RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH PHILIP SHAAK

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY
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Nicholas Molnar: This begins an interview with Philip Shaak in Brielle, New Jersey on July 21, 2011 with Philip Shaak, Shaun Illingworth, and Nicholas Molnar. Thank you for having us, Professor Shaak.

Philip Shaak: … A correction, rather than Shaak, [Sha-ck] it's Shaak [Shawk]. Walk, talk, Shaak. … That is a battle we've been waging for decades. [laughter] In fact, up in Kearny it was Shaak [Sha-ck]. … My father and grandfather had a pharmacy, it was Shaak's Pharmacy but when we moved to the shore, we wanted to maintain Shaak [Shawk]. It's Pennsylvania Dutch background. … I keep saying to folks, "Walk, talk, Shaak." It's that simple. …

NM: Could you tell us when and where you were born?

PS: Yes, I was born in Kearny, New Jersey at the West Hudson Hospital in … May 31st, 1926. My folks lived in the Arlington section of Kearny at that point at 28 Elizabeth Avenue, the old homestead is still there. … My dad had … built a cottage down here in Manasquan just for summer use. … We came down here and then in … 1932 there was a polio epidemic, particularly in North Jersey, and my dad suggested … the family stay down here in Manasquan and not move back to the city until maybe the colder temperatures [came]. So although I had been in first grade up in Kearny, I came down here and started second grade in Manasquan Elementary School and we didn't want to move back to the city. We just thoroughly enjoyed it down here and Manasquan was then a small country town. I mean, maybe the population was 2500 or something like that. … We thoroughly enjoyed it, so that winter we stayed in what was ostensibly the summer cottage, and then the next year moved into the downtown area of Manasquan.

NM: I wanted to learn a little about your family's history. Can you tell us a little bit about your father's background?

PS: Sure, my father's background, my father's family was in Lebanon, Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania Dutch Country, and my grandfather moved from Lebanon. This must have been a big break in the family because he went to the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, graduated from there, and then moved to Newark and I remember he worked for a physician in Newark for a few years and then married. Well, he was in Newark or Kearny, I'm trying to think of when that marriage was--1895 or so, I would guess. …

NM: Did your father ever talk about growing up in Pennsylvania Dutch Country?

PS: No, he was born in Kearny in 1896, … but he would visit occasionally, go back to Lebanon and had a couple of uncles back there, and he visited them, and they had a campsite somewhere in that area, and he had very fond memories of going to that campsite and enjoying that. But ultimately, he went to Kearny High School as did my mother, and then he went to Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, and was about to graduate. It must have been about 1914 or '15, he was a senior and he and a couple of friends went to the US Army recruiting office and wanted to enlist in World War I. … They said, "No, graduate from college and then come back and see us." Which he did, so he was in World War I, in the Army infantry, yes. He drove an ambulance, I remember hearing that.

NM: Could you tell us a little about his service?

PS: I know he drove a motorcycle in the Army, and drove an ambulance. He didn't speak about a lot of detail. I remember my dad telling me he had an airplane ride, and those were the days when airplanes were pretty fragile.

NM: Oh, yes.

PS: I think he had a ride with a rather daredevil pilot and that was the one and only time my father flew in an airplane. I think it scared the day lights out of him. I think, I recall him saying, they flew under a bridge in France. So, that cooled it for airplanes as far as my dad was concerned. … Then after--I'll shift over to my mother's side in a minute or so--when my dad finished Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, he and his father established Shaak's Pharmacy. This must have been around 1922 or something like that. … The big deal was that they were going to be in a partnership, and had the pharmacy, and everything was going to be excellent. In fact, my grandfather had several pieces of property in Kearny, I guess he had been quite successful as a pharmacist, and one building was a three story building and my grandfather's view was, "Well, John's family can live on the third floor in an apartment." My mother said, "In no way are we living in Kearny in the third floor apartment over the store." So, she was a strong advocate for moving to Manasquan. …

NM: Your mother's background, are they from Pennsylvania as well or do they have a different background?

PS: On my mother's side, her family, her father, lived in Arlington and in fact, her grandfather, Grandpa Shepherd was in the Civil War. … He lived at that address at 28 Elizabeth Avenue, I think he was eighty-eight years of age when he died. But I had a brother and sister two and four years old, older than I, and there was a photograph of my great grandfather with my sister when she was maybe three years of age so, that had to be around 1924, '25, I think. … My grandfather was an oil salesman, he travelled around the northeastern part of the country selling oil. I don't know whether it's apocryphal or what, but he was in one shop one day and ostensibly, Henry Ford came through with some hair-brained idea about a horseless carriage, and everybody thought that was kind of crazy. … Then, after selling oil for some time, my grandfather ultimately--his name was Charles Ezra Shepherd, by the way--he opened a gas station in Kearny and operated that for some time. I can remember, it's interesting how things come back. I was a little boy, I went down to my grandfather's gas station and a customer came in, and I was quote, "taking care of him," and the man got some gas, and then drove off. … My grandfather said, "Didn't he pay you?" Well, I never thought about that. But apparently, my grandfather knew the man, so ultimately that deal was resolved. But again, I was only four or five years of age. Now, my mother had four sisters and her mother died at an early age. One of my mother's four sisters was with the Felt and Tarrant Company. They made comptometers, which were the forerunners really of computers, advanced at the time, calculating machines. … Those machines were used to do business payrolls and income tax. At the end of the year, there's a high demand for comptometer operators. … My mother worked for JC Penney for a while as a comptometer operator. She may have also have worked for JP Morgan, I'm not sure of that, but when we

moved down here, that ended the comptometer career at that time. … My mother was fully engaged down here. … [Editor's Note: The comptometer was invented in 1887. It is one of the earliest mass-produced machines that computed numbers.]

NM: Do you have any recollections of the area as a young child?

PS: A lot of farm land in the area. With respect to the beach area, I can recall being with my dad walking down Manasquan beach. … At low tide people walked from Manasquan beach, across the sand bar, to Point Pleasant. The rock jetties had not been put in at that point. It was just a very few summer cottages right up on the beach. I happen to recall, my first day in grammar school, second grade, in Manasquan elementary school, because my mother was standing near the back of the room, and my mother pointed to a little red headed boy, and she said, "Now, you know him, he's the little Herbert boy." Well, it turned out to be … George Arthur Herbert, and they were neighbors down at Manasquan beach. They lived only about a half a block away from us. … As I grew up it turned out that the Herbert family was extremely influential in my growing up and my background. Art Herbert and I became fast friends, and he died last year. He had lived in Florida for some time, and although we were separated geographically, we were never separated emotionally. He had an older brother, Carl Herbert and they had an older sister, Peg Herbert, yes. They lived at 70 Ocean Avenue, that house is still there. I have so many fond memories of that. It would fill a book.

NM: You mentioned the family pharmacy. Where was that located?

PS: 49 Kearny Avenue.

NM: Did your father commute to work from the Southern New Jersey?

PS: Oh yes, he did. That was quite a story. In the late, maybe mid '30s, late '30s, my grandfather--his father--had a heart attack. It was a hot May day and "bam," he was out clipping a hedge, and "bam" he went over. … That meant my father was left with the mortgage for the store. At that point, of course, the economy had gone in the tank with the Great Depression and so my father had this mortgage to handle, and [had to] keep the business going, and his mother had a strong emotional attachment to Shaak's Pharmacy, and my dad just could not bring himself to close the pharmacy and move down here. … He kept the pharmacy going until … maybe the 1950s, but you asked about commuting. Yes, he commuted, either by car, but then during the war by train because gas was so short. … His pattern was … he'd leave Monday morning, the store was closed on Sunday, he'd leave Monday morning at ten of eight in the morning, and if he got the early train back to Manasquan from Newark, he would arrive at 11:20 at night on the Jersey Central Railroad train. If he missed that, it was the 12:30 Penn train, got him into Manasquan. … The next morning he turned around at ten of eight in the morning, go back up … to the store and it was six days a week. For a while, some years, he would stay overnight at his mother's one night a week, maybe Wednesday night … to break the pattern a little bit, but it was just a horrendous work pattern, you know, six days a week you figure. … We were then living at 40 Main Street in Manasquan, leave our house at 7:30 in the morning and come in at 11:30 at night, yes.

Shaun Illingworth: Can you describe the business a little bit for us because pharmacies then were little different than they are today.

PS: Oh, yes. It was, as I think about it now, a fairly small pharmacy, but that's a good question. In the back room, they had what they called the laboratory where they compounded prescriptions, and they had all sorts of powders and mixes and so on. I can still see the counter in the back room of the laboratory where my father would compound, put it in little capsules of various powders. He got a patent for "Shaak's Cold Capsules," for example, I remember seeing them fill those little capsules, and he sold them locally. Forty cents a dozen, and that was the price. … A lot of people swore by it. If you took one of those Shaak's Cold Capsules early enough, at the early symptoms of a cold, it would knock it out. So, he had a nice little business going that way. The pharmacy had--as you enter the pharmacy--let's see, on the left side, there was a marble counter, soda fountain there, small soda fountain. In fact, we still have two benches right here in the house from that soda fountain. There must have been three or four benches, but we just have two of the benches here, still in the house. Sold Dolly Madison Ice Cream and the ice cream came in rolls. Maybe it was a nickel, or maybe ten cents a roll, and you'd unroll that, and you'd have a little ball of ice cream, yes. Mahogany fixtures, when they set up the store, tile floor, yes, they did it well at that point, but again it was a small pharmacy and the economy was such, and that part of Kearny went down economically, so the market kind of evaporated in front of them.

NM: Did you visit this pharmacy a lot as a child? Did you go back to Kearny?

PS: Very occasionally, Christmas of course, we'd go up, and from time to time, maybe two, maybe three times a year, but not frequently, no. … My folks had family and friends up there, we'd go up, but we didn't have any great desire or motivation to go back to Kearny. …

NM: One of the reasons you came to Manasquan was because there was a polio epidemic.

PS: Polio.

NM: Were you aware of this as a child, that there was a health issue?

PS: Well, because again, it didn't have any impact on me frankly. All I wanted to do was to stay down the shore, near the beach. We were only three blocks from the ocean, and we're right, the house was built on a little crick. That house is still there by the way. … I remember, we'd go swimming in the crick, mud banks, it's all bulk headed now and upgraded of course but then it was natural, and we'd go swimming in the crick, and had all sorts of fun.

SI: At that time, what was the beach front like?

PS: Well, there were no sand dunes as there are today. I was down at the beach not long ago, and it had been a while since I had been right at the beach, and there were eight foot sand dunes all along Manasquan beach now. Well, here were no dunes then at all. … We had a few heavy storms, a hurricane now and then. Let's see, I think it was 1938 there was a hurricane and it came right onto the beach into some of those cottages and so on and a friend of my mother's,

after the hurricane had ostensibly passed, went down to look at the beach and all the devastation and so on. Well, a west wind had kicked in, and apparently another massive wave came in and washed this woman from the beach front back down to First Avenue, and she got a broken leg and some severe injuries, you know. Everybody thought it was safe, but it wasn't safe. That triggers another thought. Do you remember hearing about the *Morro Castle* disaster? … I can remember, at this point we lived on Broad Street, hearing about the *Morro Castle* disaster, that was a Saturday, it's funny how details register. I had had two donuts for breakfast and then ran down, it was one mile, I ran down to the beach to see what was going on, and there were clumps of people working over survivors, presumably. I remember an older woman saying, "Children shouldn't be seeing this," because the first aid squads were then very limited but they were doing whatever they could. There is a funeral home here on South Street, it was then the Lefferson Funeral Home, and I remember hearing that bodies from the *Morro Castle* were literally stacked in the garage of the Lefferson Funeral Home, yes.

SH: What were the conditions of the survivors that you saw?

PS: I only remember seeing one or two and just a clump of people around them, but beyond that I don't have any [recollection]. There were some survivors, I know that, yes.

SH: Did you walk to see the wreckage in Asbury Park?

PS: Yes, that was Saturday. Sunday, my dad drove us up to see the *Morro Castle* and it had come in just between a convention hall and a pier. The way the ocean brought it in, it didn't damage either, but there were still flames licking out of the hull of the *Morro Castle*. … People were just fascinated by the sight. … You can see the hull was severely charred, you know. [Editor's Note: In Asbury Park, New Jersey on September 8, 1934 the SS *Morro Castle*, a luxury liner, caught fire off the coast during a Nor'easter, resulting in 137 deaths].

NM: Can you tell us about your early school experiences? Did you have friends already in Manasquan?

PS: … I was quote "transplanted," that's a good word. I was never accepted as a Manasquan native, "you weren't born here." … However, that diminished over the years, and I'll go back to the Herbert family, they were just magnificent. … Our grammar school class I would say was maybe twenty people in that class. As an aside, the survivors of that class, and we were a regional high school at that point, so folks from Belmar, Spring Lake, Sea Girt, came to Manasquan High School, graduated in 1943. … Some of the survivors of the Manasquan High School class of 1943 still get together for breakfast once a month right over here at the Atlantis restaurant. A couple of us folks, we had breakfast there a couple weeks ago, I met in the second grade. … Yes, Mary Bird was one of them and another friend of mine who's quite ill in Manasquan now, Frank Applegate. So, there's still connections that go really pretty far back. Now, in terms of schools and at the school, we just had a very close, warm, friendly, environment in school as I remember it, yes. Give you another little episode, it was a very cold day, I was in third grade, and we were out for playground in the morning, and there's an outside staircase at that building, which is still standing and a pipe railing around the edge of the stairs so nobody would fall in. Well, as kids will, on a cold day, stuck my tongue out and put it on that

pipe railing. Well, I remember the bell ringing, end of recess, and I had to go in but my tongue was stuck so I pulled my tongue off and ended up back in the classroom. … I'll tell you it was very sore of tongue. … Oh, trivia, trivia.

SH: What were the facilities like in the schools there?

PS: … Wooden floor, wooden desks, a cloak room, ink wells. The teacher would come along with a big bottle of, not in second grade, this was probably fifth or sixth grade, a big bottle of ink and fill the ink wells and I guess we used a straight pen, yes, with a nib on it.

NM: Now in terms extracurricular activities, were you involved in any youth organizations such as the Boy Scouts?

PS: I was, yes, the HI-Y but that was more high school. Elementary school I don't remember distinct clubs. … I was in that building, in Manasquan elementary school until sixth grade, and then the new Manasquan High School opened on Broad Street, and for seventh and eighth grade, we were moved over to the new high school on the second floor in the … north part of the building on the second floor. Just before I leave Manasquan elementary school, another memory, around five o'clock in the afternoon, this was the Hindenburg disaster. I was on the front porch of our house on Union Avenue, diagonally across the street from the Catholic Church. That house is still there now. It's a physician's office. In any event, I was on the porch around five or six o'clock, and my sixth grade teacher and a friend of hers were driving down to Lakehurst to see the Hindenburg land. I had seen the Hindenburg that afternoon, flying over the beach area and it was really quite impressive but they knew it was landing in Lakehurst, so they were going to go down and see it. They almost stopped to pick me up to see the Hindenburg land, but they thought, "No, it's dinner time, we better not pick him up at dinner time." So, they went on by, but I almost saw the Hindenburg disaster. … High school, seventh and eighth grade in high school, HI-Y organization, very active, there were two gentleman from Sea Girt. Taylor Gregory did the Boy Scouts, and his brother George Gregory handled the HI-Y activity. … So, a lot of activities there. We met every week, precisely what we did frankly I don't recall, but I know it was a nice association. [Editor's Note: On May 6, 1937, the Nazi airship *Hindenburg* crashed in Lakehurst, New Jersey killing thirty-six people.]

NM: Were a lot of children from the area involved?

PS: Yes, there was quite a few of them. Folks were involved either in the Boy Scouts or the HI-Y. … I joined the Manasquan Presbyterian Church over here on South Street and my memories of that were not very happy. The minister in those early years, Harry Hopkins Hummel, he wore a winged collar, very formal attire, very stiff, no laughter in church. His wife would not permit any red in the church because it was too garish a color to have in a church. … Mrs. Hummel, not a relation, was the organist, and there was a beautiful organ in that church, but as a little kid, it used to terrify me when she'd go into the deep notes. That sound reverberated in the church. The first time I remember speaking in public was in that church and the sanctuary, there was a little Sunday school program of some kind, I stood up on the, by the pulpit there, and had all these people staring at me, I was petrified. …

NM: Was the church a large part of the community?

PS: Well, there were several churches in Manasquan. … They were elements of strength in the community--Methodist church, Baptist church, Catholic Church, of course, Presbyterian, and Lutheran. … I'd say, they were a force but not a strong force. … The Methodist church had a very effective minister and he was involved in many of the high school programs, and auditorium programs, and so on--very well-liked. At commencement exercises he would typically speak, his name almost came back to me. … The churches were an influence, but not a dominant influence I would say.

SI: Did Manasquan's population stay the same throughout the year or did it swell during the summer?

PS: Oh--good question. It swelled. I can't really quantify it, but I would say easily four or five times its winter population, and we were--in September--mighty happy to see the city people go back. [laughter]

SI: Did they call them "BENNY's" then? [Editor's Note: The acronym BENNY is a term used by the year-round Jersey shore residents to describe summer vacationers from the North from cities such as Bayonne, Englewood, Newark, and New York.]

PS: BENNY's, no not then. … Not in those days, no.

NM: What forms of entertainment did you have an a child? Did you listen to radio or go to movies?

PS: The Algonquin movie [theater] was built in about 1940, and I can pinpoint that, or '41, because my brother was in high school then, and they recruited some high school students to help move in and install all the seating in the Algonquin theater. … Saturday afternoon, that was the big deal to go to the movies, and see Tom Mix and Hopalong Cassidy in movies then. [Editor's Note: The Algonquin Arts Theatre still exists in Manasquan and is run by the non-profit organization of the same name.] But by in large, we just made our own fun, had our own fun. We played kick the can and whatever, and of course, being down at the beach there were not too many people around. So, Art Herbert and I, and three or four other kids from town would go down, and we'd just play around the beach, yes. There was a wooden boardwalk then that had been built in Manasquan. One very windy day, I don't know if this is relevant or interesting, but Art and I thought, must have been a Saturday. He had been given a wagon with balloon tires. Art's father was a lawyer and was doing very well. … This was the only wagon I ever saw in my life with balloon tires, and Art and I thought, "Well, why don't we fix up a sail?" It's a northeast wind, we'll start at the north part of the boardwalk, put up the sail on the wagon, we'll sit on the wagon and have the wind push us out. Well, if we got three inches, … but that occupied a lot of Saturday I'm sure that Saturday, yes.

SI: Did you do any actual sailing?

PS: No, I didn't. … Well, in our circle of friends, no one had a boat. I can back up a little bit and tell you about the Halloweens when we were kids down at the beach. … The old Coast Guard station, that building is still there on Ocean Avenue. … It's being rehabbed as a historical site and in addition to the building, yes, another vision comes to mind. There was a tower, Coast Guard tower right up on the beach, maybe it was thirty, thirty-five feet, and it was a big deal if the Coast Guardsmen who were on watch would let us climb up those stairs. We could stay in the tower with them, and look around, that was a big deal, but Halloween, the Coast Guard station was a target for us as kids, and Art's older brother Carl, four years older, and a couple of his friends decided they would, there was a large high flagpole, they would get the trash cans from the Coast Guard station, hook them to the lines and haul the … trash cans up to the top of the flagpole of the Coast Guard station. … Art and I, and maybe one or two others that were our age, we were assigned to be lookouts, and we got underneath some of the cottages on Ocean Avenue there with flashlights, and we were to see if any of the Coast Guardsmen found out, discovered what was going on, we'd let them know. Well, we were miserable failures as lookouts and … the trashcans did get hauled up one year at the Coast Guard station. The next year, apparently they were waiting for us, because Carl, or one of his friends, was half way up the flagpole climbing, there was a ladder halfway up. … All of a sudden, three or four flashlights spotted him. The police and Coast Guardsmen in the area anticipated what was going on. … We were terrified because we were told if they ever catch you, they have a big table inside and they were going to paddle the hell out of you. So, that was really scary.

NM: Did you listen to the radio growing up?

PS: Not much, I don't remember.

NM: Did your family or did other families in Manasquan own radios?

PS: We had radios. We had a Philco radio, nice one on a stand, but I really don't remember listening to the radio much at all.

SI: What about, for example, the fireside chats given by Franklin Roosevelt?

PS: Yes, I do remember hearing some of the fireside chats, yes, with Roosevelt, because when he spoke that was important, yes.

SI: How did your family feel towards President Roosevelt?

PS: They were Republicans, and my mother couldn't stand Eleanor Roosevelt. She went down in the coal mines at one point, "What is that woman doing down in the coal mines?" A lot of the liberal programs that Roosevelt was initiating, couldn't stand them. Let me back up, going to the big Depression, unemployment, the father of one of my close friends worked in a gas station up in Neptune, and I was at his house when he came home on a Friday afternoon and announced he had just been fired. … It was his wife and his two sons, both of them about my age. … I can remember after the subsequent months, they had kerosene lanterns instead of electricity, no telephone, and in fact in the winter time they put down newspapers on the floor as insulation. I mean people were desperately poor in those days, but that image of newspapers is still in my

mind and frankly, to this day I don't like to see a newspaper on the floor. Invariably, I'll go out and pick it up … if someone is reading the paper and drops it. It just bothers the daylights out of me because of that image in the Depression days. They were tough, tough, times.

NM: The Depression affected the Manasquan community in visible ways.

PS: Oh, yes, it did right, but no one, I don't remember people saying, "Oh, so and so is poor." We were all in the same boat. Art's family probably was better off than almost anyone else in the area, but they never ever flaunted their position. It was just like everybody else, yes.

SI: You mentioned the area the pharmacy was in took a real hit during the Depression. Did your father ever share how difficult it was during that time or did you see that in the rare times that you did go to the store?

PS: Yes, I could see it, but he never complained to us as kids about it. … I can remember when he paid off the mortgage. I remember him saying he had just come from the bank, and the banker said to my father, "John, anytime you want to borrow any money it's here for you." Which I thought was really nice, but as a kid, I didn't understand the importance of it, but in retrospect, boy, he was in a very tough spot financially, and emotionally, yes. High School clubs, there was a code club in those days. Morse Code, I started learning the Morse code then, and a few other clubs. Senior year, maybe junior year, I was president of the high school class. That still bugs me because when we go over here to the Atlantis for breakfast and the check comes, they say, "Give it to the president." … I don't figure with that anymore, it's ten bucks a piece. [laughter]

SI: You said you went to a regional high school. How many students were in the class?

PS: There were 130 in my high school graduating class. … I would say the school, total population then was six or seven hundred. There were a few school buses, not many, five or six, maybe going to Sea Girt, Spring Lake, Wall Township certainly, and Belmar. A few kids from as far away as Neptune came to our school too, but the dominant, wait a minute, maybe it was the modal group of students was Manasquan, but other towns, sure, had a good mix of the school. Maybe eighty percent of our population was students from the outlying towns, yes.

SI: Could you see differences between the kids from these different communities?

PS: … The kids from Sea Girt and Spring Lake, they were just socioeconomically, they were a step up. … Fathers were lawyers or business people, maybe physicians, yes. That would be the one gradation that I can recall, yes.

NM: In high school, was this something noticeable during the Depression, the different gradations of wealth? Were there students that looked not as well off as others?

PS: It was a pretty homogenous group, it really was, yes. Everybody seemed to be driving an old car. Well, of course in the war you couldn't buy a new car. … All the headlights in the cars, the tops were painted black. … See, what they found was that during the war, a ship at sea was

silhouetted by the lights on shore with the submarine offshore. So if a sub offshore looked toward the beach, they could see the ship silhouetted, and so there was a strong effort to dim all the shore lights. All the lights along on the beach front, for example, the streetlights and so on had cones on them to direct the light down. I'm skipping around a lot, but Art Herbert and I were at the beach one evening, around five or six o'clock, and it was dark. … We had been watching a Navy blimp go offshore, and then we saw an explosion. … Shortly after that explosion we saw a Coast Guard boat race out the inlet. Well, I saw a story in the Asbury Park Press years later that that blimp was after a German submarine, and was going to depth charge it from the air. The German submarine deck gun, however, shot down the blimp and that's what we saw. The explosion was the blimp being shot down by the German sub. … The Coast Guard went out to rescue [them]. I don't know whether any rescue ever was achieved, but that was what the situation was, yes. … In terms of blocking lighting on the trains, there were shades on the east side of the trains so that none of the light from the railroad cars would shine out. It was real dim out for sure, all along the beach front, yes.

NM: In high school, were you aware of the problems in the world, such as the Japanese invasion of China?

PS: No, that was a total blank--the Japanese, Chinese, total blank. Yes, we knew a war was going on in Germany and England, and France, and I guess there was some sense that some time maybe we were going to have to get involved, but it did not seem imminent, but when Pearl Harbor hit, I can distinctly remember that day. I said I was active in the HI-Y. The HI-Y had a three day conference up in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and the conference was ending Sunday morning in a Presbyterian church up there, and Mrs. Gregory drove up to pick a group of us up to bring us home after the three day conference. … When we got in Mrs. Gregory's car, she said the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. Well, we didn't know where Pearl Harbor was, but we knew that was not good. … When I walked in my home about two o'clock in the afternoon, I would guess, maybe three, my folks were intently listening to the radio and getting the reports of Pearl Harbor and what had gone on. … Then, the whole society, economy, changed very quickly.

NM: A little bit prior to Pearl Harbor there was a call up for Selective Service.

PS: Oh, yes, the draft.

NM: Do you recall anyone in the community leaving prior to Pearl Harbor?

PS: I don't recall any husbands or older single men being drafted. There probably were some, but that does not stand out. I do remember, yes, the draft being instituted, yes.

NM: You mentioned you had two siblings, one brother and one sister. Was your brother older than you?

PS: My brother was two years older than me and my sister was four years older. She graduated in 1939 from Manasquan High School. Went into nursing, became a registered nurse. My brother graduated in '41, and he ended up at the Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, New

York on Long Island. For a while he was an instructor. I'm not sure of the sequencing of this, I know for a while that he joined the Merchant Marines. I guess he joined the Merchant Marines. He figured well if he was going to be in service, he might as well get paid for it. So, he joined the Merchant Marines, and he shipped out as an able bodied seaman and after one or two trips where he essentially was chipping paint for the whole trip, he was at the bottom of the hierarchy, I can tell you that, he figured well he wasn't going to spend his life doing that, so he applied to the Merchant Marine Academy, and was accepted there as a midshipman. Part of that duty was not just classroom, but at sea. … In 1942, certainly '43, he ran, he was in a number of convoys going across the Atlantic, in extremely hazardous circumstances. I remember him writing back saying, "We arrived in Scotland, not without incident." Which translated, … there were ships in his convoy sunk all around him. He happened to be lucky and was never on a ship that was sunk. … He went to Murmansk, Russia on a ship. He was in extremely dangerous situations. So, in 1945, he was still going to sea. My mother had two sons essentially at sea and didn't know where they were by in large. That must have been very, very difficult.

NM: Did your family keep in contact with your brother--you mentioned letters--but was writing back home a fairly regular thing?

PS: Infrequent, just because of the logistics of it. He might be at sea for a month or so and couldn't get a letter out, so it was very infrequent contacts. In those days, you may know they held in the residences, if people were in service from that residence, there were stars hung up for the number of children who were in service. … The gold star, of course, denoted somebody who'd been killed in service. Fortunately, none in our neighborhood had that, but young men in 1943, '44, '42 even, just young men, … they were in the military. I had two of my teachers pulled out of Manasquan High School, and drafted into the military, yes. My German teacher, Karl Maisch was called out. … I understand he ended up somewhere in the Army or intelligence service--German background, spoke German. …

SI: Could you see any other ways that the war was impacting the school? Were programs cut?

PS: … There was the Victory Corps and everybody, most people, started Victory Gardens, growing their own food in the summer time. … The Victory Corps--it was a psychological mobilization of the whole country--but I can remember we did, as high school kids, we were doing close order drills out on the football field for some unknown reason. Everybody got a Victory Corps little cap, overseas cap, and I don't know, but it was, clearly it was psychologically to gear everybody toward the war, yes.

NM: Was it common for eligible young men in your community to be drafted or to volunteer?

PS: Oh, yes. … Well, it was both. … A lot volunteered. Probably a half a dozen of my high school friends when we were seniors in high school volunteered to go in before they graduated. … The war was on and they were going in. There's one other thought there. … The local volunteer fire companies in Manasquan lost most of their membership, so they went to the high school and they asked for junior firemen from the senior class, maybe junior class as well. So, at one point, I was a junior fireman at Manasquan in Manasquan Fire Company number two. I can tell you a scary story. … We had a fire call, ran out of high school one afternoon, got on the fire

truck, fire call was down at the beach and I stood on the side of the fire truck on the running board, arm around one of the ladders and I literally had a toe hold on that running board and I really thought I was going to fall off that fire engine as I went down Main Street across the bridge over the crick down there. I didn't fall, but it was one scary ride, I can tell you that. Yes, but the fire companies had a number of very young guys as fireman, yes.

SI: How much training did they give you for that?

PS: Well, they may have given us some, but I don't remember day one of any training. [laughter] They probably did train us somewhat, but I don't remember.

SI: Would they give the junior firemen less dangerous tasks?

PS: Not that I recall, no we were firemen. [laughter] They probably did. …

SI: Were there a lot of fires?

PS: No, I don't remember many calls. …

NM: In what ways did wartime demands affect the Manasquan community? For example, you mentioned the rationing of gasoline.

PS: Food rationing. … There were collections, like recycling now. There were collections of, I guess, old tires. I can't remember what, but yes, all sorts of collections for the war effort.

NM: How did rationing affect your family's living conditions?

PS: Well, I never recall anybody going hungry. We may not have had quite the food we wanted to have, but I never remember anybody really going hungry. Social life was limited to pretty much walking to friends. Oh, my mother worked at Fort Monmouth, got a job during the war at Fort Monmouth in an office situation, yes. So, she took the train up to, I guess it was Red Bank for a year or two working for the Army, yes. A lot of women turned to various jobs. My father's sister and some of her friends, she worked at Congoleum Nairn in Kearny and a number of her friends worked at the Prudential Insurance Company, and after the normal office hours up there, they would go down to the Kearny shipyards for a four hour shift, and they were working in the shipyards, putting ships together ultimately, yes. It was just a total change in the society, yes.

NM: How soon after Pearl Harbor did your mother begin working?

PS: … My guess is it was 1942 that she started at Fort Monmouth. … Probably that was a result of her comptometer competence and experience. … Generally, people did, wherever they could pitch in, they pitched in for the war effort, yes.

SI: Did you or any of your friends do any kind of war work or was there any opportunity to do that in that area?

PS: Before going in the service?

SI: Yes.

PS: I don't recall. In the summer, I worked at the beach, but I don't remember anything related to the war.

SI: Did the war affect the tourist trade?

PS: Well, it reduced it certainly, quite a bit, but there was some activity, yes. That beach is a real magnet, you know, if people can get to the beach, they go.

NM: Do you remember any posters of bond drives?

PS: Yes.

NM: Do you recall any of those?

PS: Well, the one poster I recall is, "Uncle Sam Wants You," or "Needs You." Yes, but I don't recall frankly, any of the specific posters, but I know they were all over the place, "Buy war bonds." My uncle, my father's brother was a dentist. He had his dentist's office on the second floor of that infamous building in Kearny and I remember he was telling me he was buying war bonds every single month. … My dad went back to enlist in World War II and they just said, "No, you're too old, family, and you're too old." … My uncle, his younger brother, never was involved in either of the wars, yes.

SI: Was your father interested or involved in veterans' affairs?

PS: No, interesting question again, never got involved in the American Legion or the Veterans of Foreign Wars, just seemed to have no interest in either of those organizations, and I didn't either by the way. In fact, I just recently got something … from one of those organizations, and I'm just not interested.

SI: Did you get a sense from your father that he felt a certain way about war? Did he think we should stay out of the war or if he was eager for America to get into the war?

PS: No, he was, to defend this country, he was a very strong advocate. He was a second lieutenant when he left the Army. …

NM: You were a senior in high school in 1943?

PS: Yes.

NM: How closely did you follow the actual events of the war?

PS: I would say we followed them, by way of the newspaper, fairly closely. By the way, it was then Camp Edison over here in Sea Girt, that was an Army training camp. … We rented a room typically … to the wife of a serviceman who was over in Camp Edison. … One of our bedrooms in the house was typically occupied by one of those wives who were there, had moved there temporarily at least before her husband was shipped out overseas.

SI: Did you interact much with them or did they pretty much stick to themselves?

PS: They pretty much stayed to themselves, yes. It was just a room rental situation. It wasn't boarding, meals anything like that.

SI: Tell us any memories you have of Camp Edison because it is one of these temporary facilities you do not hear too much about.

PS: Well, going back earlier when I was a kid, most of us in town, … it was a New Jersey National Guard Training Center before the war, and just primarily used during the summer, but if we could get a soldier to sponsor us, we could slip into the camp by way of the, what was then the town dump near the railroad in Manasquan. We could slip into the camp over the railroad in the back way. There was a movie theatre there, and we'd get a soldier to sponsor us and take us in. We can see a free movie. So, every night we'd go over and see if we get in there and we'd always get in to see a movie, because the soldier would take us in. … I guess the Army took it over, there's a very fine rifle range there, up at the beach, and so there were a fair number, I can't give you specifics, but I'd say a fair number of Army troops that were trained there, before being shipped out in World War II. … In fact, in World War I that was used as a training site for the Army because a friend of my mother's married a soldier who trained at Camp Edison in World War I. … Now, of course, it's still a very active training site for a variety of state organizations--State police.

NM: Camp Edison was at Sea Girt then, which is the New Jersey State Police Academy today.

PS: … It was the camp at Sea Girt, yes. When the firing range was being used, they always hoisted a red flag on the north and the south end of the firing range, yes. … That's for boats offshore, pleasure boats, fishing boats, they know the firing range is being used, yes. … Art Herbert and I were out, there's a little lake, Stockton Lake, on the south side of the camp. … 1940, maybe '41, Art Herbert and I were out in his great rowboat, it was a fourteen foot custom built rowboat that his father had built for Art and his brother. We were out on Stockton Lake and a couple soldiers called us over. We were by the edge there of the camp, and they called us over and they wanted us to help them. They got in the boat. Well, they were in the training exercise, and so they got in the boat, and there was then a bulkhead along that side. We slipped along the bulkhead and they said, "Be very quiet." … What they were doing was slipping behind the enemy lines in their Army exercise. So, we let them out, we went west and we let them out behind the enemy lines. … Of course, for us as kids, wow, that was really exciting stuff, yes. [laughter]

SI: Were there any other examples of increased military presence in the area? Did the Coast Guard station change at all?

PS: What did happen in this area, and I distinctly remember it, there were jeeps in the area with machine guns mounted on them, and they were patrolling the area. … At night, they patrolled, foot patrols, down the beach. In the morning, go down the beach, you'd see the footprints of the soldiers that had been going down the beach, yes. … Again, the whole psychology of the area was changed, we were at war, yes.

NM: In many cities, there was a shortage of housing simply because there was an influx of so many people. Was it common for the people of Manasquan to take in boarders from these military facilities?

PS: I think a few people did. I don't recall a lot of people doing it, but I think a few people did, yes. I don't remember any real shortage of housing in Manasquan. Maybe it was there, I just wasn't alert to it, but a few did.

SI: Do you think GIs made up a good portion of those coming to the beach during that period?

PS: I really don't know. I don't recall. … I would say a lot of women, young women, who worked at Prudential and up in the North Jersey area would come down to the beach for the summertime on the weekends, yes, a big recreation spot for them in the summer time.

SI: There was nothing like a USO in the area?

PS: In Asbury Park, I think there was a USO operation, but I don't remember anything here.

NM: In high school you mentioned many of your classmates already had signed commitments to volunteer for the military. Were you in that category?

PS: No, I wasn't and they went in. … It was more than a signature, they went on duty. I graduated in '43, and I did not go in until '44, a year later after I had graduated, but that's a story down the road, yes.

NM: Did your classmates enlist in any particular branch or was it a variety of branches?

PS: It was a variety of branches. One of my close friends joined the Navy who I mentioned earlier. Frank Applegate, and he really turned, he'll dismiss it, but he really turned into a war hero. … There was a plane and he was in the Pacific, plane shot down a US pilot down in the water. He saw him, and Frank tied a line around his waist and jumped off the side of his destroyer and swam out and rescued this pilot, yes. He got a couple of citations.

SI: At that time, how were young men who seemed able-bodied but were not in the service treated?

PS: Ah, with glances. "Why aren't you in the service?" Some sense of disdain, and if you were a 4-F, a lot of people raised a lot of questions. Now, some people from New York moved down to Lakewood and established egg farms down here in Lakewood. … That gave them an

exemption from military service. That's how the Lakewood egg industry really grew, yes, but it was, yes, either, if you weren't in, you ought to have a good reason why you weren't in. I was beginning to feel uncomfortable, frankly, before I went in, but I was still seventeen. I went in on my eighteenth birthday--happy birthday. [laughter]

SI: Tell us a little bit about after graduation, what you were doing.

PS: From high school?

SI: Yes.

PS: Okay, yes, I worked a summer job down here on the beach, and then, thought I wanted to be an engineer. What a mistake that was. I went to the Newark College of Engineering. … I couldn't get in there right away. So, in the fall, I got a job in the New Jersey Tobacco Company, the warehouse operation in Asbury Park. They were distributors really. … They sold tobacco and candy to retail stores. So, salesman would go out from this operation to retail stores, get an order, bring it in, and then the order would be filled at the New Jersey Tobacco warehouse. … Then, taken out, interesting, transportation might have been a problem, but delivered to the retail stores. Okay, I did that for a few months because I could not get into Newark College of Engineering in September. I don't know their schedule was such, it was filled or something. So, I started after a few months in New Jersey Tobacco warehouse where I learned to tie up packages. [laughter] I started Newark College of Engineering, for a term, the spring term of '44. Well, that turned into almost an academic disaster. In fact, that term I think my grades, I ended up with a straight average-- "A, B, C, D, E." So, I then went into the Navy on June 1, 1944. … When I came out, I went back to NCE for a year, and it was very clear I was not cut out to be an engineer, so I can extend that story later on if you want, but that was the year after I graduated, … a few months in Asbury Park, New Jersey Tobacco. … Then, a half year at NCE which is now New Jersey Institute of Technology, yes.

NM: Why did you enlist in the Navy?

PS: Well, I decided to join the Navy on my own accord, but I also realized I didn't want to be sleeping in trenches. … I figured if you're in the Navy, the chances are you're going to be in a reasonably clean environment most of the time, which turned out in my case to be true. … I never regretted that, and I just loved being at sea, just absolutely loved being at sea, yes.

NM: Could you tell us about the process of enlisting? When did you first make contact with the Navy?

PS: Okay, I'm quite sure I'm right on the dates. [On] May 20th, I went to 383 Madison Avenue in New York City and enlisted there. The paperwork, I guess there was a physical exam there at that day too, and then, they said, "All right, report back on May 31st, ten days later." I went back to 383 Madison Avenue, and then there was a group of us, and then we were marched down to Grand Central Station that night. The first I'd ever seen Grand Central Station in New York, what a building, and we got on the troop train and went out to Great Lakes Naval Training Center--seventeen hours on a troop train. … It was all business. …

NM: I just want to ask a quick reference question. Were you based out of Newark at the time or were you commuting to go to school?

PS: I was commuting then to Newark, to NCE, yes.

NM: Then you enlisted in the Navy?

PS: Yes.

NM: Do you recall anything about the process of enlistment? You mentioned that you had a physical--does anything else stand out?

PS: … When we got out to Chicago and off loading at Great Lakes Naval Training Center, the awful reality was they immediately separated all the blacks and they were to become stewards in the Navy. … We were strip searched, I can remember that too. Just when that happened, I don't know. … Then we were immediately assigned to, it's in that sheet, Camp Porter to Company 1242 for six weeks of basic training, yes.

NM: Were African-Americans and whites enlisting at the same place?

PS: I'm sure they were, yes. In our draft, yes, there was a whole mix of men. … As I recall, all about my age, yes.

SI: How was adjusting to the military like for you?

PS: It was pretty tough initially. Just leaving, frankly at that age, … I just turned eighteen. … Emotionally, that was very difficult--leaving my family, leaving Manasquan. Listen, in those days, a big trip in those days was to go to Asbury Park, and here I'm now going to New York--first time I'd ever done that on my own, and from there out to Chicagoland or Great Lakes Naval Training Center. That was a big adjustment. … I don't remember a lot of correspondence either at that time from boot camp to home or home out to boot camp. I don't remember a lot of contact there at all. … Finished there in August and then came home on leave, went back around Labor Day and found out, "Gee, I'm not going overseas, they're sending me to a radio school at Northwestern University," and that seemed pretty neat. They had done testing when we went in for a day or two and they determined I was going to be a radioman, yes. "Da-dit-dit-da," it's still up here--Morse code. [laughter]

SI: Tell us a little more about Camp Porter and what the training there was like.

PS: Okay, the first morning we went up on what was called the grinder for exercises and when I finished up there that morning, I could barely walk. … I was so stiff, holy Moses, and it was hot, very hot--well it was June. So, it was very disciplined, up at five 'o clock in the morning, and on the way up to the grinder, I don't know if this was deliberate, but we passed the navy brig with Marine guards so everybody in our company could see if you don't behave yourself, you're going to be in there with the Marine guards, and they were not asking people to do things either. The

Marines were not that friendly. It was a highly disciplined situation. Yes, one day we went out as part of the training, we went out on the firing range. There was one 'fella who happened to be from New York, and we had rifles, and he had a question, and he turned this way to ask a question. … They said, "Put that rifle down!" Oh, they were terrified the guy was going to pull the trigger. …

SI: He turned his whole body and the rifle was pointing at somebody.

PS: Yes, we were put in a gas chamber to experience, I guess it was tear gas, and everybody stayed in there until everybody in that group took off their mask. So that was an experience, and we got out of there, and survived it. It was some pretty tough training for six weeks. … I was, frankly, physically I was pretty soft, I didn't do any physical activity of any kind at all before going in. I went in at 165 pounds and came out of boot camp at 155 pounds. … I had come down on the train to come home after that experience. I was walking down Main Street, my mother was driving down to the station to meet me. She passed me, and I was so thin she didn't recognize me. [laughter]

NM: How long was your leave to come home to Manasquan?

PS: Ten days, it was a ten day leave, yes.

NM: Since your father had military service, did he try to impart you with any advice or did he wish you luck?

PS: He wished me luck, again, emotional on both our parts, yes. But, you know, if you had a son that young in those days, going off to war is pretty tough. Because he had seen war, I mean, he was an ambulance driver, and he knew what the possibilities were. Yes, ten days and then back. … In fact, on my orders when I returned from that leave of boot camp, the orders were I was to go in the hospital and have my tonsils removed and that never happened. I don't know what happened to those orders, but I joined radio school at Northwestern instead. That was much more pleasant.

NM: Was it a surprise to you that they sent you to radio school?

PS: Yes.

NM: Can you tell us what happened?

PS: … We shifted from Camp Porter to Northwestern. There was a company of maybe thirty or forty of us in that class. I guess it was broken into two parts, and we lived in a dormitory, Swift Hall, which was turned into a barracks, right up on the edge of the lake. We had a beautiful lake. We slept in bunks three high. … The radio school was established by the Navy in what was then their new technological institute building. Beautiful building, I guess the engineering school had planned for that. … From September until December, I learned a little bit about radios and Morse code and typing. They showed us typing skills. … I had leave on weekends. Go down to Chicago, met a number of very fine people, guys, and so it turned out to be a good experience.

Finished there in December, and the leave came up just before Christmas, so I was able to come home for that Christmas, December of '44. I went back, and between Christmas and New Year's, the leave was renewed for another ten days. So, I came back to Manasquan until early January and then … I ended up out on the West Coast in January. Yes, that was a troop train going across the country. … Ended up, can't remember the name of the camp outside of San Francisco. Pardon me, and then shipped out, it must have been early February on a troop ship, the *Joseph T. Dickman* for the Southwest Pacific. [Editor's Note: The USS *Joseph T. Dickman* was constructed in July 1920 for the American President Cruise Lines and was then named the *Theodore Roosevelt*. In 1940, it was converted to a troop ship and served in both the European and Pacific theatres. It was scrapped in 1948.]

SI: I would imagine that your training was the first time you came into prolonged contact with people from outside of the New York/New Jersey area.

PS: You're absolutely right.

SI: What was that like?

PS: Yes, I mean, I saw some real cowboys, some folks in the Deep South, just a total mix of folks whose lifestyles had been completely different from what I had been used to. It was a good education actually seeing that kind of mix. … Radio school, I would say most of the folks were reasonably bright people. We had tests every week to see how we were progressing. One fellow claimed that learning the Morse code just got him, his nervous condition couldn't take it, and so he was reassigned, he was pulled out of school. I don't know whatever happened to him. It generally is a very cohesive group and almost everybody, yes, stayed, stuck it through. …

SI: There were not regional conflicts between Northerners or Southerners.

PS: Not at school--I don't remember that at all. When I went aboard ship later on we had, even though it was a very small crew, yes, we had some issues there, North and South, yes.

SI: We will ask about that when we get to the ship.

NM: You mentioned that you rarely travelled.

PS: Yes.

NM: Could you describe what Chicago was like?

PS: Well, I had been in New York a few times, that was not a total change that way, but we went into the city almost every weekend and were able to look around. I don't remember going to the theater much out there. We went to museums, I do remember that. Walked around the city a lot but again, none of us had any money so we weren't going to any top restaurants or anything like that. Rode the "L" in Chicago, yes.

NM: Were there a lot of servicemen going around the city?

PS: All over the city. Oh yes, the USO, I think there were four USO centers in Chicago. … We'd go there and, you know, free food, shows, entertainment, yes, the USO did a fabulous job in Chicago in those years. I saw it as a very friendly city. Interestingly, on just a personal note, when I go from our barracks at Northwestern in Evanston, Illinois. I went down the street and it turns out at that time, my brother-in-law and sister-in-law were living in an apartment right along that street that I walked past numerous times. I had no idea of course of that connection [until] years later, yes.

SI: In the classroom, were you just learning about Morse code or were you learning about how to take apart the radio?

PS: Yes, we were. We learned theory, as well as Morse Code and typing. Those were the three major components of that training as I remember it. … Of course, and in those days, when a radioman went aboard a large ship--that's where I thought I was probably headed--all the radioman did was to sit with earphones on, and letters would be communicated in blocks of five, all code. … They'd simply hear "Da-da-dit-dit-dit" and they would type in those blocks of five letters. Totally meaningless to the radioman and then the radioman's copy would go to the code room and would then be deciphered. It must have been a dreadfully boring assignment. Fortunately I escaped that, but for those radioman who were on the large ships, that's what they did, yes--long before computer technology. …

SI: You were not involved in encryption or decryption--you were just taking down the message?

PS: Not at all, no, that in fact was an officer's job--encryption, decryption--yes, not enlisted men. I think I ended up at that school as a radioman third class and then ultimately became radioman second class when I was aboard ship, yes.

SI: Did you ever consider applying for officer's training?

PS: I think I did apply for V-12 then, but didn't make it, or V-5. I think I was too young, just inexperienced, and shouldn't have made it at that stage. To become an officer at that very young age wouldn't have made sense. [Editor's Note: The Navy's V-12 program was started in July 1943, when the Navy wanted to secure college educated officers with technical skills. The program was implemented at over 131 universities and colleges and inducted seaman and new college students for officer's training. The V-5 program was similar but was aimed towards aviation training.]

NM: Was it a foregone conclusion where you would serve after radio school?

PS: No, … those assignments came out of the blue. … After the trip from San Francisco, out to the Southwest Pacific to Espiritu Santo out in the New Hebrides Islands. Again, I think we were essentially put in temporary storage so we went to an advanced radio school for another … six or eight weeks there until they figured out who should go where. Then I was assigned to the APC 29. I think I sent you a picture of that little ship, 103 feet long, twenty one men--three officers, eighteen enlisted men. … There was one radioman aboard, he was about to be relieved of duty

and sent back to the States so they needed a replacement, and I was his replacement. … The duty there was very good as far as I was concerned. … On that little ship, behind the bridge there was the captain's cabin on the port side of the ship, and on the starboard side of the ship was the radio shack, and that had a bunk, actually it had two bunks in it for the radiomen. The rest of the crew slept down below on the main deck in the compartment. But the radiomen had that slot up in the radio shack and the bunk, so I got that right next to the captain's cabin, and it worked out very well for me. … The curious thing, after spending about six months learning the Morse code, I got on board ship and all our circuits were voice circuits. I didn't need the … Morse code at all. Only after that duty for a very short while, maybe a week or so I got an assignment, forgotten where that was, where Morse code was needed. By and large I didn't need it, yes.

NM: While you were in the Pacific, was it common to follow the events of the war?

PS: … We didn't know a great deal. … In a general sense we were kept informed but not in specifics. For example, at the Espiritu Santo, there was the 1st Marine Corps was in training there for the next invasion, and there was a big banner over the road as the Marines went for their training in the morning, and the big banner just said, "Kill the Bastards." I mean that was the psychology. … They were headed for the Okinawa, I think it was the Okinawa invasion, yes. We didn't know that but we just knew they were in training for the next invasion. When I was at Espiritu Santo, let's see, Roosevelt was killed, or died, and Harry Truman became President and one of my friends was from Independence, Missouri and he knew about Harry Truman and he said, "Oh boy, this country is really in trouble now." … He had all sorts of terrible things to say about Harry Truman. The political machines, and how awful things were going to be. Well, it sounded pretty dire. It was Jack Shackleford. … In fact I wrote to Jack a year or so ago and heard back from him. … I think he was assigned to another APC, another small ship, and I essentially lost touch with Jack for many years. [Editor's Note: President Franklin Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, with his Vice-President, Harry Truman, assuming the Presidency.]

SI: When you were on Espiritu Santo, was it within range of enemy bombers? Was it ever attacked?

PS: No, I was that way, personally, I was very fortunate. I was always behind the action, almost by a year or so. For example, I went to Guadalcanal, all that action had taken place a year or so earlier. I went to Tarawa--all that action had taken place at least a year earlier. The only potential action, live, was we were sent from Guadalcanal up to Guam and not in a convoy, just our ship. … We passed one night the island of Truk. Well, Truk still had Japanese on it. Our forces, of course, hopscotched up the Pacific, and one of the islands that MacArthur ignored essentially was the island of Truk. So there were a lot of Japanese on Truk, and we were just leaving them there. But we had to pass that island of Truk one night and I remember it was all lights out and no noise, no sounds whatsoever because if they had ever found even a small ship like us we would have been under fire. I do remember being at sea, we are advancing a little bit, but I think it was on the trip to Guam. There was a mist in the ocean, and out of that mist came a … US cruiser at flank speed, at full speed, and it was just a beautiful sight, and we wondered, you know, why just a cruiser, which normally would have other ships around it. … I found out later, newspaper article some years later, the bomb that was used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was

carried on a cruiser out to Tinian Island and putting dates together, I think it's very likely that that cruiser was carrying the bomb that was used at either Hiroshima or Nagasaki. [Editor's Note: The island of Truk in the Caroline Islands was a major station of the Japanese Navy. On February 17-18, 1944 the US conducted Operation *Hailstone* which decimated the Japanese fleet there. The island was never invaded by ground troops and was cut off from supplies for the remainder of the war.]

SI: Do you think it was the USS *Indianapolis?*

PS: I think it was, I'm quite sure it was, yes. I remember it was a beautiful sight seeing that cruiser at flank speed going by us, yes. [Editor's Note: After delivering parts for the first atomic bomb, the USS *Indianapolis* was sailing from Guam to Leyte on July 30, 1945. During its movement it was torpedoed and sunk by a Japanese submarine.]

NM: Was there any chance to interact with indigenous people living in the places you were stationed across the Pacific?

PS: Oh, yes.

NM: Could you share these experiences with us?

PS: Yes, we did. Including, some Catholic nuns that were, had been living on the islands. … Tarawa is a chain of tiny islands. Betio was the one island where the action really took place. … As we stood off shore Betio, and looked at Betio in comparison to all the other small islands, the other small islands had a solid line of palm trees or coconut trees. Betio essentially was stripped except for maybe eighty or one hundred posts remaining and that was all because of the shelling and so on. … We went ashore a number of times at Betio and saw the gun emplacements that the Japanese had put in--huge logs in the trees embedded down in the sand and in the coral so the guns could fire out. But I mentioned people on the islands, very friendly. Broken English, they knew a little English, I can remember we had four native men come aboard one time, and we gave them ice water. They had never experienced ice water. … It hurt their teeth but they laughed and giggled, but that was really funny, so that was a big experience for them, the ice water. With respect to the nuns at Tarawa, they had been there during the Japanese occupation. They got word, and there was a Catholic priest in the islands there, got word of an impending invasion. They told us that the priest got his hands on an old boat where the engine had not been started for whenever, but he got the engine of that boat going, and he took the nuns and I guess some other people in that small boat off the island of Betio to one of the other islands and escaped. They survived the shelling and the warfare that went on that essentially decimated Betio. The nuns were talking with us, gave me two shells, I still have them inside, in fact, I put a little note on them for our kids, where they came from and the history of those two shells. But the nuns were there helping the natives and the big deal for the nuns in terms of equipment and supplies was to have a treadle-driven Singer sewing machine. That was a real piece of equipment for them to have so they could sew clothes. You might ask, what were we doing at these islands? Well, our ship was designed, before Higgins … designed his landing craft, and the idea for our ship was on an invasion, sixty Army troops would go in the forward hold, go near the invasion site, they would get out, and they would chug into the beach in tiny little boats,

and invade. Well, Higgins came along with his craft, and made our craft obsolete, and I think only twenty or thirty APC's [were] built in total. Also, they found they were top heavy, so they couldn't be used in the Atlantic Ocean, they could flip over. So, they sent them off to the Pacific and our job was, well, essentially twofold. Primarily to supply oil, drums of oil, or fuel, to the various remote islands where there were radar, essentially early radar sites, so they needed oil to power the motors … to generate the electricity for these LORAN on stations and that's why the ship was small enough, we could go into pretty shallow water. Whereas the standard ship couldn't do that, and so we supplied oil to all those little islands, and it turned out again, the war pretty much had gone passed where we were in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands. I crossed the equator probably a dozen, I'm sure a dozen times, just a configuration of where we were in those islands. … The natives, very cordial, welcoming. Some of the islands, Tabituae is one island, sticks with me, absolutely spotless. I mean talk about primitive living--four posts and a thatched roof. … I can remember the hospital … was one of those four posts and a roof and the medicines were in coke bottles all around the edge and the rafters around the edge. That was the hospital, yes.

NM: How often would you and your crew disembark?

PS: Yes, pretty frequently.

NM: Where would you get the fuel when you would go to these places? How often did you and your crew disembark to these places?

PS: The fuel would be brought to us, I can see LCMs [Landing Craft Mechanized] coming along side us with drums of oil and they'd be off-loaded. That was a pretty large landing craft, and be off loaded from that LCM into our holds, and so that's where we got our supplies really. … Then we'd go from a large island, then we'd go off to the smaller islands to distribute it. … Invariably when we went to some of the smaller islands, some of us would be able to go off in the island and look around, talk to the natives as best as we could, yes. Near the end of the war, … after the war was over, frankly it was a joy ride for passengers. We had some British doctors just visiting the island, seeing what it was like. We also one time took a USO troop from one island to another, they were doing *Porgy and Bess* [an American opera]. I think we had William Warfield on board, I think so, but as kids we didn't appreciate that. …

SI: Was there any danger associated with transporting the fuel? Did it have to be handled a certain way?

PS: There probably was, but I wasn't cognizant of it. We had some pretty savvy machinists mates, I know that. So, I never remember any real concern about a fire or explosion, yes.

SI: What would you be doing as the radio operator during all these trips, just listening for messages?

PS: In part, yes, but on the bridge, you always need enlisted men on the bridge. See, we had a signalman, second class, and a radioman, myself, and just steering the ship when we were

underway. When we were in port, you always have the bridge watch, and … we recorded the weather conditions every hour on the hour in the ship's log. … A lot of free time, yes.

NM: You mentioned that the people who unloaded the oil drums were savvy. Did they come up with a process that made unloading the oil drums easier for themselves?

PS: I would say they did. Yes, we had a boom on our ship, there was a boom that would swing off over the side to lift these oil drums up and put them in our forward hold, yes.

NM: Could you tell us what life was like on the ship, interacting with this small crew?

PS: Okay, we'll start at the top. The captain had his cabin as I said, up just behind the bridge. Down below at the forward part of the compartment, there was a small, and I mean small state room for the two officers--a lieutenant junior grade and an ensign. The lieutenant junior grade, William Ragland, was from North Carolina. I'm quite sure he came from a very wealthy family, had gone to Duke University, graduate of Duke. The ensign, Bill Dickie--Mr. Dickie was from, I think, Wisconsin, college graduate. … They were up in the forward part of the compartment, their own living quarters. … The enlisted men, the bunks were three high in the major compartment. … The bunks would, during the day, or when we were underway, unless they were being used, they would swing up against the bulk head. When in use, they'd swing down, and so you'd have three high bunks. One cook on board--ceramic plates, not trays. The least senior person on the ship was called the mess cook, he aided the cook, did the dishes, cleaned up and so on. The first person on board usually became the mess cook, that was me when I first went on board, made the coffee. The galley really got hot. I mean it was 130 degrees in that galley when I was in there one day. … The cook was from Florida, had been a chef before he came on board, he was pretty good. … Our meals were not bad, yes. In terms of supplies, anytime, when we got to Pearl Harbor, the sub crews always got top priority on any food supplies. The best food went to the submariners, yes. But again, our food was not bad, you know. Now, I'm trying to think of crew members. One [was] from Montana who [was] a real rancher--a real cowboy. There was a man from Alabama, a tenant farmer, dirt poor clearly, married, had children. Let's see, Jimmy Shin was from Kansas. In fact, his niece after, it must have been around 1950 or early '50s, she set out on a project to locate her uncle's shipmates. … So I get a letter I guess, out of the blue from her. … We've established a contact then, and I've been in touch with this niece over the years by computer email. In fact, she just told me last week that her uncle died. He was in very bad shape. I'm trying to think of other people. There was, oh, yes, the signalman from Ohio. There was a poker game every night on the fan tail of the ship. That was entertainment. They wanted me to get involved in a poker game; that didn't sound like a good idea. This one man from Ohio regularly sent back quite a bit of money that he won in the poker games. He was a pretty sharp guy. [laughter] I'm trying to think of other individuals. A fellow from Brooklyn came in as a seaman. Tony Shortino, no that was another one. So yes, a couple New York guys from Brooklyn were there on the crew. There was a fellow from Kentucky, hot-tempered, and as I said, there was a difference--North and South. One time there was a fight on board with this fellow from Kentucky. I've forgotten who he was fighting with but it got pretty serious. … This guy from Kentucky went up by the bridge, there was a gun, a .45, and he went up to get the gun, and that was stopped immediately. … We were at Tarawa when this happened. The next day, that guy from Kentucky was off the ship. He was

taken over to the army stockade and lost track of him, yes. So there were occasional spats, but generally, overall as I think about twenty-one men living in that confined space for a year, it was generally really quite harmonious. …

NM: It sounds like you got to know the majority of the crew very well. Was everyone very sociable?

PS: I would say, generally, everyone was very sociable. As I think for example, were there any isolates? No, I don't remember anyone, it would be hard to be one but I'll grant that given the physical environment, but everyone was pretty sociable. Interactions were generally very good. Now, the machinists mates, that was kind of one group on the ship, and then there was, well a few of us up on the bridge, another group, but nothing overt, nothing that would indicate a major split. I know shortly after I first went on board, the boatswain mate wanted me to kind of be in his group and I was encouraged by the then radiomen and the signalman, "Don't get involved, stay up on the bridge with us." The first class boatswain mate, he ran the ship really, just below the officers. But he was like a foreman, that's really what his role was. Then he was, I guess because of a lot of duty, time in service and so on, he was replaced by a chief boatswain mate and I've forgotten where he was from, but he and I hit it off very well, very nice. … After the war, our captain was married in Seattle, Washington, and the chief boatswain mate and I were invited to the captain's wedding in Seattle, yes. That Captain was (Norris V. Lateer. Again, a person I contacted some years later in Chicago, we had lunch together, it was a nice reconnection, yes.

SI: Sounds like there was a pretty close relationship between the enlisted men and the officers.

PS: Not as close I guess as I've indicated, there was always that split. You've reminded me of something else. I was up on the bridge one day with that there executive officer, and again with a lot of time on our hands, we were trying to learn new words, so we had the dictionary out. Approbation, Abrogation, Approval were three of the five words we were working on. At one point, the executive officer turned to me and he said, "Shaak, you're never going to graduate from college." That kind of set me back a little bit. I thought, "Like hell, I am going to graduate when I get back to civilian life." He was a bit of a snob I will say that, he was.

[TAPE PAUSED]

PS: My god, time flies.

NM: We were talking about the crew.

PS: Yes.

SI: When we left off, you were describing how there was that line between the officers and the enlisted men.

PS: Oh yes, let's see, interesting observation I think. When I first went aboard the APC 29, the captain was named Shapiro. I'm trying to bring his first name up. … He was, shortly after I

went aboard he was relieved of duty, and so he left, and I lost track of him. Except that, years later I found, I realized, that a Dupont, a non-Dupont family member took over as President of the Dupont Corporation. His picture was in the paper. I said, "That is the Shapiro that was the captain of our ship, I'm sure." So, I contacted his office and inquired and I got a response from some public relations person saying, well essentially, "No, he was the captain of a destroyer during the war and ultimately joined the Dupont Corporation and ultimately became president." It really annoys me, I can't remember his first name, I will I'm sure, but I'm sure Mr. Shapiro was the captain of our ship and he ultimately became president … of the Dupont Corporation. But the PR people denied it, I mean, our ship was just too small an operation, and I don't doubt that he was once a captain of a destroyer during World War II. I don't doubt that at all, but I also think he was on our ship. … When he went on the beaches … to visit the islands, he would typically visit the British governor of the island and then he would send a letter back to the governor, "Thank you for the lovely visit." … Guess who typed the letters--the radioman does. I had the typewriter, so I typed the letters. … Every letter, literally, had to be letter perfect. There could not be any mistake in those letters that went back, and one letter that he sent to one of the governors noted that he had "a penchant for cigars." That's the first time I had ever heard that word, "penchant" for cigars. I got out my little dictionary and looked it up. Irving R. Shapiro, that's the full name, Irving Shapiro, yes. He was followed by a man whose background I really don't recall. The most prominent thing I recall about him was that he was an absolute total chain smoker, was extremely thin, and had a horrible cough, and if he survived with any longevity I would be amazed. … Then he was survived by Norris V. Lateer. … He was the one who got married in Seattle, Washington when we went there. When Mr. Lateer came aboard, I have given you the arrangements, the sleeping arrangements, and when he came aboard he was clearly going to succeed the then captain. So, I assumed that one of the officers in one of the bunks down below would move out, well they didn't. … So, Mr. Lateer slept outside on the top deck for maybe a month or so until the other captain left, and he then assumed command. I thought that was pretty poor on the part of the junior officers frankly that they didn't, one of them didn't leave their bunk, and let Mr. Lateer into the officer's quarters. … Except for the third officer, Mr. Dickie, there was always that gap between the officers and the enlisted men, even in those close quarters. Oh, and we had a steward's mate on board, an African-American, and, what was his name, and he took care of all the meals and all the laundry of the officers. Even in that small environment, that was his job, he was the steward for those three officers. Talk about discrimination--boy it was rife, yes. But I can still see him, he was a great guy. Had a great sense of humor and a wonderful laugh, he was a big man, and I really enjoyed him.

NM: Did you have any personal interaction with him? Did you interact with him regularly?

PS: The steward's mate?

NM: Yes.

PS: Oh sure, I mean he was one of the crew. Oh, yes, he was just one of us. I mean, there was not a scintilla of discrimination I would say within the enlisted men on that ship, none. I don't remember any. … We'd kid around, I do remember laughing, not that he was African-American but one time the ship almost, well we were in danger of sinking, and he didn't know how to swim, and he put on a life jacket, and we kidded the life out of him. … Coming back to the

States, we were, well we had one diesel engine and a shaft with a screw going out the stern. Well, the packing around that shaft as the shaft turned the packing became loose, and we were in, coming back, we were in a convoy with two other APCs. Well, we started taking on water. … So there was a concern, "Gee, we might be going down, we may be finding ourselves in one of the other APCs." … There was a pump called a handy-billy that was put in a place to pump out the water as fast as it came in. Well, it didn't pump out water as fast as it came in, so we got the other APCs to come along side and we borrowed their handy billys, pumps, so the three pumps we were able to stay float and the packing then was put in place by the engine crew and we made it all right. But we reached the point where our third officer, Mr. Dickie, said, "Well, pack up all of the code books and get them ready to heave over the side," because we thought we were going to sink but we didn't. …

NM: Do you remember where the steward's mate came from?

PS: I sure do--as your asking--Pittsburgh. God, he was a nice guy, yes.

SI: Was he regular Navy or was he just in for the duration?

PS: He was in for the duration.

SI: Okay. Were there any regular Navy men on the ship?

PS: That's a good question, I don't know. I don't think anybody was. The chief petty officer that came on board, I'm quite sure he was regular navy but the rest of us were there for the duration, yes. [I] almost got the name of that steward's mate--Sherman Lindsey. [laughter]

NM: A lot of people we interview express the concern of getting orders to be transferred to the Pacific for the impending invasion of Japan once the war in Europe was over. Was that something that was spoken about among the crew or on other ships?

PS: … Yes, our general view was, "Okay, it's over over there. Now, they can come over here and help us." You just figured--I'm backtracking I apologize. … We were assigned to go to Guam, and we were going to be assigned to go in on the Okinawan invasion. When we were at Guam, the Guam harbor, inner and outer harbor were just packed with ships, and we were moored there and a British aircraft carrier came in, … a beautiful, magnificent ship came steaming by us, very slow speed. … I was up on the bridge with our captain, and their blinker light was on, well I read blinker light in Morse code, and Mr. Lateer turned to me and said, "Shaak, are they talking to us?" So I read the light and they were asking, "Are you Navy?" … The captain said, "Send back, yes. Wooden ship and iron men." [laughter] Yes, that was quite a fun couple of minutes there. Coming back, I'll give you another image. Coming back after the war we came into San Francisco. It was early morning, one of the most glorious sights I have ever seen in my life was we're near the Golden Gate Bridge about to go under the bridge and I turned back and as far as the eye can see, there were ships of every size and description, coming in, converging on the Golden Gate Bridge. I said, "What a magnificent sight that was." Boy, if I had ever had a camera. Yes, it was just beautiful. It was a crystal clear for us, cold morning,

very cold in that we had been in the Southwest Pacific. So, everybody had every jacket, every sweater, whatever they could put on. …

SI: Did weather affect your operations at all? I know they have some pretty extreme storms in the Pacific.

PS: Yes, not really, other than, one distinct memory is being at sea. I can't pinpoint where it was, but this condition of the sea registered with me. There were huge, deep swells in the ocean, and I suspect there had been a major storm, maybe hundreds of miles away, but this day at sea we'd like ride up one swell and then down the other side, and up and down, very gentle, very gentle. But just an absolute delightful ride as far as I was concerned. We'd often sleep up on deck at night, and I'll tell you being in the Southwest Pacific, the starry sky and everything else dark, it was just a religious experience, the Southern Cross, just the stars--beautiful. I say I loved being at sea and I did. A few times there were choppy seas, … the hull would go up and slam like this all day long. But you get used to that stuff, yes.

SI: Other veterans in the war in the Pacific mentioned there were moments of intense activity but then you have a lot of time to think and reflect and look at the starry sky.

PS: Yes, I did. We did, yes.

SI: What else would you do when you had free time? What were your options on ship?

PS: [laughter] I tooled, they had leather on board for various purposes. But I got a strip of leather about this long and hand tooled a cribbage board actually out of that leather strip, and I still have it inside. In fact, I had it, not framed but put on a board so, yes, I have that. … Other than the card games at night, I don't remember, I don't know how we spent most of the time.

SI: Would you describe the job as stressful or did the nature of the work wear you down?

PS: Not in the least, I was, as I say, extremely fortunate. It was like the equivalent, I was thinking about this, maybe a sixty-credit hour college course learning about group dynamics, behavior of people, as I reflect on it, background. I was just extremely lucky throughout my whole naval experience, yes.

NM: How did you hear about the end of the war in the Pacific?

PS: Oh, okay, radio. Again, I have an image. … We were at Tarawa, it was a very difficult signal to hear but I was getting, maybe it was coming from Guam, I'm not sure. Getting this voice message, radio broadcast, and everybody was trying to cram into this tiny little radio shack, "What's going on?" But we kept glued to that radio and I kept tuning to get a stronger signal, and that's how we heard about the end of the war, yes.

NM: Did it come as a surprise?

PS: Yes it did, surprise and like great relief, "when am I going home?" That was kind of the initial reaction from most of the crew members, yes.

NM: Did life change at all for those aboard your ship and yourself?

PS: We just kept waiting for orders, when are going back to the States. … We went back through the Golden Gate in December. No, it was after that because we were in Hawaii that Christmas, December, we were in Hawaii. I remember approaching the Hawaiian Islands and had the radio on every little barber shop and retail store wishing Merry Christmas to everybody, that was December '45. It was August … when the surrender took place, so we kept waiting for orders when are we going back. Of course, it took us probably a month or so to get back to the Hawaiian Islands from where we were. Our top speed was like ten knots, which is not very fast. I mean, you just chug along, yes. But there was a sense of relief, but c'mon let's get back to the States, yes.

SI: Did you have an image in mind of what you were going to do after the war?

PS: Yes, I was going to go back and be an engineer. Oh yes, I was going back to NCE which was a mistake, but that's the way it is.

SI: Where did that idea come from?

PS: I had it in high school just. I don't know why I thought an engineer would be a neat career, but I knew I didn't want to be a pharmacist. I knew that. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do and probably geography played a part there. Kearny, next to Newark, Newark College of Engineering, you know, it was a school that was handy. Rutgers hadn't started in Newark yet. So, that kind of made a lot of sense. Princeton might have been three thousand miles away, I never dreamed of going to Princeton. Of course, when they came out with the GI Bill of Rights, I ended up with thirty-six months of college paid for and that was a career changing action right there. I've got a few in my life--that was one of them, yes.

NM: Did you think that your experience in the Navy with radios would be of benefit to an engineering career if you decided to pursue that?

PS: I never connected those dots, no. No, I didn't.

NM: When did you become aware of the GI Bill of Rights? Was it in the Navy?

PS: Oh boy, yes it was in the Navy. I knew about it before I got out of the service. … I could see that I had four years of college paid for ahead of me. Why everyone didn't take advantage of that, I'll never tell you. I had a brother-in-law who had been in the Navy at least three years. He just never took advantage of it. He became a plumber. [Editor's Note: The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, known as the GI Bill of Rights, was created during World War II to provide financial aid to veterans to attend colleges and universities.]

SI: Was that something men in the crew would talk about?

PS: I never remember those kinds of discussions, interesting. I never remember those discussions. I would say most of them were not college-oriented. None of the enlisted, as I think about the enlisted men, I don't recall any enlisted men having had any college experience or aspirations at all, no. Hourly jobs in civilian life, but what they were I couldn't tell you. The only college oriented people were the three officers who have been through school, yes.

SI: You told us before in training that you went away from home for the first time and your family didn't really exchange letters with you. Did that continue when you were in the Pacific?

PS: … I would write to them periodically but, of course, every letter was read by an officer before it was sent, before it was mailed, and they would literally cut out any geographic designation. I can remember one letter I sent, "Well, we had finally arrived at," and, that word had been cut out. It may have been the New Hebrides. Yes, any geographical designation was deleted.

SI: Was getting mail from home important for your personal morale?

PS: Extremely important, everybody, yes. Mail call, it was very infrequent but it was, yes, those letters were cherished. I didn't mention the USO either but the USO, we saw a couple of USO shows in the islands and they were very good. One show had a one woman, girl, from Long Branch, New Jersey, yes--dance, singing, music. … I have this soft spot in my heart for the USO. They did a great job, and still do apparently.

SI: What was the first thing you wanted to eat when you got back to the United States?

PS: Well, when I went to my captain's wedding, the night before the wedding some family had us for dinner, and we had fresh peas. They were the most delicious peas I ever had in my life. Beyond that, I don't know, but that was just one delicious meal, yes.

SI: You said the meals were pretty good on the ship. Were there shortages of food or were you limited in what you had to eat?

PS: Never remember any shortages, feeling limited, no. …

SI: Did you eat powdered eggs regularly?

PS: Yes, frequently, yes. But you adjust, powdered milk, I'm sure.

NM: Did your worldview change when you returned home to Manasquan?

PS: Yes it did, Manasquan seemed like a small town at that point. … That summer I got back, the summer of '46, a couple of friends who had also gotten out of service, frankly it's a wonder we're still alive because that was a pretty wild summer. We went out drinking on some Saturday nights, god almighty made sure we got home. … Beyond that, it was quite an adjustment, and I didn't anticipate it going from the strict military life to civilian life and kind of, sorry for the pun,

"being at sea," in terms of, "What am I going to do?" … I remember going to the veterans' administration in Newark across the street from the business school on Washington Place and signed up with a counselor, and I had a number of sessions with that counselor. He was extremely helpful in helping me make the adjustment to civilian life. Yes, it was more difficult than I had anticipated. The uncertainties, I guess, was a big factor in that, and that year after the service, I was clearly not going to make it in engineering, and that's fortunately when Rutgers just started the Newark College of Arts and Sciences with Dean Herbert Woodward as the dean there, so I signed down there. … That was a positive turning point for me in my life, very.

SI: When you returned to school did you continue living at home?

PS: … At that point I was living at my grandmother's home in Kearny which was only like fifteen minutes away, yes. … That living arrangement was fine, it was extremely beneficial for me, so I lived there. … Then lived there one more year, and then shifted over to the Newark YMCA. They had a resident six-story building and I lived at the Newark YMCA for two years, and that turned out to be very helpful, very positive. I was getting, I was living on twenty dollars a week, the room was a dollar a night, and the meals were extremely inexpensive as I think about it, but that's what I lived on. I earned some money in the summer, summer jobs down here and … I think the GI Bill paid us sixty-five dollars a month. So, between the summer earnings and the GI Bill, I was able to survive.

SI: Did you go right back to school when you returned from the service?

PS: … I was discharged June 1, 1946 and then in September went right back to NCE, yes.

NM: Were there others like yourself using the GI Bill at NCE?

PS: Oh, yes, a strong part of the population were GI Bill students, yes. Well, I just don't remember many of those folks at all at NCE, it's kind of a blank.

NM: When you enrolled in Rutgers was it similar?

PS: Yes, same thing, very similar, yes. … The business school was just booming with students enrolling in the business school, yes.

SI: We want to ask a few questions about Rutgers Newark at that time because it had just gone to Newark College to becoming part of Rutgers. What were the facilities like?

PS: Okay, 40 Rector Street, it was called the "old brewery." It had been a Ballantine brewery, and Rutgers had renovated it to some degree. … There was a library in the building, had been established, a small library, it was, I'd say, modest, but there were classrooms and it was adequate for the time. I don't, nothing really stands out, it was standard classrooms, I think they were pulling instructors in. … I had a Mr. Gross who had a Master's degree, who was teaching one of the science courses there. Dr. Edward Huberman, taught English, very impressive person. Almost, for a while, I questioned whether … I should change to the business school because I liked the liberal arts a lot but everybody was going to the business school, so I went to the

business school. But that one year at NCAS was very nice, you know, and I did pretty well there.

NM: You transferred to the business school as an undergraduate?

PS: Yes, the business school then was a four year undergraduate program, was a distinct entity junior and senior year, and one would transfer from whatever into the Rutgers Business School, yes. … Junior year was three terms--fall, spring, and summer, and then senior year, two terms. It was a pretty rigorous program I'll say that, yes.

NM: Prior to that transfer, you mentioned you were in the liberal arts. You did not think you were going to be an engineer anymore.

PS: I knew I was not going to be an engineer.

NM: What other kind of possibilities did you see yourself doing as a career?

PS: You know, I recall going to one of the marketing profs, I guess it was in my senior year at the Rutgers Business School and essentially saying, "You know, I'm really not sure what I want to do." And he said, "Look, if you went into a mortuary school and you're really geared into marketing, you'd probably become head of the Mortuary Institute of America and market the whole industry." He said, "You will gravitate to your skill set." He didn't use skill set but that's essentially what he was saying. He said, "Take it easy, your career will emerge." … I think he was right. … Did I set out to teach in college--no way. … I enjoyed it immensely but I never thought I'd ever be teaching in college, yes.

SI: Can you tell us a little bit about the courses themselves or any professors that stand out in your memory?

PS: Yes, a number of them, Dr. Louis Starkweather taught finance. Eric Otto was a member of his department, finance department--I had Eric Otto--heavy German background, very autocratic, terrified a few people in the class, but a very strong person. … He had this marketing course, management, let's see, other names and faces start coming up. … Robert Cambreleng was in the management department, associate professor. Never did finish his terminal degree--master's degree from Harvard Business School. Sid Philips was in the management department. He taught essentially, industrial engineering. It was called motion and time study. What am I missing, finance--oh accounting, John Gilmore had been a GI, young man, very funny, very witty, big classes then. … The business school was so crowded, he was running classes of like forty, forty-five people. … Dean Esterly was kind of all business, he didn't have too much of a sense of humor and I can remember him kind of trying to cool down John Gilmore with his jokes and focus on accounting. [laughter] So let's see, accounting, finance, marketing, management, business law, a lawyer from the Harvard business school, John Connell--was also very tough, very good, and very tough. Those were the first year of courses and then later on I took more management courses with them, yes.

SI: Was the Rutgers business school created entirely when Rutgers started in Newark or was it built on something that had been at Newark College?

PS: … I don't know whether it was the Newark business school, but it was a business school and when Rutgers came into Newark it subsumed the business school and became the Rutgers School of Business Administration. That was the exact title of Rutgers University, yes. George Esterly had a Harvard MBA. He valued that Harvard MBA a good deal and he started recruiting Harvard graduates and Harvard doctoral graduates. At one time there were five of us with doctoral degrees from Harvard on the business school faculty. … Then the Korean War came in and the school, I think it was after the war, the business school just boomed with enrollment, yes.

SI: How were they dealing with the influx in Newark?

PS: We rented some office space and some retail space near the business school on Washington Street I know. There was one building leased there that the business school used. They were reaching out wherever they could find space, and reaching out for instructors and professors.

SI: Had Dean Esterly been at whatever school was there before or was he brought in by Rutgers?

PS: No, he had been there in the 1930s. He and Professor William J. Von Minden, the two of them and a few others had started as I understand a business school before the war. Then the war came and they lost all their students essentially. Then as the war ended then they started to rebuild the school, and I think from New Brunswick's point of view, well the business school in Newark, yes, it's a nice little operation up there, but it wasn't seen as a terribly important operation. There was at one time a move to move the business school to New Brunswick and have the economics department as part of the business school in New Brunswick. Well the head of the economics department in New Brunswick fought it fiercely and won. The business school did not move to New Brunswick, yes.

SI: Do you remember approximately when that was?

PS: I'm trying to think, '51 or '52.

SI: So it was just when you started there as an instructor.

PS: Yes.

SI: At that time there was an emphasis on getting faculty members who also had a lot of experience in the business world. Was that the case here?

PS: Yes, George Esterly wanted people with business experience, he did. He was very strong on that, yes, and did that. He had a lot of accountants come in that had good accounting experience. …

SI: When you were a student, would they work their business experience into the classroom work?

PS: Very much so, yes--reality based, I would say, a lot of it. A number of them had consulting firms or an accounting firm. Bill Von Minden had his own accounting firm I know. … William J. Von Minden, a towering figure headed the accounting department, yes. … Bill Von Minden knew every single one of the principals in the top accounting firms in New York City, yes.

NM: How did you find your way into the MBA program?

PS: … I graduated in 1950 and the MBA program started in September of that year. So I thought, well, come on, let's sign into the MBA program right away. …

NM: The MBA program itself had just started?

PS: … It was in '50. In 1951, George Esterly got some extra money and he appointed four--this is as low as you could get on the faculty hierarchy--part-time assistant instructors. One in management, one in marketing, one in economics, and one in finance. Well, I was asked if I wanted to be a part-time assistant instructor in management. I said, "Yes." So, it was like a graduate assistant. So, I did that the '50-'51 academic year and started in the MBA program. After that one year, George Esterly lost the money so I had to go out and get an honest job. … One of our faculty members, Tom Reynolds, hooked me up with the North Jersey Employer's Association, an association of industry people in North Jersey and so I worked there for a year and a half. … Then Ernie McMahon, Dean McMahon, was looking for an instructor in University College, the evening college and George Esterly and Bob Cambreleng recommended me. I got a call from Bob Cambreleng, "Would you like to join the faculty at University College as an instructor?" I had taught one course, I think, at the business school on an adjunct basis. I said, "Yes, I'd like to try it." That was in January of 1953. I joined full-time faculty at University College before I had my MBA actually. Dean McMahon said, "Well, for the first term we'll low key that." Then I got my MBA in '53, so I became more legitimate, yes.

SI: At that point did most of the faculty members have the MBA as their highest degree?

PS: It was a mix, there were some doctoral people on the faculty but I mean a ballpark figure, maybe a third of them, maybe half. … I had then signed into the NYU PhD program at night, but it was taking six, seven years, and that just seemed to be a long time. But I did have Peter Drucker, the towering figure in management at the time for a couple of courses there, and Herman Kroos who was a historian, an economic historian, also very good. … Do you want to continue on that vein?

SI: To go back to your undergraduate days, was there a lot of student activity on campus?

PS: Yes. No sports, but there were a lot of clubs--finance club, accounting club, I'm sure, management club, yes. … In those days, the fraternity, the business fraternity, Delta Sigma Pi, was a big factor in the school, so … a lot of the social activities centered around Delta Sigma Pi fraternity. …

SI: It was not just an honor society, but an actual working fraternity.

PS: No, Beta Gamma Sigma was the honor society but Delta Sigma Pi was really the social, and there were … a lot of social activities--formal dinners, tuxedos, and all that jazz, yes. George Esterly instituted what he called the business lunch and conference. Once a month we would have, we would go over to the Robert Treat Hotel, have a business speaker. There would be tables of eight, a faculty member, a business guest, and six students. George's general idea was to teach some of these students how to behave at a business lunch and business affair. So, they became more civilized.

SI: Could you give us some examples of what they would tell you what to do and what not to do?

PS: Well, table manners among other things, yes. … A student was supposed to be the host at that table, introducing everybody around, and getting some real world experience.

SI: What kind of relationship did the business school have at that time with the businesses in Newark?

PS: Pretty strong, Orville Beal was president of Prudential and he was a graduate of our school and so. George Esterly and Bill Von Minden had established some pretty good contacts, yes.

SI: Would they bring in executives from those companies to speak in the classroom?

PS: Yes, there'd be guest speakers. I'm trying to think of the years but there used to be the annual business conference for the state of New Jersey … co-sponsored by the Sales Executive Club of New Jersey and the Rutgers Business School and we'd have a thousand or twelve hundred people down at the gym on College Avenue New Brunswick in early June at a huge one day conference--top national business leaders, George Romney, Mitt's father, was the speaker one year. The governor would always come at the conference. It was a big deal. In fact, I was kind of in charge, responsible for Rutgers, the Rutgers arrangements on it for a number of years but after a while I don't know what happened, it just faded away, we let it go, which was tragic. But it used to be the major business meeting in New Jersey.

NM: Were there other types of events that you would hold on the New Brunswick campus?

PS: No, this was it, and I think in a way we were seen in a way as invaders of the New Brunswick campus, yes. Governor Hughes was one of the governors there. One year I remember chatting with him there, yes. Now, the business school from the New Brunswick point of view, my impression is that the business school was better off in Newark, let them do their thing up in Newark. We'll run the economics department down here. [Editor's Note: Governor Richard J. Hughes served as Governor of New Jersey from 1962 to 1970. After his governorship he served as New Jersey's Chief Justice from 1973 to 1979.]

SI: Tell us about your year at the North Jersey Employer's Association and what you did there.

PS: Okay, a lot of my job was to go out and frankly encourage businesses to join the association. I was in marketing for the association and we did, that's not totally accurate, we did surveys among our members of employment practices and wage surveys, and so I did that kind of work as well. Quite a bit of my job as a matter of fact was that way too. … I liked it and if the Rutgers offer had not come up I probably would have stayed there. Harold Hawkey, a lawyer, was a very bright person, was the Secretary of the Association, and we had some very nice industry contacts, luncheons periodically, so if there's nothing that caused me to leave other than that I had an offer that I thought would be nice to try. …

NM: Was it hard to work a full-time job and attend school?

PS: Yes, it was a pretty full schedule, it was, even though the business school, the MBA program was new. … They were still getting their feet on the ground, clearly. Yes, but it was a pretty tight time demand at times, the job itself and the evening college work, yes. But that MBA program was okay, but it was again new, and it was not as rigorous as it might have been to be candid.

SI: Can you elaborate on that?

PS: Well, I saw the contrast when I went to Harvard.

SI: I was wondering if maybe this program was modeled on Harvard's program.

PS: Generally, I would say generally it was in that George Esterly had that Harvard background. I'm sure he saw that as ultimately not just an evening program but he wanted to go full-time with it, yes.

SI: When you say it was not as rigorous was that just in terms of what the faculty demanded of the students?

PS: No, all of a sudden, I don't know if this ought to be on the record or off the record, but all of a sudden you have an undergraduate faculty teaching undergraduate business students and "bam," you're authorized to offer an MBA program and you don't bring in a whole new faculty for the MBA program. Your undergraduate faculty adjusts now to providing graduate level instruction, and for some people I think that was quite a jump to make. …

NM: Did you have a specialty in the business school? Did you plan on going in any particular direction?

PS: I was in the management department, so organization, behavior, communication, policy, strategy, were on the horizon, but frankly I was involved in some more mundane courses like motion and time study which essentially is industrial engineering, and that's where I started at University College. I started teaching industrial engineering courses under the motion and time study label. So, yes I was generally in the management area academically, but interesting, when I got to Harvard I ended up in the, by choice, in the production area under Franklin Folts, with

production and policy both, yes. I liked marketing a lot and took a number of marketing courses yes. … I like the marketing function.

NM: What were some of the other possible specializations that this new business school was offering?

PS: A very strong element was accounting and always had been and is today a strong element of the business school, the accounting department, but I never wanted to go that route. I just didn't see myself oriented that way.

SI: At the time you graduated as an undergraduate, the Korean War starts, did that have any impact on your life? Were you afraid that you might be called into the service again?

PS: No, no, that was not a factor at all as I remember it.

NM: It sounds like you did notice some of the demographic changes that were occurring in the colleges, and that some people left for the Korean War.

PS: Yes.

NM: How closely did you follow the Korean War? Was it something you read daily in newspapers?

PS: Radio and newspapers, but it was not a high impact--not nearly a high impact as World War II was.

SI: As a New Jersey resident, did you have any idea what Rutgers was or did the name mean anything to you?

PS: Well it did. In fact, my dad had gone to Rutgers apparently his freshman year, I don't know too much about that, but then Philadelphia College of Pharmacy. … Had I ever been out to the campus? I don't think so.

SI: Was that a draw that NCAS was now part of Rutgers or do you think you would have applied to Newark College of Arts and Sciences if it had not been part of Rutgers?

PS: I'm not sure I would have gone to it, but the Rutgers label then certainly was a plus. I thought, "Gee, I can go to Rutgers," yes. I don't know if the Rutgers label had not been there, I don't know what I would have done. I knew I had the GI Bill. I might … well have explored other options.

SI: Is there anything else we should add to the record before we wrap up for today? Next time we'll pick up with more questions about your time at University College, which is the University College based in Newark, right?

PS: Well, no, it was based in New Brunswick. Headquarters was the New Brunswick dean's office. Ernie McMahon's office was in New Brunswick at 77 Hamilton Street. That was my first office affiliation, yes.

SI: Did you teach your classes in Newark?

PS: Both Newark and New Brunswick, as well as in North Newark up at the College of Pharmacy. There was a pretty dismal facility up there at the time.

SI: Did University College still have divisions in Paterson and other areas of the state back then?

PS: Yes, it did. Paterson and Jersey City, and Newark and New Brunswick. I think those were the four elements of University College, yes.

SI: Did you teach at any of the other sites?

PS: North Newark and Newark and New Brunswick, but not Paterson and not Jersey City. I also taught for one term, and probably two terms, at the Camden campus.

SI: Okay.

PS: Jersey City was run those days by, they were called the "Andrew Sisters." They ran the office of University College in Jersey City. It was their kind of domain. [laughter]

NM: What was the average course load that instructors were expected to teach a semester?

PS: Twelve credit hours a term, and six credit hours in Newark and six in New Brunswick--fall and spring terms, twenty-four credit hours a year.

NM: Four classes a semester.

PS: Yes.

NM: Were you teaching two courses twice or four separate courses a semester?

PS: Let's see--it must have been two courses twice, not four separate courses when I first started teaching. It was two courses twice, and it started six 'o clock until 9:30 or so, maybe ten. … It was a heavy load. It really was.

NM: As a first-year instructor, was it overwhelming that all of a sudden you have four courses on your plate that you were expected to teach?

PS: It was. … I spent all day during the day with preparations, yes. The initial year, that was a full year.

SI: Were there other expectations besides classroom work such as publishing and that sort of thing?

PS: Yes, at that time that was kind of in the background, but also there were some committees, University College had as you can imagine some committees, Stu Demarest, that's the name I've been trying to surface, head of the English department of University College, wonderful person, and he asked me to join a committee kind of looking at the future of University College, yes. There were four or five of us on that committee, so there were committee assignments as well as the teaching load.

SI: Well, I think that will be a good place to pick up next time.

PS: I'm not sure I can add an awful lot frankly. That's in the dim distant past, but I can remember being on the committee with him, yes.

SI: Well, thank you very much. We appreciate your time today and we will set up a second interview time in the future.

PS: Wow, time has flown.

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

Reviewed by Nicholas Molnar 8/6/2012
Reviewed by Philip Shaak 9/24/2012