'm not quite sure of the year. It must have been about 1915, maybe. Something like that.

SH: Were his mother and father still alive?

JS: Yes, when he left.

SH: Do you know what they did? What their occupation was?

JS: No, I don't know.

SH: Okay.

JC: So, [your father] didn't have any contact with his family after he came to the United States?

JS: Well, that's when, you know, that's when Germany started their, what's the word I want to use, you know, when they started, how can I put this? I never really heard about it, because my father had, must have had some contact with them, but then suddenly the contact was lost. And this was in the thirties, the middle thirties, and late thirties and I was just very, you know, young and I wasn't too concerned about it. But evidently that was the time when the Nazis were taking over and people were disappearing. He lost his whole family there. One sister managed to get out. She ended up in Israel. After war, she went there [to Israel], but she had a son who was a captain in the Israeli paratroopers and he was killed in the '56 or '67 war.

SH: How many siblings did your father leave in Europe?

JS: Oh, there were, I believe it was five altogether. He was one of five, so there were four siblings.

SH: Did your father speak English when he came to this country?

JS: I think my father spoke five languages. Well, it seems like the countries there [in Europe] were so close together, you know, you went from one to another. He could speak Russian, German, Hungarian, and Polish. And I don't know what else he could, but I know it was five languages.

JC: What type of education did your father have?

JS: He had what would be here probably similar to high school, maybe one year more. They called it, I can't recall exactly, the Gymnasium, that's what they called it. He finished that, I know. At that time, that age, it wasn't unusual for these children to travel by themselves in different areas. Cause he told me about going to Budapest, what a beautiful city it was. And he had to be fourteen or something like that at that time.

SH: Now can you tell us a bit about your mother, what she was like.

JS: Well, my mother, believe this or not, was born in Bound Brook, New Jersey. [laughter] Which is in the news a lot lately [because of flooding caused by Hurricane Floyd]. And my father had an uncle, actually, who lived in New Brunswick. And he [this uncle] had a hardware store on Albany Street. And he [my father] came here, out to New Jersey from New York. And this uncle was married to a woman who was my mother's sister. So, this happened and that's what started this relationship. [laughter] That's how my father met my mother and they got married.

JC: When did they get married?

JS: Good question. [laughter] I don't know the exact date. But I assume it was, it had to be, oh ...

SH: I think on the pre-interview survey you put 1919.

JS: I was just going to say that. That sounds about right. Yes. Because I had an older sister who was five years older than me, so it had to be before 1920, I know. [laughter] So, I think that was about right.

SH: What jobs did your father hold? Did he start out as an apprentice?

JS: He had different jobs. He ended up in a, he was a baker in a bakery. In fact, even in New Brunswick I think he was a baker. He was a salesman. A milkman, I think, for awhile. His last job he ended up with Metropolitan Insurance Company as an insurance agent. And, in those days, the time of the Depression and whatnot, the insurance agents used to travel, they used to have different areas around New Brunswick, they had a number of them. And each one would be assigned a certain area and they would go, oh, I don't know how they did it, but it was almost like house to house trying, you know, selling insurance policies. And when they had an insurance policy they would collect from the people. They would go to the house and collect each month from everyone. I don't know how they did it exactly. But, you know, they [the insured] would pay, I don't know, a quarter or something like that. You know, nobody can imagine what it was like in those days, really.

JC: I imagine it must have been very difficult to sell insurance to people during the Depression, with the hard economic times.

JS: True. True. But he did that [sell insurance], well, that was up to the late, I think, the late thirties and early forties, he was doing that. Yes.

SH: What do you remember about growing up as a kid in the Depression?

JS: You know, not really that much because we didn't, for some reason, we really didn't suffer because my father managed to, you know, take care of us. There were four of us, four children. I had a brother and two sisters. I was the third child. I had a younger sister who was ten years younger than me. They probably wondered how that happened. [laughter]

SH: To back up a bit, and ask about your mother, what did her family do in Bound Brook?

JS: Well, her father was a merchant. He, I can remember them saying that he had a horse drawn carriage, things like that, and he used to go around and sell stuff off that way. And that's the way it started. But her brother, she had a brother who, in the late thirties, I think it was the late thirties. There was a store in New Brunswick that was called "Nathan's." He worked there for awhile. This was her brother, yes, her younger brother. And he was a very good salesman. He was an excellent salesman. He had a wonderful personality. Eventually, he opened a men's haberdashery of his own on George Street. He had a very nice store. And then, after awhile, he lost it for some reason or other. But he was very good with that [salesmanship].

SH: You were born in New York, so after your father came and courted your mother, then they moved to New York?

JS: They moved to New York.

SH: Was your father a baker at that time in New York?

JS: Yes. Right.

SH: So, were all of your parent's children born in New York?

JS: No, not my younger sister. She was born here. New Brunswick.

JC: Do you recall when your family moved back to New Brunswick [from New York City]?

JS: I was one year old.

JC: So, that would have been around 1926?

JS: Yes, right, right. You got it. [laughter] Very good. So, I was schooled in all the New Brunswick schools. I started at Lincoln School, which was here in the Sixth Ward in New Brunswick, if you know anything about that. And I think I had some experience, my mother's sister also lived in New Brunswick. Actually, [she] had both her sisters there. And they lived in this area, in the Sixth Ward area, which was near Saint Peter's hospital. Delafield Street, I believe. Right? And, so I went to the Lincoln School for about, I think, until I was in second grade or third grade. And then we moved to the Second Ward, which is Livingston Avenue up by the old New Brunswick high school. Livingston School is there. And I started there in third grade but they skipped me. I skipped a grade there. My mother started me in school when I was four and a half. Evidently they allowed it at that time. She probably wanted to get rid of me. [laughter] As a result, [when] I graduated high school I was sixteen and, I wasn't seventeen, I was sixteen and a half when I graduated high school.

JC: How well did you do in school academically?

JS: I was a B student, really. I wasn't an A student, let's put it that way.

SH: What were your favorite subjects?

JS: Good question. I think I liked science.

JC: Did you participate in extracurricular activities at all, sports or things like that, in high school?

JS: It used to be more intramural because, just about the time I wanted to go out for the football team in high school I had an attack of appendicitis and I had to have my appendix removed. In

those days, they kept you in bed for a long time. And when I was eight years old, before that, I had a hernia operation. I think I must have had a congenital hernia but it never really showed up until I was eight years old. And that was like learning to walk again because I was in bed for two weeks.

SH: Were your family activities during holiday times centered around extended family?

JS: Yes.

SH: Was it more your mother's family?

JS: Right, right.

SH: Did you ever go into New York to visit your father's family?

JS: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Yes. My father, my father used to say, "Okay, we're going in to see my aunt." She was quite a woman. Cause evidently she had been the one who a lot of the family that followed my father that came over turned to her when they came to this country. And she would help them get on their own feet, you know.

JC: So, she was like a family matriarch?

JS: Right. Exactly. That's what she was.

SH: How devout were your family in their practice?

JS: Of religion?

SH: Yes.

JS: Well, my father was an Orthodox. He was pretty devout. But as the years went by that sort of, you know everyone became very Americanized and that's the way it is, you know.

SH: Did you go to Hebrew school?

JS: Yes, I did. [laughter]

SH: What was your mother's ethnic background?

JS: The same.

SH: She was also from Germany?

JS: Oh, no. No, no. Sorry, I'm sorry. I didn't quite follow you. Her parents came from Russia. Her mother came from Russia. 'Cause they had a problem in Russia in those days, before there was problems in Germany, with the Czar and so forth. So, there were a lot of Jewish people that

immigrated. And her mother, who was the matriarch of her family, believe me [laughter], my grandmother, I remember her well because she had three daughters and three sons. One of the sons was in the First World War. The other one was the one I mentioned before that ended up with the store on George Street in New Brunswick. But she sort of ruled the land. All the daughters would come to her for her opinion about how to do things. And she played one daughter against the other. [laughter] She was quite a woman.

SH: Which temple would you all go to?

JS: At that time, it was on, it was on, it was called the Avas Achim. It was on, well, they tore it down and they moved to Highland Park. It's in Highland Park now. It's on First Avenue, I believe. But that's where we went. Later on my sister, my older sister, went to the Anshe Emeth on Livingston Avenue, the reformed synagogue. And that's what my daughter does. She goes to the reformed synagogue, in Trenton. And, actually, after a while we went to the conservative, which wasn't quite as orthodox, you know. So, there's different gradations.

SH: How did your family feel about the Zionist movement and how supportive were they? Was it discussed in your home?

JS: Well, pretty supportive. Because it seems that, I don't know if this is appropriate at this time, but I have to say this, that anti-Semitism is something that has been with us for centuries and I don't think it's ever going to stop. Because it's out there today, just probably not as bad as it was then, but it's there and there's no telling. History repeats. You should know that. [laughter] It's a sad thing. So, the fact that the Jewish people do have a state of their own, and they fought for it against four Arab countries, and they won, I don't think they should be forced to give up anything, in my opinion. But they evidently are going to. For peace, because they want peace.

SH: When you were going to high school here in New Brunswick what kind of associations did you have with, or did you know about, Rutgers? Did you want to go to Rutgers? Had you thought about it?

JS: Well, at that time Rutgers was not a state university. In fact, the student body, I think, was about thirty-five hundred. Since I went to high school here in New Brunswick and thinking my father and mother wanted me to continue my education, so Rutgers was here and I could, actually it was like going to high school because I lived in New Brunswick so I could go to class and go back home. So, as a result, I missed a lot of the college life, you know, that you normally would get if you were living here. But I, my heart was always with Rutgers, I'll tell you that.

SH: Did your sisters go to NJC [New Jersey College for Women]?

JS: No. My older sister was, she went to a business school and she was a secretary for awhile. But she ended up marrying an MD. And she passed away a number of years ago. She had a brain tumor. My younger sister went to Trenton State. She taught for a number of years. She's in Florida now.

JC: You mentioned earlier that you had a brother. Did he go to Rutgers at all?

JS: He sure did. And he graduated. He was in the Class of '47.

JC: So, he was a year before you?

JS: He was actually, let's put it this way. My brother was two years older than me. No, wait a minute. I'm sorry. Three years, three years older than me. When I started Rutgers he was working. He didn't go to college right away. He was working in the clothing business as a salesman in New Brunswick and in New York. But after, he was in the service, and in fact, I should have brought the picture. He was in, attached to the Ninth Air Force, which was in England. And then they, after the invasion of France, groups of the Ninth Air Force came over to support the troops. The fighting, you know. And so his outfit came over. And they were stationed outside of Paris, after Paris was taken. And we were up, I was up further right after the Battle of the Bulge, I lived through that. And, we had communication, letters from home and so forth and so on. And I found out the general area that he was in. And I had a, I got a pass from [my] commanding officer to go to Paris. I had a three day leave to see him. And I went back and I found his outfit. He wasn't there. [laughter] He heard that I was coming. He went into Paris to look for me. So, I spent like twenty-four hours, no, it wasn't twenty-four. I spent most of the day sitting trying to decide what to do and he came back. We were together, to make a long story short, for a day.

JC: That must have been wonderful.

JS: In fact, we had a picture that was in the, that we sent to the *Home News*, of the two of us, you know, in France at that time. But he was a graduate in '47. And he went into business. He married a girl who was a Douglass graduate and she was from Matawan. Her family had a paper business and he ended up going into the business there. And I lost him about ten years ago. He had a very bad heart attack.

SH: To back up a bit, before we start talking about your Rutgers experiences, as a teenager growing up in your family, how aware were you of what was going on in Europe during the 1930s? I know you talked about your family not hearing from their families any more. What kinds of discussions were going on in your house? Were they discussed with you as children or was it just your mother and father?

JS: Not really, it was my mother and father. But we would kind of know from my father's reaction. We had radio at that time and we used to listen the radio. And there were certain people, even here in the United States, at that time, who were really anti-Semitic. And they would make speeches, you know, so, you know, that's how I became aware, really, of what was going on there.

JC: The schools that you went to, New Brunswick high school, how well do you think, do you feel, they prepared you for Rutgers? For college?

JS: I think I was prepared very well at the time. I might not have applied it too well [laughter] but they were very good.

SH: When you came to Rutgers, what did you pick as your major?

JS: I picked engineering, and I went into the school of engineering. But I didn't apply myself that well, really. I could have done a lot better. It was either that or the realization that I could have done a lot better when I got older. [laughter]

JC: When did you first enter Rutgers?

JS: 1941. September 1941.

SH: Can you tell us about, did you have a freshman initiation?

JS: No. Not really.

SH: What activities did you get involved with here?

JS: I wasn't that involved really. I had friends that were in some of the fraternities, and I used to go over, be invited over, and stuff like that. But I never joined any fraternity or anything like that. No. I worked part-time, sometimes at night. I had various jobs to pick up a little money.

SH: What did you do?

JS: I actually, there was a factory on Remsen Avenue in New Brunswick between Howard and Talmadge Street. It was called, it was Bond's. You know Bond's store? They made men's suits and stuff like that. Well, the first job I had, I think, was, I don't know how I got that, I can't remember really. But I ended up, a friend of mine who was also at Rutgers at that time as a freshman, we both went there on Sundays and we'd clean the machines that they used, went around cleaning up. And after that I started to work there as a salesman in the sales department. So, I would for a few hours, helping when they'd fold something, sometimes I'd wrap things, you know.

SH: Did you get involved in ROTC as a freshman?

JS: Oh, yes. That was mandatory then.

SH: And what about chapel? Since you lived here in New Brunswick, did you have to attend chapel?

JS: I had to attend chapel. Kirkpatrick Chapel, right? [laughter]

SH: What do you remember about that?

JS: Just going. That's about it. [laughter] I remember, we went, it was nice, you know, we went, I'm trying to think if it was one day a week. I don't even remember. It was pretty often. We had to be there.

SH: Do you remember any of the speakers?

JS: Not really. No.

JC: Were there any faculty members that you were fond of or have particularly fond recollections of?

JS: When I was taking engineering I can't say so, no. They, you know, they were good men. What I do recall, is that the university used to have speakers. They came in convocations. They would have the entire student body come to the gymnasium, the Barn, you know, and they'd have a well-known speaker come and speak about conditions in the world and in the country. And the one that stands out the most in my memory was William L. Shirer.

JC: The journalist?

JS: Right. He came and spoke to us about what was going on in Germany. And this was before, or maybe, maybe it happened right after, the war. But he was a very good speaker, he wrote a few books that were excellent. But they had different ones, but for some reason, why I don't know, he sticks out.

JC: Before the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December '41, what was the mood on campus towards the war, the feeling on campus about what was going on in Europe and the possibility of us going to war?

JS: Well, I think that the inclination here with both my friends and students, we really didn't discuss it that much, but the feeling was that, you know, we didn't like what was going on, especially when they started bombing England. And, you know, that didn't go over well. Everybody was for the English.

SH: Did anyone discuss the Lend-Lease at all?

JS: Well, I think there might have been some people who didn't like that, but that was something I think that really was well-thought-out and was something that had to be done, really.

SH: What did your family think about FDR?

JS: They liked him. Well, you have to understand that when Hoover was president, that was the time of depression, you know, and here this man comes along and he speaks about "you have nothing to fear but fear itself."

SH: Were your family politically active at all in New Brunswick?

JS: Not really. Nah. No.

SH: Did they serve on any councils or school boards?

JS: No. No. [laughter]

SH: Do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

JS: Very well, I remember that. I was home, sitting in the living room, doing my homework on a Sunday afternoon and I had the radio on, believe it or not. And I was listening to the Giants play, the Brooklyn Dodgers had a football team at that time, and then the game was on. And I was doing the homework. And all of a sudden they said, "We interrupt this program to bring the following announcement." And they said, "Pearl Harbor has been bombed." And I said, "Where the heck is Pearl Harbor?" I didn't know what it was all about, you know. And then, of course, shortly after that we were told where it was and, you know, what happened.

SH: Were your family all there at that point?

JS: No. And actually my mother and father, I think they were at the movies, and they came home and I ran out to tell them and they went into shock, you know. They were really worried, upset, because they had two boys. The speech that Roosevelt made the following day

SH: Did you hear the speech here on campus?

JS: I think I must have either heard it here or someplace.

SH: Being a freshman on campus did you notice any moves right away to join any of the military services?

JS: Well, you know, we had the ROTC training. Of course, I was in the middle of it, I was just starting it at that time. But, you know, what happened was that this country had a lot of people who were "America First" and so forth and so on, you know. And they weren't for us doing anything about the war, you know. But when Pearl Harbor was bombed, the whole attitude of this country changed. People were so united it was unbelievable. They, people, just ran down to enlist to get into the service to fight.

SH: What was your advice from your father to you and your brother?

JS: Well, he didn't want us to go, you know. No. And my brother went in before I did. And that bothered me, that he was in and I wasn't.

JC: Did he volunteer or was he drafted?

JS: I think he was drafted.

JC: Earlier you mentioned the America First movement. Did they have a strong presence on campus at Rutgers before the bombing of Pearl Harbor?

JS: Not that I, not at Rutgers, I don't think. I don't remember. There might have been a group. They had a Bund organization, you know. Did you ever hear of a German Bund? In different areas. I don't know if it was really here at Rutgers, I don't think so. But it was present here in the East and I'm sure it was probably there in New Jersey and New York. People, you know, they were German extractions. They were for Germany, at that time. Maybe they changed their minds after awhile, but they weren't then, not then.

SH: Your freshman year, was that when you were involved in 150 pound football?

JS: Actually, it was the sophomore year, that was. That was my last year, it was my second year at that time, you know. And then I went down and told them to take me. Went to the draft board, you know. Then I went home and told my mother and father and never heard the end of that.

JC: So, you volunteered then for the service?

JS: Yes, really.

JC: When was that?

JS: That was actually August 1943.

JC: How did campus life change after the bombing when war was declared?

JS: Well, everybody was aware, you know, that this was going on and there wasn't quite a change. And I think the feeling among a lot of people was that they wanted to be a part of it, fighting or doing something to alleviate what was going on, you know. But, I can't say it affected, I don't know how it affected most people.

SH: Basically classes just continued on as they had been? The schedules didn't change?

JS: Yes, they did, they did. In fact, at the time that I went in, to show you some mistakes I made in my life, I went in after two years of engineering. I wasn't a great student. And at that time, right after the sophomore year, they accelerated the course. So, the next two years were incorporated as one year and they graduated in one year after that.

JC: How old were you at the time you enlisted?

JS: Eighteen.

SH: Did you consider the Navy or the Marines?

JS: Well, when I volunteered, I actually ended up going to the Army because I volunteered for the Army. And this may sound, some people may think I was not too clever, because I had infantry ROTC at Rutgers which is what, I mean I would have had two years of it, so I didn't get into the part where you would become an officer after you graduate. But I put that down on the questionnaire when I went into the service, so, boom, they sent me to an infantry replacement training camp.

SH: And where did they send, I mean, can you tell us chronologically, then. You enlisted in August? Had you worked after school when you joined?

JS: Yes. Yes. I might have, I might have enlisted more in July, but the, I actually went in in August. And then I went to Fort Dix, which was, I guess, a center where they would test you and then send you to different camps. And I guess that's where I put down I had infantry ROTC.

SH: Now did you go down by train to Fort Dix or did your folks take you down?

JS: No. Train. Oh, yes. We had to report, we had to report to, I think it was Newark. We went, we might have gone by bus to Newark and then by train to Fort Dix.

SH: Did anyone else you knew from the area go with you?

JS: No. No. I went by myself at that time. There was a friend of mine who lived on the same street. In fact, one of the fellows that's in the picture there with the 150 pound team, he was the quarterback, I was the fullback. He, he went in, I don't know exactly when, but he was over there in the infantry also. And there was another one who was a good friend of mine who was in the infantry that was over there that was killed. He lived just a few houses away from where I did.

SH: Had he also been a Rutgers student?

JS: Yes.

SH: Do you remember his name?

JS: Latham. Kenneth Latham.

SH: And who was the quarterback?

JS: Jimmy Potter. James Potter.

SH: Tell us about Fort Dix. What kind of a shock was that from New Brunswick?

JS: Well, it was, you know I had a little bit of the military, I knew what to expect from the ROTC. So, actually, Fort Dix was a very short, we're just there a very short time. Maybe it was a week. Because it was a reception center. That's where they took us in and then would send us to different areas. And I was sent to Camp Croft, South Carolina, which was what they called an

IRTC. Infantry Replacement Training Camp. Which wasn't too good a place to go to because at that time they gave us seventeen weeks of basic training. Today I read about people going in for five weeks of basic training, but this was really, how should I put it, it was very involved training. They really got us in good shape, physically. Went on twenty-five mile marches, twenty mile marches. Learned how to take a rifle apart blind-folded. Put it back together again. Things like that. Learned how to shoot. And we learned a little bit about, not a little bit, a lot about what to do in combat. But, I was fortunate in that after the seventeen weeks of basic training, the Allies had invaded Italy, and they were having a tough time, there were a lot of casualties, and this battalion that I trained with just about all of them were sent to Anzio beachhead. You've heard of it? There was a heavy casualty rate there. But they took, I don't know, they did this by the IQ test that was taken when you went into the service and if you scored, I think, one twenty five something like, or above, they wanted you to go for special training. So, they took about five of us out of this battalion of about a thousand men and didn't send us there [to Anzio]. So, they sent me to ...

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

JS: Five out of a thousand were picked out and I was one of the five to go to what was called "ASTP." Army Specialized Training Program. So, we went from Camp Croft, South Carolina, which was, today is, I don't think it exists, but it was in Spartanburg, South Carolina, outside of Spartanburg. And I was sent to Georgia State Teacher's College, which was in Statesboro, Georgia. And I was there for two months. I think it was two months. Well, they were waiting to assign me, this was sort of a school where they tested you and then decided where they were going to send you, but they wanted to further your education. So, they hadn't definitely decided upon us, there must have been at least a hundred of us there. And these were men from various units, some who had desk jobs in the Air Force, so forth so on. And while we were there we had a great time. I played basketball, you know. We had a team. And we were living on one side of the campus, there was a cement walk down the middle, and the rest of the other side was all girls who were attending the university and the teacher's college. So, it was nice. [laughter] Then, after I believe it was, I'm not certain about the time, but it must have been close to two months anyway, that the notice came that they were closing the program. And the reason why they were closing the program was because of things like the Anzio beachhead. That the casualty rates were so high they needed men. They needed young men. So, at that time, they took a lot of us, I think, most of us that were there probably were sent to the same place. We went to Camp Gordon, Georgia, which was close to Statesboro, Georgia. And it so happened that at Camp Gordon, Georgia there was the Tenth Armored Division. And that's how I got to the Tenth Armored Division. And that was in February or March 1944.

SH: Can you tell me a little bit of what it was like to be in the South for the first time?

JS: Well, when we went into the town, once in awhile we'd get passes or on a weekend maybe we'd go into the town, the thing that always hit me was the accent. The southern accent. [laughter] That's something that, you know, took a while to get used to, but I enjoyed it, you know, when I heard it, really. But it was, it was America. It was.

JC: Before you joined the military, had you traveled much outside of New Jersey?

JS: No.

SH: What was the make up, where were most of the people from who you were in Statesboro with or in Spartanburg with?

JS: Well, they were from various areas. It wasn't just New Jersey. And then, of course, when I joined the Tenth Armored they were from all over the country, a lot of men.

SH: Did you see any of the segregation in the South or in the military at all?

JS: Well, it was all segregated. We were all segregated at that time. There were no African-Americans.

SH: Did you see any of the white only, colored only signs when you were there?

JS: Oh, yes.

SH: As a young man, did that affect you?

JS: Well, I didn't like it. When I saw it I didn't like it. But that's the way it was at that time. Of course, you might wanna change it, but there was no way you were going to be able to do that.

JC: Now, when you were transferred into the Tenth Armored Division, that was in 1944?

JS: Right.

JC: So, [after the transfer] was there additional training in Georgia?

JS: Oh, yes. Sure. Yes. Before, actually we joined them in, I say I think it was March 1944. And I just found out a reunion this past Labor Day, the Tenth Armored had a reunion in Cherry Hill, one of the historians who's doing the work on the history, he heard I, you know, he was talking to me, and I said, "Well, I was in the ASTP program before I came." And he said, "Oh," he said, "you're one of the intelligent men that came." Because what they did, he said, this division was well known as one of the, now this may be hard to believe, but one of the smarter divisions because they went out of their way to get, I think, about twelve hundred or more of the men that were in the ASTP program. So, we went into it. And this actually [he picks up an application form] was an, I started to apply to Officers Candidate School, you know, officers training. And, if you notice the date.

JC: You mean on your application here?

SH: What does it say?

JC: It reads, "August 14, 1944."

JS: Right. And about a week after I applied, we were shipped out of Camp Gordon, Georgia and we came up to Camp Shanks, New York, which was a port of embarkation and then we went overseas, so this was forgotten. [laughter]

SH: When did you hear about the D-Day invasion?

JS: Oh, right away.

SH: So, you were aware of it?

JS: Well aware of it. Believe it or not, some of us were sorry at that, I don't know why. Sorry that we missed it.

JC: Were you?

JS: I had the feeling, you know, I was sort of gung ho as a young fella, or else I wouldn't be there. In fact, that statement would lead to something else that I wrote in there [the pre-interview survey]. Yes, I think as a result of my training in ROTC here at Rutgers, you know, I knew about the infantry and how they did things, so the platoon leader and the company commander, I think they, they were aware of that. We went through training, so forth. The platoon leader, the company was made up of four platoons, and the platoon leader was the head of one of them, the platoons. He would be riding the half-track, up front. And the half-track had a fifty caliber machine gun in front and two thirty calibers on the sides of the track. And, I'm getting ahead of the story. I shouldn't be doing this. [laughter]

SH: Well we'll just go back and ask how long you were at Camp Shanks?

JS: Okay, very good. Okay, you picked me right up on that. Well, we, I would say we were there maybe five days. And when we were there, being in Camp Shanks, which was in New York, it was pretty close to home, so they said, well, could I get a pass, I asked if I could get a pass to go home. And I was told, "Yes, but you have to be back at a certain time," I think it was the next day at six o'clock or whatever it was, that I had to be back in the outfit. And there was another fella from New Jersey who also applied, you know, and he was a master sergeant, or, yes, he was a master sergeant. He was a regular Army man. And we got, we both got the pass and we came home on the train. And I think it was in Newark he said, "I'll see you tomorrow, you know, when we're going back. I'll meet you on the train." I went home, saw my family. My father took me to the station [when I had to go back to my unit]. And he was crying. But, when I went to look for my friend, my friend wasn't there, where he said he was going to be. So, I went back by myself to the division. And I got back to the company headquarters. And he didn't show up until, I don't know where he got the information from, but it was like three days later. We shipped out. And he came walking in. And guess what, guess what? He was broken. He was demoted right away because of being away without leave, you know. So, that's another story. [laughter]

SH: Where was your brother at this time? He was already in the military.

JS: Yes, he was in the military. First, he was in Florida at an air station. He was assigned to the Air Force. But he was an aerial photographer. And then they went out to Denver. I know he was out in Denver for awhile. And then he went, he was in England, then they shipped him to England.

SH: He was in England when you were at Camp Shanks?

JS: Yes. Yes. Sure.

SH: Did you know when you left Camp Shanks where you were heading?

JS: Well, we knew that we were going to participate in the invasion. I mean, this was after D-Day, but we knew that we were going to go and be part of the battle.

SH: How did you travel to Europe?

JS: In a convoy. We left, the funny thing was, that we left, we came down from Camp Shanks on a train. They had us on a train. We came right down to, it had to be, North Bergen or some place like that, right on the waterfront. On the Hudson. They put us on a ferryboat. We went across the Hudson on a ferryboat. And we looked up. The *Queen Mary* was there. We thought, "Oh, boy. We're going on the *Queen Mary*." We pulled up and there was a ship right along side [the *Queen Mary*] and that's the one we got on. [laughter] In fact, I think it was the *General Black*, that was what the name of the ship was. *General Black*.

JC: Was the voyage overseas eventful at all?

JS: Yes, well, we had a couple of submarine scares because we were in a convoy. So, then we had alerts every day where we had to run up on deck on different areas and line up and be ready to get off the ship. And there was a couple of times where the destroyers accompanied this big convoy, and it actually took fifteen days to get across the Atlantic 'cause they didn't want to go in a straight line. They zigzagged.

SH: What was it like to be on the ship? We've heard about the crowding.

JS: [laughter] Well, they actually had five bunks, one on top of the other, and that's the way we slept. If you can take it. Then, after a while, we'd go up on deck and sleep on deck.

SH: Were they [the officers] pretty generous in letting you do that?

JS: Yes, they didn't, they frowned upon it. Let's put it that way. But, you know, every once in awhile some of us would do it, you know. Initially, a few days after we were out of New York, or maybe it was a day or so, we really hit some rough seas and that boat was going up and down. And we had, one morning when this was happening, you know, we had one of these alerts, we had to be up on deck, lined up in company formation, and some of the guys got seasick and they started heaving right there.

JC: How did you feel?

JS: I didn't feel too good at that time, I'll tell you that. [laughter] When we had, we used to have to take turns to go down to the kitchen area to get meals and we'd get these trays and the ship was going like this [rocks his hand back and forth] and the trays were sliding back and forth, you know. It was a little difficult. And then we found out afterwards that, I think a hurricane had come up the coast, the East coast, at that time, and that's why the seas were not as bad as [Hurricane] Floyd, but evidently they were very bad.

JC: Outside of the emergency drills, were there other activities for you during the day? Either additional training or other drills?

JS: Yes, we'd have drills. Occasionally. But, actually, most of the time we would be, as I recall, there wasn't too much training, really.

SH: Was this a Navy ship or a Merchant Marine ship?

JS: It was a, it had to be a Merchant Marine ship. It wasn't Navy. I don't think, no. It was called the *General Black*, though. I remember that. Certain things you remember. [laughter]

SH: What did you do to while away the time during the trip across the Atlantic?

JS: Oh, play cards and things like that, you know. Read.

SH: Was everybody on board the ship from the Tenth Armored Division?

JS: Yes. Oh yes. In fact, it wasn't just one ship, there were a lot of ships that were involved, yes. Actually, we anchored, when we crossed, outside of England. You know the white cliffs of Dover? You've heard of that? We look out and there they are.

SH: That was your first anchor then?

JS: Yes. After leaving New York. Yes. That was just overnight. I don't know why we stopped there. Maybe it wasn't even overnight. Because from there we went right to Normandy.

SH: Was that the first embarkation for you? Normandy?

JS: Yes. Right. We never got off the ship [in England].

SH: What harbor did you go into [in Normandy]?

JS: Well, we were supposed to go to Cherbourg, but Cherbourg wasn't, the harbor wasn't fit to embark troops, you know. So, we went right to the beach, you know. Omaha, Utah. I think we must have landed on Omaha or Utah, I'm not sure which one. You saw *Saving Private Ryan*?

JC: Certainly.

JS: All right, one of those beaches.

SH: At this point, I'll have to ask you what your opinion was of *Saving Private Ryan*?

JS: Well, you know, some of it was really realistic in the beginning. They showed footage of the actual combat, the way it was, really shocking to a lot of people. How when the landing craft was coming up, they dropped the landing craft [door] and they get killed right away. Very, very factual I would say. But even, the premise of that story is hard to believe, because, you know, to send a group out to find a man because he had lost all his brothers, I'm not sure that that would have happened, to tell you the truth.

SH: Have you seen any other movies that you thought were good or just blatantly horrible?

JS: Most of them aren't factual, you know, most of them aren't. This was pretty close, yes. Especially later on, when they had the couple of the firefights with the tanks and what not.

SH: Tell us about the landing then on the beach at Normandy, what you saw and what you experienced.

JS: Well, actually, we landed at night.

SH: Was this planned, to put you ashore at night?

JS: Oh, yes. That was the idea, in the dark. I don't even know if it was early in the morning or late at night, just after dark. I don't remember what it was, but I know it was nighttime.

JC: Why at night? I would think it would be easier to land troops during the daytime.

JS: Sure, I thought maybe one of the reasons was to protect us in case there was an attack by air. So, we went ashore and, you know, there was no opposition. We landed and we just walked up the beach.

SH: When you went ashore, when you went off the craft, did you go down the sides or was this an LST that let you go off through the front?

JS: No, I think we went down the sides on rope. Yes, you know, how you climb? You've seen the pictures where they climb? That's the way.

SH: What kinds of equipment did you have to carry, you personally? What were you assigned to do in your platoon?

JS: I was a rifleman. Which meant I had my M-1 rifle. And my job was to be a rifleman in the company, that was it.

SH: How did you communicate and do this landing in the dead of night?

JS: We seemed to ...

SH: Were there flares or any lighting?

JS: There might have been, I don't recall any, though. There might have been. But then maybe it was because the moon was out. But we had, carried a full pack and the pack would have, oh, a blanket, half of a pup tent, we would share two halves with another person, all right, we would put the two halves together and two people would sleep. So, what happened was, we marched up, I forget really, exactly, how we got there, but I think we probably walked because we were used to marching. In fact, getting back to Georgia, part of the training was these forced marches. We had one that was a thirty mile march where we left for the early evening and we got back at dawn. It was all night long.

JC: Was that with full gear?

JS: Right, right. Yes. That was to get you in shape. But that happened. Usually it was twenty-five miles, but I remember one was thirty-five or thirty. And then they would double time during the march, too.

SH: Do you remember your drill sergeant?

JS: Oh, yes. In fact, when we were in Camp Croft taking the basic training, the cadre who trained us were all regular Army, they were all very tough men, really, they really were. And they all had habits, you know. But they really were good, they were good.

JC: Did you think that basic training made you physically well-prepared for combat?

JS: Yes. That was the whole part of it.

SH: Did you think that your training was adequate once you got into battle? Did you look back and say, "thank heavens," or were you dreading not having had more?

JS: Well, no, I think actually we were trained enough. Except mentally, to prepare yourself for actually what happened was something nobody could prepare you for. And nobody realized what you actually go through unless you've been through it, really.

SH: When did you land at Normandy?

JS: At the beginning of September [1944]. And actually we, what happened was, we landed and was a short distance, it had to be maybe a few miles, that we marched to an apple orchard and we bivouacked in the apple orchard. We set up the, the company set up there, because this was still part of an armored division at that time and the equipment for the armored division hadn't arrived. So, we had to wait until it arrived. So, actually, we spent a few weeks waiting on the Normandy peninsula, yes.

JC: So, then your armored units didn't travel with you on the convoy?

JS: No, they had separate ships that came over. But, you know, eventually they came and when they all came that's when we went forward.

JC: When was that?

JS: That was probably October, late October, the beginning of November.

SH: When you were bivouacked in the orchard, did you meet any of the French?

JS: We would, we didn't go, really, go into any of the towns, but there were some farm houses nearby. And at that time we were introduced to calvados. You know what that is? [laughter]

JC: Calvados?

JS: That's a liquor made from apples. It was potent. So, you know, we were there for a while and we trained there. We even had some, setup some football games, we had football. This was all part of being together.

SH: In the platoon, do you remember where people were from?

JS: Yes, I do. There were a couple from New York, a couple from, one from Tennessee, Mississippi. These were friends of mine. I guess one from California. And the platoon leader, my platoon leader was, he was from the Midwest and the captain was from the Midwest, from St. Louis area. A sad story, well, we'll get to that.

SH: If you want to tell it now, you can.

JS: Okay. This platoon leader. When we were training in Camp Gordon, I think, he liked me. So, I was in the third platoon at the time and he took me, he wanted me in his platoon because evidently he felt I would be useful as a scout. He wanted me to be a scout, which meant that I would probably be the first one to get shot at. [laughter] But, he picked me to do that. And this all leads up, this happened in the States, and, you know, so I was in his platoon. And this fellow was such a nice man. He was a young guy. He was big, strong, and he had been already in action in the Pacific as an enlisted man. And I don't know if he received a battlefield commission or if he just went to officer's school or what. But anyway, when I wrote this story about him [in the pre-interview survey] that happened later in November [1944]. But leading up to that, where were we? We were in October, right?

JC: Right, you were bivouacking in an apple orchard.

JS: Well, when we finally moved up, we went through France and we went through, Paris had been taken, but we drove through the outskirts of Paris and when we went through there the French were all over us, you know. They were very excited about us. And then we went on. We went into Alsace-Lorraine. And that's actually where the first combat occurred. Around the

city of Metz, which is here, I think, in the chronology. [Refers to a chronology in the Tenth Armored Division's history.]

JC: Do you recall your first experience in combat?

JS: Yes, well, here, you see, [reading from Division history] "First Combat, First Major Offensive."

JC: "November 15, 1944." [also reading from history]

JS: Yes, well it was about that time. I don't remember the exact date. But we actually, as an armored division, rather than be on foot as a foot soldier, even though I was an infantryman, I was an infantryman that rode for awhile but when you hit combat you got off the vehicle and helped fight on foot. So, we were assigned on this battle of Metz, which was big stronghold that the Germans had. They had forts there. And, prior to that, we had been involved, I think, in Alsace in some combat. And we didn't, we would drive through the towns, and we had orders to shoot at anything that moves. And that's just what we would do, go into the town and start shooting. And usually there wasn't much opposition at that time. And as an armored division what we would do would be, try to encircle some of the objectives. For instance, in Metz, we were, instead of a direct assault, we were sent around it, so that we would cut them off, the Germans from coming, you know. And, that was our, really, our first combat experience. I think that's when I took my first prisoner.

JC: How did that feel?

JS: Well, I'll tell you. I was kind of surprised because it was a young German boy. I think he was younger than I was. And he was scared to death, you know, which was only natural. But, you know, the minute I saw him I went in with my rifle. And he put his hands up. He was hiding in the barn. We were going through the town, house-to-house.

SH: Was he in uniform?

JS: Yes, oh yes. So, I took him prisoner. He couldn't have been, I was probably nineteen at the time, nineteen and a half, I wasn't twenty yet, I know that all right. He looked to me like maybe he was sixteen or seventeen, yes, really. That was at that time.

SH: Did you ever find out why he was still there?

JS: Well, not really, because we took him and then there were certain people who would take the prisoners, take them back, so I never really got involved with that.

JC: What did it feel like, the first time in combat, to have people shooting at you?

JS: Not too good. [laughter] That's when the realization of what combat is really like hit home. I think I was, I was all gung ho, you know, and I thought, oh, well, you know, it was like an athletic event. Until, the first experience that really hit home was, when we were going to, we

were in, this was right around the time of the battle for Metz or right after it. The Germans were in an area called the Saar-Moselle Triangle, formed by the Saar River and the Moselle River. And we came up to the Moselle River and we were going across it, but it was nighttime, and the engineers were putting up pontoon bridges for us to get across. And we had to lay down and sleep over night, you know. So, what we did was, we had sleeping bags as part of our pack and we would take a sleeping bag and just lay down and go to sleep, if you could, you'd hear the artillery going and so forth. And the first shock for me was when I got up, when light came and I woke up and I looked down the side of the road and there were ten bodies laying there. American boys. Like going to a butcher shop. So, that was the beginning of an eye-opener.

SH: How well were you supplied?

JS: Well, that's a story that, the way I understand it, and the way it happened was, that Patton was interested in speed, in just getting across there, and he did very well with the Third Army. I mean, we went right through France, to Alsace-Lorraine. But what happened was, the supply lines were so long, at this time, that they couldn't bring up enough supplies like, particularly, gas. So, we were sort of slowed down at that time and you couldn't advance too quickly. And I think he [Patton] claimed that that's one of the reasons why the war lasted longer. And if we had been supplied we would have just kept going at that time. And, they had what's called the Red Ball Express. Have you ever heard of that? You have? You're very good. But this was the quartermaster corps, and they had two and a half ton trucks, which were big Army trucks. And they would load them with five gallon tanks of gas. In other words, the gasoline came in five gallon tanks, and they had to load them up at the beaches or wherever the supplies were coming in and run them up to the front. So, they had these poor guys driving these trucks that were, you know, it was a continuous thing, the supplies coming up there 'cause they had to bring ammunition and food and gasoline. But gasoline was the most important thing at [that] time, I think. Plus the ammunition.

SH: Did the slowdown allow you to rest and regroup, or did it just hold you back?

JS: I think it held us back more than anything, really.

JC: You mentioned Patton a moment ago. He's a colorful figure. During the war, what was your opinion of him as a leader?

JS: Well, he was kind of, what's the word I want to use, a little controversial, really. He didn't agree very much with Eisenhower. He was, he believed in, and he was right about a lot of things. He believed in speed, in getting around the enemy, surrounding him, and just driving to the objective, that's what he believed. To give you an example, right in there [points to the Division history] it says, oh, in March, that was in March. Trier was a major German city that was a fort and, this was after the Battle of the Bulge, and they wanted to attack and take the city and he [Patton] was told, Eisenhower said, "Well, you'll need three divisions, three or four divisions, to take Trier, and you can't do that by yourself." So, I don't know if he ignored the orders or what, but this came out later, he took our division and one other infantry division and took Trier right away. They found a bridge, went across the bridge, went into the town, and all we found there was wine cellars that were full of wine. [laughter] No, seriously, it was a major

coup at that time. But, right after that, it wasn't long after that that I saw something that I wasn't too happy about. The tankers were, on the side of a tank there was room to place something. And the tankers, who were the advanced people on a lot of these missions, when it came to attacking, some of them would put sandbags on the side of the tank. And the reason for the sandbags being that if they were hit by a German .88, the shell wouldn't penetrate, would explode, and, you know, the sandbag would stop it. But, I saw him [Patton], I actually saw this happen, I saw him drive up in his jeep, you know, three stars.

SH: It was marked that way?

JS: Yes, right.

SH: It didn't make him a target?

JS: Well, you know, that's something else. We didn't have markings on our unit. Our unit they called "The Ghost Division," because the Germans didn't really, they didn't have the Division markings on it. They blacked them out.

JC: Was that unusual?

JS: That was ...

[Answering machine starts.]

SH: Excuse the interruption

JS: That's okay. That's okay. Now where were we?

JC: You were talking about the lack of patches.

JS: Yes. The Germans called our division "The Ghost Division," because it showed up in different areas and they didn't know where we were or who we were. That's what they say.

SH: You were also telling us about Patton showing up in his marked jeep.

JS: Right. Yes. He hopped out of the jeep and he went over to the tank and he ordered them to take the sandbags off the tank because it would slow the tank down.

JC: But it would also expose them to more danger?

JS: Exactly. That's my point, you know. When I saw that I wasn't too happy to see that. But, he had a purpose and that's the way he felt that he had to do it. And that was right, after that we just really went through Germany very fast. We went down very quickly.

SH: After Metz, where did you go then?

JS: Well, that's ...

SH: We need to back up just a little bit.

JS: That's okay. That's all right. What happened after Metz, was the main firefight that I was involved in where I think I explained, I wrote about that [in the pre-survey interview].

SH: If you'll tell the tape for us.

JS: Yes, right. I'm sorry. My platoon, my company, was the lead company, actually, you'll have to understand the setup of an armored division. The tanks were supported by armored infantry, so it was tanks and half-tracks that were in a column. And we came up, at that time the Germans' defense was the Siegfried Line. And we were the lead half-track. There were three tanks in front of us, but we were the first half-track. I was in the first half-track of the company, of my company, with this platoon commander. We were told by the reconnaissance as we were going up, I'll never forget this, that there was nothing up there but small arms fire. And we went over the crest of the hill. And we started down the hill. And, I hear 'fshhhhhh, boom' shell on one side and 'fshhhhhh, boom' shell on the other side ...

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

SH: This is beginning of tape two with an interview with Dr. Jerome Selinger on October 7, 1999 in New Brunswick, New Jersey. You were telling us about just coming down a hill and being zeroed in by the Germans.

JS: Right. So, we were zeroed in by the German defense, the German .88s, that were, they were in, behind the dragon's teeth, which were cement columns that were part of the Siegfried Line. And they actually were zeroing in on the column. And what happened was they hit the first tank immediately with a direct hit. They hit the second tank with a direct hit. They hit the third tank with a direct hit. And then they hit our half-track with a direct hit on the front right fender of the half-track. And when the shell burst, just before it burst, this lieutenant got up, and he was riding up front, to tell us, starting to say to get out of the track, get out, you know, dismount. And as he got up, the shell burst, and he got it right through the head. A piece of shrapnel. So, that killed him. And, what happened then was, really, a terrifying thing. And, of course, everybody tried to get out of the track. And some of the men jumped over the side. In the meantime, the Germans were zeroing in with machine guns on the side. And they were still shooting. And for some reason, I don't know what gave me the sense to do it, but I fell on the, I laid on the floor, on the track, and I just crawled out the back of the track. So, I had the track in front of me. And I hit the ground and I rolled over, and, you know, how on the side of a dirt road there's always a depression? I just laid in that depression and while the fire was going on above my head, and I must have laid there about ten, fifteen minutes, and the firing slowed down, and I started looking around and I didn't see anybody. Nobody. So, then I looked back, and I decided there was nothing moving and I thought, "I better get back," see if I could get back. So, I got up and I ran. And the way we were taught under fire was to run a few paces and hit the ground. And get up, run, hit the ground. And I did that 'til I got back up over the crest of the hill. And I got up over the crest of the hill, I looked down and I see the rest of my company are all digging in. They're

digging in. And they looked up, looked up at me, and they thought, you know, I was gone. They thought I had been killed. But I got back. And that was an experience that I'll never forget.

SH: Were you the only one to survive?

JS: Well, there was another one that came by later. I'd started digging in with the rest of them at that time. I don't know what happened to this one other fellow who I was very friendly with was from Mississippi. And, it was shortly after I got back and I was digging, a medic was leading him back. And he had, I could see, he had shrapnel right through, you know, abdomen area. And a couple of fingers were shot off. And at that time, you know, one of the things that we really wanted, or felt that we needed, was cigarettes. And, believe it or not, he came up to me with the medic there and he says, "Here, I won't be needing this anymore," and hands me his cigarettes. I'll never forget that either.

JC: The lieutenant who was killed, was he the same officer who had taken a liking to you back in training camp?

JS: Yes, right. Right. Evidently, it was kind of a, well, we won't go into that. We shouldn't have been attacking at that point, in that area because the casualties that we received there were very high. We must have lost thirty percent of the company right there.

JC: Were you one of the first units to attack the Siegfried Line?

JS: Yes. If we weren't the first, we were one of the first. They called that the Siegfried Switch Line, at that time. I don't know if it was just a section of it or what but I'll always remember that town.

JC: What was the town?

JS: Tetingen.

SH: How long were you dug in there?

JS: Oh, it was like a day or overnight I think that we went into the town. But the Germans had artillery that were railroad guns, they were tremendous guns, and they were sending this artillery bursts into the town. And they counterattacked. And we pulled back after awhile because of the losses. I was out in a foxhole with one other fella and I had to pull him out. But, you know, that's when, I sort of matured at that time.

SH: What was the weather like then?

JS: It was cold. It hadn't snowed yet. The snow wasn't there. But it was cold.

SH: Can you tell us now about how you progressed from there and what your orders were?

JS: Yes, well. We pulled back. I think we had been, like, thirty days or more on the front as lead. The division was divided into three combat commands, there was a Combat Command A, Combat Command B, and Combat Command R, Reserve. So, each combat command contained a battalion of infantry, a battalion of tanks, a battalion of self-propelled artillery, and then there were support groups, too. So, we were attacking there at that time and the battalion of course consists of companies so I don't know where exactly what happened but I know we were pulled back for a rest, supposedly, for a few days and someone else took our position. It was another company. And they pulled us back into this area where we were able to be in barracks, I don't know if they were old German barracks or what, for, we thought we were going to be there for a few days. And all of a sudden they come running through, five o'clock in the morning, and I said this before, and they said, "Let's go! Everybody up. We're leaving." So, we knew that something was happening. And we got out and we loaded up on the half-track. And we got in this column. And we started on the road. And we were going pretty fast. We were in this column of tanks and half-tracks and we were moving along. And as we rode, whenever we went past an intersection, there were big guns or other men, supplies, and they were all standing and looking at us, you know. In other words we had the green light to go all the way and that was this thing in that article [given to the interviewers along with the pre-interview survey] about the forced march, that was the seventeenth or the 16th of December 1944. The Battle of the Bulge. We were the first division that Patton sent up there to defend against the German attack. And Combat Command B, the one I just told you about, went to protect Bastogne, they went into Bastogne. I was in Combat Command A. And we were sent to protect the city of Luxembourg, which was in the same general area. The back of that book [the Division history] shows probably the area. So, we were strafed by German planes at that time. But then we set up, as we went up there, and that's when the Germans were stopped. We stopped them there. A few days after we went up there. The weather was bad and we couldn't get air support. But the weather cleared, I think it was about the 23rd of December, something like that, and the sky was just filled with American and English planes. They just came over and bombed and bombed.

SH: Were you glad to see them?

JS: [laughter] Sure. Yes.

JC: While this was all occurring, how aware were you and the others in your unit of the extent of the German advance?

JS: We weren't really that much aware of how far they got. We know, we knew that they had broken through because we were told, first of all, we were told that, you know, the Germans had units that were dressed in American uniforms, could speak English, and to be prepared, you know, to challenge any unit that came that you weren't aware was coming down the road or something.

JC: Did you?

JS: Yes. And what happened was that, I personally didn't run into this, but they had, they captured some that were coming over to infiltrate us Americans and then they would turn around and shoot them.

SH: Were you serving as a scout, as that lieutenant had recruited you for?

JS: Yes. Yes.

SH: Can you tell us about that?

JS: Well. After that, I, look, we got up to the Bulge, I was pulled back, I myself, to be with some of the fellas that were more in reserve. So, I didn't really get out there up front the way I was initially. But I was there and I experienced all of it. The scouting, I went on a couple of patrols and went out to see what was going on. And we went, later on we went through this town where we were surrounded by the Germans. It was like, similar to, Bastogne. It was a city called Crailsheim. This was much later in Germany. We had broken through behind the lines and we came into the town and we must have really surprised them because they were in the city of Heilbronn. We went into Crailsheim. And I went out on a patrol as, you know, a scout. And we came around a building, I just happened to be on the inside, I had a partner who was on the outside. We turned the corner and a machine gun opened up and got him and didn't hit me. Thing like that, you know. That happened a few times. But we got into that town. We had broken through their lines. We surrounded them in the back, we thought, but ended up that we were surrounded. In this city, Crailsheim, and they bombed, and that's the first time that we experienced, that we saw, jet planes. The Germans had jet planes at that time. They came up and all of a sudden they go 'shhhhhew.' A plane goes shooting by and they were shooting.

JC: What did it feel like?

JS: Not too good. [laughter]

JC: You never experienced jet planes before, right?

JS: No, no. Never did. And they, they were so fast that their advantage was that they could come up, their airfields were very close, and they had these jet planes, they were the first ones to develop the jet aircraft. And, I don't know how many they had or what, but we experienced it there and they were able to get up early in the morning at the break of light, daybreak, and come over and strafe and bomb us and get out of there before our planes could come. And they did that in the evening the same way. They'd come up at dusk, you know. But it's a good thing the war ended when it did. Because they had those jet planes.

SH: How long were you surrounded like that? When did you finally break out, or did they finally break in?

JS: That was, they actually broke in. We were surrounded there for a period. A combination: we broke out a little bit, but they broke in to get us, yes. That was about three days or something.

SH: Through all of this, how well supplied were you with food and clothing and ammunition?

JS: At this time, we were, I don't think the supplies were that much of a problem. They had caught up to it. And because of the Red Ball Express or some other way they were supplying us, you know.

SH: But through this winter, one of the worst in history, how were you able to keep warm? We've heard about trench foot and things like that.

JS: I had trench foot. But you, it's amazing what the human body can stand really. And you can adapt, we adapted to the cold. What we, what we would do is try to find some place either right after, you know the combat wasn't a continuous thing, so we'd find a place where, like a barn or house, where you could go in and maybe warm up a little bit.

SH: Did you have any interaction with the German people as you went through, or were they pretty well evacuated?

JS: Yes, they were pretty well evacuated. They left pretty much, but there were a few occasions. I remember one where we went into, this was about the time that I was telling you about previously where we went into that town by the Siegfried Line. And we went into this house, we took over the house. There were some Germans in there, you know. I had my rifle. And I saw that one was a German soldier. A woman was there I believe. I don't even remember. But I do remember one of the first things I said, was I looked at them and I said, "*Ich bin ein Jude.*" That's what I said.

SH: How did they react?

JS: They didn't say anything.

SH: How much German were you able to speak and understand?

JS: Well, I didn't speak that much German, but I picked it up a little bit.

JC: When you mentioned earlier about being surrounded in the German city, was that in early 1945?

JS: That was, actually, that was late, as far as the war was concerned. That was like a month before the war ended. That was April '45.

JC: So, then what happened between the battle for the city and the Battle of the Bulge?

JS: Well, there was this experience, remember I told you about the tanks with the sandbags. Then after that we went through the Rhineland and we crossed the Rhine. And we didn't meet that much opposition, really, because the Germans were, their defenses were pretty much broken and we really went through pretty quickly. But we went to the Seventh Army, instead of Patton we were transferred because we were going in that direction, we were going south, and we ended up, that's why we were going toward Nuremberg. Nuremberg was the seat of the Nazis. And we were going towards that and the town that we were in, the Germans were defending

Heilbronn, which was a town on the Neckar River and we broke through, went around the back and that's when we got surrounded cause we went like twenty miles behind the lines into German territory and then they surrounded us. But that was April '45, I think, when that happened.

SH: So, there was still strong resistance at that point then?

JS: Yes.

SH: Did you go past the Danube?

JS: We didn't get, the Danube?

SH: Did you, you didn't ...

JS: No, we went over the Rhine, we crossed the Rhine. See, the end of March, we crossed the Rhine on a pontoon bridge, I remember that. But at that time, the Ninth Armored found a, Ninth Armored Division, found a bridge that was still intact. I think it was Remagen. And they captured it, so it made crossing the Rhine easier. But, there wasn't too much opposition, so we started going south because the Germans, the idea was that the SS troops were going to fight the last battles in the Alps. And that's where we were heading, to the Bavarian Alps. And that's where we ended up.

JC: At about the same time, in April 1945, FDR died. Do you recall hearing about that?

JS: Yes. Yes.

JC: Where were you when you heard about it?

JS: We were deep into Germany. I think we might have been pulled back for a little rest at that time, but we were going deep into Germany.

JC: Was a general announcement made of FDR's death or did you hear it on the radio?

JS: I don't even remember. I think maybe we heard it by radio. But they certainly sent an announcement out about it, I know.

SH: Well, when you were heading south were you heading towards Nuremberg or had you gone through Nuremberg?

JS: We were actually, we didn't go through Nuremberg. But this was, I wonder if this shows anything [looks through Division history]. There was a map or something on it, I don't know if it was in the back of that book. Yes, there it is. Of course there's nothing that I mentioned in there. [laughter]

SH: Tell us about going into the Alps then. You did get pretty far down there?

JS: Yes, we did.

SH: Were there a lot of SS troops there waiting for you?

JS: There was a battle. Actually, we went down, we were again the point, going down this one road that went down into Garmisch. It went past the town, what's it called, it's where they had the passion play every year. You know where I mean? I can't think of the name of it. Oberammergau! And we went through that town, we took it. You know, they were up in the sides of the mountains on the sides, we went through and they were firing down. And, but we went through there. We took some, a lot of prisoners there because they were coming out, some of them gave up. They knew that it was hopeless. These were the storm troopers, too. But the last day, the last day of combat that we were, you know, actually fighting, we had five men that were killed.

JC: Where was that at?

JS: That was between Oberammergau and Garmisch. This was all on a road right into the heart of the Bavarian Alps.

SH: Did you then become part of the occupation forces?

JS: Yes.

SH: In Garmisch?

JS: Well, the headquarters was in Garmisch. But we went, the Sixty-First Battalion went to the next town, which was a smaller town which was called Mittenwald. And Mittenwald, there was a beautiful town, really, in the Alps. It's like, you know, in a valley. And there was a German officers' barracks that was there, so we took over the barracks and that's where we were billeted after the war. So, we were there, we occupied there for about, I was there from May 'til June or July, I think, maybe the beginning of August [1945].

JC: How did the German citizenry treat you?

JS: The German civilians?

JC: Yes.

JS: First of all, there was a, we were not supposed to communicate with them. There was supposed to be a non-fraternization law. We weren't supposed to be allowed to speak. But we spoke to them. [laughter] We fraternized. Of course, none of them knew anything about what was going on with Germany, you know. That's what they said. That's the story we got. [laughter]

JC: What were your duties?

JS: There?

JC: Yes.

JS: We, again, were just doing the usual thing that we would do back in the States. That's what we would do. We had more free time for sports and other activities, too. But the thing is that, supposedly, the story that I have heard since, was that in Garmisch, which actually ended up as a rest area, and R&R place for the Army, was most of the families of the top German officers or whoever in Germany, those families were down there, they had sent them down to get away from the fighting. Because there wasn't any big fight put up when we went into Garmisch, see. The war ended on May eighth and we went in there, I think it was, maybe the first, something like that, so there was no opposition really at that time.

SH: Did you get up to Berchesgarten?

JS: I didn't go, no. It was close. Went into Munich once, 'cause that wasn't that far.

JC: What was that like?

JS: There was never too much about it. Just that we went. It was a city, you know. I wonder if I should make a phone call.

SH: Okay, we can stop the tape.

[tape paused]

SH: We just paused for a phone call. So, you were telling us about the occupation in Garmisch.

JS: Well, actually during the occupation, we had, we were able to enjoy ourselves a little bit besides, you know, the duties which weren't too involved at that time. What we did was have sports activities, plus we also had entertainment from the USO. They sent shows over and I remember Jack Benny came to entertain in Garmisch. They had a big theater and we went to it.

SH: Was that your first exposure to the USO since you'd been in Europe?

JS: Well, as far as shows or anything like that, yes, because they wouldn't come up to where we were. [laughter] In fact, you know, that's another thing that most people don't realize, is that photography of the actual warfare and what happened, they just weren't around. There were no photographers that were there when these things happened, you know. Occasionally, you'll see something like these pictures that are in here [the Division history] but I never saw a photographer where I was, I'll tell you that. [laughter]

SH: Did you ever see any journalists?

JS: Well, no. There was one famous newspaper man, you probably know the name, Ernie Pyle. But he wasn't in our area. No. He was in, I don't know if he was in the Pacific or Italy, maybe.

SH: That's another question I'd like to ask. The war has ended for you, and you're in Garmisch in the Alps, what were you hearing about the war in the Pacific?

JS: Well, that's another thing. I said we were there, I was there, I think, 'til the end of July or the beginning of August [1945]. And they decided that the war was going to continue in Japan and that the country decided that they were going to form seventeen divisions from Europe and send them to Japan. So, it all depended upon how many points you had. And also, upon the age and so forth. At that time, you needed, when the war ended in Europe, you needed eight-five points in order to be discharged from the service. And I had something like sixty-five. [laughter] So, the what happened was, they actually broke up the division, the Tenth Armored, so they took some men, you notice I have two patches on that uniform [points to his uniform hanging on the coat rack], and the one on this side [right side] ...

SH: The one with an eagle?

JS: Right. That's the patch for the Forty-Fifth Infantry Division. And the Forty-Fifth Infantry Division was a famous division that fought through Italy and up into France and evidently it was chosen as one of the divisions to go to the Pacific. And they took a certain number of men, myself included, and shipped us up to the Forty-Fifth Infantry Division, which at that time was in, getting ready to leave France and maybe go the Pacific. So, we ended up in Rheims, France, which was a staging area. And while we were there, it was a few weeks, while we were there they dropped the first atom bomb. All right? So, followed, within a week, I think it was, by the second atom bomb. And this changed all the plans. So, we were in an area where the way they staged things, the way the Army did things, that they were preparing to send us aboard ship to go someplace. So, actually, I was fortunate because they brought me back to the States earlier because they shipped us over to, where the heck did we leave from, we left from, oh, Le Havre, France. So, and we came back to the States and we were actually pretty early coming back after the war. So, I got back, we landed in Boston, Camp Miles Standish, was the port of embarkation. And we were there a short time and then we got a thirty-day furlough and because of the number of points I had I was designated to go to the Pacific, still. After the thirty days, I had to report to Texas. I got on the train, went all the way down to Texas. Camp Fanning, Texas, it was. I think it was near Austin. And I got there and I wasn't there more than a few days and they called me in and they said, "Well, guess what? You have enough points to be discharged." So, that's where I was discharged from, Camp Fanning. That's the way the Army did things. I don't know why they sent me all the way down there, when I could have been discharged here in Fort Dix. [laughter] So, I had a train ride back.

JC: Did you ever give any consideration to staying in the Army as a career?

JS: Not really, but I had some second thoughts when I got out of dental school. You know why?

JC: Why is that?

JS: Well, this doesn't really apply to this, but the war started, the Korean war started, okay, while I was in dental school. And the Navy sent an Admiral to the dental school to try to get some of the dentists to enlist in the Navy. You know, naval officers as dentists. And it was the first class of all veterans at the dental school, and, you know, this didn't go over too good with most of them. But, there were I think two of them that were officers and went in as a flier or captain in the Air Force and one of the other fellows that did it, took a jump on it and went into the service. And of course the time that they were in the service counted as time served. I'm talking about during World War II. So, that they ended up I think maybe fifteen years later retiring after twenty years in the service. Yes. And I thought about that afterwards. [laughter]

JC: I have a couple quick questions, if we could go back to Europe? When you were showing us all of your medals earlier, you showed us the Bronze Star. What were you awarded that for?

JS: I was awarded that by the, this was a general order that came about after the war, a number of years after, that anybody who was involved as a combat infantryman was awarded a Bronze Star for their service to the country. So, it wasn't for any specific point or thing that I did, personally. It was for serving there for that period of time when all this went on. Don't forget, there were thousands of men over there.

JC: The other question I had was about the Holocaust. I know there were at least a couple of concentration camps located in Bavaria. During the war and afterwards during occupation, how aware were you and others in your unit about what had been going on in the camps?

JS: Well, we heard about it while we still there. During the war we weren't really aware of that much about it, we really weren't. Because we were involved in thinking about how to save our own skins, really. But, actually, that wasn't really well-known. Maybe it was well-known to the higher ups in the country, but I don't think it was common knowledge, that what was actually happening. But then, when we got into Bavaria, as you said, there were units that were part, that were close to us, that went into Dachau and others. And when we were in this town of Mittenwald after, you know, when we were occupying, one day all of a sudden the streets were filled with inmates from these concentration camps. They had, you know, the stripe thing on and they had been set free, they were on a train, and they came through there. And, you know, I saw them and spoke to them, and spoke to one of them. And this is really something that, I think it was a year or two ago, there was an article in the *Home News Tribune*, and on the front page, it must have been like the fiftieth anniversary, a few years ago, of the end of the war. There was a fella whose a merchant in Highland Park who was an inmate at that time in Germany and he remembers being on the street and he remembered the unit that was there. And it was in the article. Well, I called him up and I went over to meet him and he introduced me to people as his savior. I'm the one that saved him, yes. And he, it's amazing really, and what a small world, when I saw that. Because, when I read the article, he said in Mittenwald, and I remember specifically that happened. Small world, really. His daughter is an obstetrician-gynecologist practicing in East Brunswick.

SH: Do you have any other questions relating to Europe?

JC: No. That was about it.

SH: After you were discharged from the Army, what were your thoughts then? Were you meeting other veterans at this point who had been in the Pacific?

JS: No. I think I mentioned previously the one officer.

SH: I just wondered if you'd had a chance to talk with anyone else while you were in uniform comparing your enemies or your battles. When you were coming back to New Jersey from Texas, what had you decided you were going to do, knowing you were getting out?

JS: That's a funny story. Well, it's not funny, but it's a story. [laughter] I had, you know, the Army was a place where you followed orders. You were told to do something by someone and you had to do it. And today people don't, young people don't understand that, you know, they don't understand how you could be involved or go through combat because of the fear that you might get killed or something. But the threat of what would happen to you was always held over you if you didn't follow those orders. This was repeated, repeatedly shown to you on movies. They would get you together in a, you know, theater or something in a camp or something. Talk about being AWOL or deserting, things like that. That, especially in combat, you were subject to being really, they could shoot you, really, if they wanted to. I don't know if it actually ever happened but that was the threat. So, that was part of it. The other thing was, the other thing was that at one time I had the opportunity shortly after that one experience I told you about, I was asked by one of the officers if I wanted, you know, to go back, you know, like to a rear echelon outfit or, you know, go back to the States or something. And, you know, I had a sense of duty. That's what it was, a sense of duty. And even though I was offered that opportunity I said, "No, I'm going to stay here with the men that I know."

SH: Did you see any evidence of battle fatigue or ...

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

JS: I knew one guy who sort of lost control, you know. Broke down. He was shipped back. I don't know whatever happened to him. Either one of them, it happened twice, you know. And I was very close, I'll tell you that.

SH: What kind of medical care was available for you?

JS: Well, they had men who were in the medical group. They had a medical company, I believe, that the men would be attached to, they'd have one or two men attached to a company I think. I don't know exactly how it worked. But there was a medical detachment. But speaking of that, and going back to that one occasion that I told you about where I was involved where the three tanks were hit, well, the men in the three tanks were calling back for help. And nobody responded. Because they didn't know what was up there, they were afraid to go themselves. That's reality. That's what actually happened. They never made it, those guys.

SH: How quickly did you receive mail and how often did you get mail?

JS: The mail came periodically, I would say, every few days. I probably shouldn't have said that.

SH: What? I'll pause the tape.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: What was going on with your family back on the home front?

JS: Well, my parents were, I think, they were just involved by the fact that their sons were in the service. And they were continually mailing, you know, we were receiving mail from them all the time. And this went for other relatives, too. They would send mail.

SH: Now, was your father still working for the insurance company?

JS: Yes.

SH: Or had he gotten involved in any of the war production?

JS: No. No.

SH: Did you mom or sisters help wrap bandages or anything like that?

JS: Not that I know of. They might have gone to the USO, you know, they might have done that because my sister met her husband, he was, he had been in the invasion in Africa, so he was older. He was, that's a long story. He had gone to medical school in Scotland. He went to Edinburgh. And the reason he went there, we'll get back to this business of quotas in medical school, did you ever hear of that? Well, evidently it applied as far as Jewish kids were. So, he was, you know, a pretty good student. He went to the University of Penn, Pennsylvania. And then he wanted to go to med school. Couldn't get in to any med schools, so he ended up going to Scotland where he was. And he had three years in Scotland in medical school and war broke out. So, he came back to the States and he went into the Army. But he was like in the Medical Corps. But he was almost a doctor already. He was a sergeant or something. He went through Africa and then to Italy. And then he came home. He came home early. And when he came home he married my sister while I was overseas.

SH: Did you come back from Europe before your brother did?

JS: You know, that's a good question. I don't even remember. Was he back? I must, I don't remember, he might have come back before I did, he might have, yes.

JC: When you came back, after you were discharged, you said it was not an automatic decision to come back to Rutgers to continue with your schooling?

JS: Oh, it was. It was an automatic decision as far as I was concerned. [laughter] Because, number one, the government, it was one of the best things the government ever did, was they had

this Public Law 16, I think it was called, which said that any veteran who served in the war could go to college and the expense would be paid by the government. So, I was from a family that didn't have too much, you know, as far as means, so this meant a lot to me. And my brother, that's how my brother went back. He came back to Rutgers.

JC: When you came back, did you continue with your engineering major?

JS: No, I switched to biological science. This goes back to a question that, I don't know if Sandra or you asked, about how did I, something about why I chose the career that I did. And I stated that in the Army all you do is get orders to do things, so I didn't think that if I went to work for a big company that I'd have much chance for advancement for a number of reasons. So, I said, gee, you know, the thing for me if I could be, do something where I would be my own boss, and what could I do? So, when I was in the ASTP, they were considering sending me to medical school. So, I thought either medical or dental school. And then when I heard about my brother-in, who was my brother-in-law at that time, about what he went through, I thought, well, maybe it's better if I go into dentistry. And so I came back to Rutgers and I took, switched from engineering to biological science. And it was amazing what that Army experience did for me because I think I had just about all "As" after. [laughter]

JC: When you returned to Rutgers, there were a lot of other veterans but there were also a lot of younger students. How did the two interact, if at all?

JS: I wasn't aware of it, really. In fact, there were so many veterans coming back, at that time, I don't know. I don't think there was too much friction. Everybody melted in.

SH: So, it was in January of '47 then that you went back to school here at Rutgers?

JS: No, I came back to Rutgers, I think it was '46.

SH: And you were here in the fall of '46?

JS: Yes, I think so. 'Cause I was discharged, what was it, late '45 or early '46?

SH: I think it was late '45.

JS: Yes, November '45. But it wasn't, you know I can't recall really the exact time, but I know it wasn't long before I was back at Rutgers and I was back home. And then, I had credits for the first two years and then I took, switched to biological science. Which I was pretty good at. And after a couple of years, I was still a few courses short of getting a degree because I had switched majors, and at that time you could get into dental schools without having a degree. I don't even know if today that still applies. If you had two or three years pre-med or pre-dent, and you followed their qualifications, you could go, so at that time I did it well. I would apply to a couple schools. New Jersey didn't have a dental school at that time. It had to be a school in, approximately nearby, you know, so I would say New York or Pennsylvania. So, a lot of the men went to either Temple, the University of Pennsylvania had a dental school, and in New York it was Columbia and NYU. So, I applied to Columbia and I was very fortunate because I think

there must have been a thousand applicants and they accepted thirty. And that class finally graduated twenty-four out of the thirty.

SH: Back here at Rutgers, Joe had asked you about whether there was two different groups, younger students and veterans, and you said they were pretty integrated. Did you at that point, after changing majors, have a lot of other veterans in your classes who had done just what you had done? Switch majors?

JS: There was some that actually, I don't know, you know, how many or, but I know there were some that did that.

SH: Did you have a professor then who became your mentor here at Rutgers?

JS: I can remember, I can't even remember his name, but there was a chemistry professor that I liked, I know. I can't say anybody in particular. They were all very nice, really. I always had very good experience here at Rutgers, really.

SH: Did you get involved more in any of the activities when you came back after the war?

JS: Not really. Because I was involved too much in, I wanted to get good grades, and I had changed, I said, chronological age when I was nineteen I was more like fifteen really. And then when I was out and I was twenty-one I was more like twenty-five, twenty-six. I think I matured more. The service did that.

SH: What were some of your first jobs when you came back? Did you work during the summers then again or did you go to school straight through?

JS: You know, when I was, I think I went to school straight through, I'm not sure. I'm trying to remember. I know I worked downtown New Brunswick on George Street. I worked in a, since before the war I had had some work at that Bond's factory, remember I told you? I worked in a, there was a store in New Brunswick called Wolfson's that was a men's store. I worked there as a salesman part-time. I did that. I even worked in a drug store, I think, part-time. There was a drug store there on Main Street or George Street. Sunway? But, yes, I did that, and then when I went to, well, that's Columbia.

SH: How different was the environment from Rutgers?

JS: At Columbia? Well, I commuted for two years.

JC: Commuted? From New Brunswick?

JS: Yup. I used to get a train early in the morning, seven forty-five, maybe it was earlier. Get into Penn Station, take the A train [laughter], something like that up to the P and S, Columbia Presbyterian Center. And that's where the dental school was, with the medical school. And I'd walk into the classroom five minutes to nine. Yes, so I did that for two years, yes, the first two

years, and then I, actually, I shared an apartment with one of my classmates down in the poor rent district. Chelsea. Yes, we had an apartment.

SH: So, you graduated from Columbia dental school in 1950?

JS: '51.

SH: '51?

JS: Right. Cause I started there in '47.

SH: Well, that's the year that your brother graduated from Rutgers.

JS: Right.

SH: What did he get his degree in?

JS: It must have been business, I think, or economics. One or the other, I'm not exactly sure.

SH: So, [after graduating from Columbia] did you set up practice right away?

JS: Actually, while I was in Columbia one of the instructors sort of approached me to go into practice with him. Which I didn't do, and I should have. Cause he ended up, you know, he had a big practice up in New York City. And I came back, and, well, I took a dental internship at Monmouth Memorial Hospital. It was long. And I was there for six months. Then I opened up my own practice in Spotswood, right? Then I practiced there for over thirty years, thirty-three years. And I was the school dentist for the public school and the parochial school.

SH: Well, before we continue with that, I have one question: where and when did you meet Mrs. Selinger?

JS: I met her originally at a dance, and I said I'd call. This was in New Brunswick. After the war. And then I was involved with dental school and I got so involved, you know, I didn't even make any calls. And then, believe it or not, I went to a Rutgers football game and who did I see there but Mrs. Selinger. [laughter] Then I called. We started dating.

JC: When were you married?

JS: 1952.

JC: Do you have any children?

JS: One girl. Two grandchildren. And the daughter is a very, we're proud of her. She's, you familiar with NJN? New Jersey Network? She's a production executive there. Yes, she had been a, she did documentaries. She was a journalism major originally. I'm sorry to say she went, I shouldn't say that. [laughter] She went to Penn State. [laughter] That's where she got

her journalism degree. But then she got her masters at Rutgers in Newark. But she's a smart girl. Yes.

SH: When you had your practice in Spotswood did you have anyone work with you?

JS: Solo practice. Those days are gone forever. But I had one assistant. One in particular was with me for about twenty years. At one point, it seemed that dentistry was, well, becoming more of a business than a profession, as far as I was concerned.

JC: How so?

JS: Well, men got involved in group practices instead. You don't find many solo practitioners because today I don't think they can really hack it because it's very difficult for them. So, the opportunity arose for me to get involved as a dental consultant.

SH: What were you a dental consultant to?

JS: I worked for a dental insurance company. I still do. I work three days a week. Delta Dental of New Jersey, have you heard of it?

JC: Sure. What do you do as a consultant?

JS: Well, I review claims that dentists submit for treatment and I, they usually submit, they have to submit x-rays or narratives to explain their treatment. And we, I, my job is to, you know, review the claims to see if it's one that we would allow.

JC: Did you do similar work when you were a consultant with the Bureau of Dental Services?

JS: Yes. Right. In fact, that's where I, when I was with the Bureau of Dental Services I did that and I was still maintaining a practice. So, the practice I had two nights a week and Saturdays, so, 'cause it was a five day a week job with the Bureau of Dental Services.

SH: What was the Bureau of Dental Services?

JS: That's the program for the Department of Human Services in Trenton. And what it is, actually, is a group of dentists who review, they do the same sort of thing, review claims and things that are submitted by dentists who are doing work for the Medicaid program. So, it involves, you know, poorer people, and seeing that they get the proper health care.

SH: So, you're not specifically giving the care, just reviewing the care given them?

JS: Right and checking to see if they're doing the proper care. I used to go out and exam patients just to double-check, things like that. Went to offices and check them.

SH: Did you ever think about teaching?

JS: I think I would have been a good teacher, really. That's what my daughter says. And I can still do it today, and actually what happens is, in my position now as a consultant when they hire new consultants I'm usually the one who shows them how, you know, we review the claims and how to do it.

JC: Before we began taping, you showed us an article about a meeting of a veterans' group. Are you involved in any such groups?

JS: Well, I'm a member, but I don't really get involved. I pay dues. That's what it amounts to. The VFW, Veterans of Foreign Wars, I'm a member. And the JWV, Jewish War Veterans. But, I think I went to one meeting since the end of the war.

SH: Did you join right after the war?

JS: Yes.

JC: Both groups?

JS: Yup. No, actually, the Veterans of Foreign Wars was, a president of the chapter was one of my patients and he came in and started to push me to join and I said, "Okay, I'll join."

JC: You had mentioned previously that you hadn't joined your division's association until recently?

JS: Yes, about fifteen years ago. Actually, it was while I was with the state, the Bureau of Dental Services. What happened was, again, the VFW magazine, they send out a magazine every, periodically, I think it's monthly. And they list in there reunions of different divisions' associations or subgroups that were in the Army together. And I got this one edition and I looked through there and I see, Tenth Armored Division Association, and I said, Wait a minute, how come I don't know about that?" So, it said that they were going to have a meeting on, you know, at Washington DC, the hotel there, so forth and so on. Contact this person if interested. So, I contacted this person 'cause I was interested. I ended up, the first reunion we went to was in Washington, DC. And it was done very well. They had a unit from the Army camp, came right into the hotel because they have, what they do is they meet every Labor Day, this organization. Labor Day weekend. I don't know why they picked it but they've done that for years. They started it, I don't know, maybe shortly after the war. And they meet different places in the country. They decide each year where it's going to be. And when it was in Washington, they had this unit come in, they marched in and played taps and all this, because what they do is, every year they have a dinner, a dinner-dance on the last night and they have a memorial service for each unit. They light a candle. It's very ...

SH: It must be very moving.

JS: It is. It is. It is.

JC: I have a question that is of the 'what if' category. How do you think your life would have been different had you not served in the military?

JS: Good question. I think I might have been a different person, I don't know. I think it shaped the type of individual I was.

JC: How so?

JS: Well, I became, through the experiences that I went through, I am a person who really tries to understand everybody else's feelings and care for them in some way or the other and, you know, not be harsh about anything. And that's the way I am.

JC: How did you learn about the oral history project?

JS: I read about it in the alumni magazine. Was that last year you had that big article in there? And, I was told by a few of my friends that I should do it because of these experiences that I had. So, they moved me to do it. [laughter] I was a little reluctant, I have to tell you. As of now, it's very nice.

SH: We thank you for bringing your uniform and all your medals to show us and share with us. And the Tenth Armored Division yearbook. If there are no other questions, I thank you very, very much for taking part in the oral history project.

JS: Thank you.

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