

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
NEW BRUNSWICK
AN INTERVIEW WITH NATHAN SHOEHALTER
FOR THE
RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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AND

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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

TRANSCRIPT BY

ALTHEA E. MILLER

Althea E. Miller: This begins an interview with Mr. Nathan Shoehalter on March 14, 1997, in San Francisco, California, with Althea Miller and ...

Sebastian Bernheim: Sebastian Bernheim.

AM: I would like to begin by asking you about your experiences at the University of Biarritz in France.

Nathan Shoehalter: All right. I don't know if it was really an accredited institution. It was set up for veterans, or, we were active soldiers at the time. It was set up while we waited for ships to go home. ... It was an opportunity for us, some of us, to go to school again and I was very lucky. I was with, at that time, the Third Infantry. We were stationed in a place called Bad Wildungen. Bad Wildungen, I believe it was called and ... we were an occupation army. We couldn't fraternize with any of the civilians, so, we were talking to each other, which was pretty awful. ... There were two guys I met there who were show people. They were bright people, Katz and Kessel. Katz, eventually, became a dentist and was practicing in Pittsburgh, last time I remember ... hearing from him, and Kessel, Harry Kessel ... lives up in North Jersey. I don't know if he's still alive or not, but, he was doing children's programs. ... He was a clown, but, the three of us used to write skits and we did Army shows. We employed a German actress, I remember. I can't remember her name. Oh, ... this goes back a long time, fifty-one years? Something like that. It was 1945.

AM: This was in the fall?

NS: Yeah, 1945, fall of 1945, and Bad Wildungen was a cute, little, German town. [I] hated it, I just hated it. It was just a dreadful place. ... The Army, in its wisdom, set up programs for soldiers and one of them was at Biarritz, which sounded very romantic. There was a program in London and there was a program in Grenoble, [France]. These were all college courses they were giving. I signed up for Biarritz, I guess because I had been to London for three weeks, less than that, and I'd never been to Grenoble. It didn't sound at all charming, not like Biarritz. So, I was lucky to get that assignment. [I] went AWOL from my unit while traveling to Biarritz. [It was the] first time I'd ever done anything illegal in my life and I don't remember how I got to Biarritz at all, which was pretty far away from Frankfurt. I was so glad to get out of Germany. You have no idea how I hated that place. It still hangs over on me. Illogically, but, I just ... cannot abide the place and didn't then. Frankfurt was a disaster. It was all bombed, and stinking, and just getting out of it was wonderful, and that's why I went AWOL. I was on a train. The other guys, I don't remember their names, who they were, but, who were also assigned, one guy was going to Paris, another one was going to London, but, we went on this train. We could have gotten a flight, but, I had never flown, and I figured, "Jesus, if I had lived this long, I'm not going to try fooling around with a flight." So, I went by train, and that's all I remember, but, I somehow got to Biarritz. When I got there, it was wonderful. I was housed in a hotel, the hotel I can't remember, but, I remember that we had our meals at the Empress Eugenie's Palace. It was a

huge hotel built by Napoleon Bonaparte for the Empress Eugenie. It was absolutely spectacular and we were housed in a hotel. ... I had been a PFC in grade for three and a half years, and didn't enjoy any of the privileges of people, but, here I was, in a hotel room with just one other guy, Katz, Dave Katz. [He was a] funny, funny man, just a wonderful, smart guy who had not been in combat at all, but, ended up, somehow, with the Third Division, like I did. So, we had nothing to talk about, our experiences. As a matter-of-fact, we never talked about our experiences, ever. At Biarritz, there was a professor from Douglass College, Dr. Schmidt, Hubert [G.] Schmidt, the historian. He is now dead. Hubert Schmidt, later, when I came back to Rutgers, reminisced with me about his experiences there, just a wonderful guy. There was somebody else. I can't remember, but, I think there was somebody else from Rutgers, but, I'm not sure, but, I do remember ... being an actor, and I took an abnormal psychology course. ... That I remember, I remember abnormal psychology. I think I had an English course, but, I'm not sure. These weren't really courses, these were just keeping us busy.

AM: Was this the first time you tried any type of acting?

NS: No, I had been an actor at Rutgers as an undergraduate. I was in Winterset. What happened at Biarritz was that the man who produced Winterset on Broadway, Guthrie McClintic, who also is dead, he was the husband of Katherine Kornell. Katherine Kornell, yeah, does that sound right?

AM: I am not sure.

NS: Yeah, okay. Oh, my God, what you are dredging up? Anyhow, Guthrie McClintic was a Broadway producer. If you go back and look up his name, he's a very famous guy. I auditioned for Guthrie McClintic and got the same part that I played at Rutgers in 1942, in Winterset, in Biarritz. I was Trock, I think [was] the name of the [character]. I was a gangster, a gangster who gets murdered. It was wonderful, just wonderful. ... They brought in all kinds of wonderful faculty people from all over the world, all over the United States, all over the country, and they brought in people like Guthrie McClintic. Richard Whorf was another one of the producers, directors. Richard Whorf was on Broadway and also did some films. Richard Whorf produced Richard the Third. Was his name Richard Whorf? I forget, but, anyhow, Richard the Third, ... a couple of the guys who played in that became television stars and movie stars, later. I never exploited that, but, we were fairly close, you know. Biarritz was just a wonderful place and very close to Lourdes, the Catholic shrine, you know, where your cripples are cured. One of our roommates, Katz and Shoehalter are not Catholic, but, one of our very dear friends was a Catholic kid from Philadelphia, whose name I will never dredge up. That poor guy, ... he went to Lourdes and he came back with the water. He said, "The water is free, this water is free, but, it costs three bucks for the glass," for the jar to carry it in. Anyhow, that's a digression. Biarritz had a library, I remember, which was in a casino. ... Biarritz was a watering hole for the very rich before the war, ... had a plage, a beach area. [It was a] beautiful spot, beautiful, absolutely lovely spot. If you looked far enough, you could see Avenue A, Brooklyn, if you looked out

toward the west. Yes, that is what we wanted. We wanted to go home. So, I don't remember anything about the courses that we took. I was there, I don't remember, but, it was up until the wintertime when I finally got orders to come to a place called the Cigarette Camps. The Cigarette Camps were named [after brands of cigarettes]. There was Chesterfield, and Pall-Mall, and Camels. ... These were just areas like Camp Kilmer, where they ... just brought everybody together, and then, we got [on] ships to go home. I was at one of those camps, and got on a ship, and came back to the States in January of 1946. The war was over and my division had been slated to go to Japan, to fight in Japan, before the armistice in August of 1945. We were slated to go. So, now, there was no war and we were going home. There were thousands of us. I was on a ship, I'll never forget the name of it, a Liberty ship called the *Sheepshead Bay Victory*. It was just a little thing. ... When I was at Biarritz, they had a unit of the Armed Forces Network radio, and I went up to the offices there, ... just out of curiosity, and was watching what they were doing. Some of them had similar equipment to what we were recording [with] here in the studio, what the Broadcast Services for the Blind [uses], very similar to this. I mean, just as cruddy as this. ... The guy there handed me a sheet of paper, and said, "Read this," and I said, "This is WBAU, the Armed Forces Network at Biarritz." I thought, "Wow, oh, this is what I want to do."

AM: That was it.

NS: "This is what I want to do the rest of my life," I thought, but, it was really very exciting. I'm being a little dramatic, though. So, on the ship, back on the Liberty ship *Sheepshead Bay Victory*, they needed somebody to operate their public address system. So, ... I volunteered, which is something you never did in the Army. I volunteered for that and I ran records. We had these huge sixteen inch transcriptions, they were called. [They] ran at thirty-three and a third rpm, and they were fifteen-minute disks, and you'd put one on one table, and one on another table, and you rotated, back and forth. They were recordings of radio programs that had been on the air. In addition to that, I was given the job of reading the news that came over from the BBC, actually. It was called dictation speed news, and it was dictation speed, so that all the ships at sea could write down quickly. ... So, I used to copy down what the BBC [broadcast], it used to be at nine o'clock, Greenwich Mean time, so, it was various times of the day that I was picking this up, as we moved westward, and I would write the news, and then, read it, and that was the beginning of my radio career, in the *Sheepshead Bay Victory*. I was violently ill. I was just so seasick. We were on board, I guess, ten days. It was twice as long as it was to take us over to the other side, when we left from Boston. When I got back to the States, I had no idea what I was going to do, absolutely no idea. I went down to Rutgers, of course, ... the same reason why you're here, just to find out what my status was. This was January, so, it might have been around the 1st of February, some place in there. Actually, I was discharged, see, these are dates you never forget, January 29th, 1946. I'll never forget that. That was the day I was discharged from Camp Kilmer, where I also went AWOL, to go back home to Irvington.

AM: To see your parents?

NS: To see my parents.

AM: And, your sister?

NS: And, my sister, ... and that over with, I had to do something. I had no idea what I wanted to do. I had had dreams of being a veterinarian. I had to finish school and wanted to be a teacher. When we were in the Army, in those moments when we could talk, ... I had a wonderful crew. There was George Kelley, Jerry Goldberg, John Cope, and myself. We were a litter squad of company aid men. We would talk about the stupidity of war, what we would do when it was all over. We wanted to be teachers. How could you not? How could you possibly condone the stuff that we're going through? We thought that education was a big thing. So, that stuck in my mind, "Maybe, I'll be a teacher." I don't remember which offices I visited at Rutgers, but, I remember, I got eighteen credits for being in the Army. I'd left when I was a junior, I guess, so, I got a couple of credits for being a soldier. I remember taking an education course which was just dreadful. Oh, God, it was so awful, but, the professor was a great guy. We were treated so differently. All the men who came back were mature and never talked about our experiences, never talked about them at all.

AM: There was, then, that age difference between you and the students just coming in.

NS: Well, there was that, but, most of the guys who were there were under the GI Bill, as I was. ... We tended to travel together by age groups. I don't remember any younger people. ... I missed everything. I missed everything. I lost my youth, eighteen to twenty-four, whatever it was. Those years are just gone. I never had that. Kids, these were kids, I didn't know anything about them. I do remember I had an English class with a guy named Donald McGinn, Professor McGinn, and we studied Shakespeare. I'll never forget that. It was so great. I knew what he was talking about. I was so mature at that time. I think we all were. We were great. It was so exciting, so much different from what I remember when I was an undergraduate, before the war. Really, we talked like adults. I mean, it was no nonsense at all. When something was bullshit, we let him know it was bullshit. Forgive me, it was very exciting. I remember, I just had a couple of credits to go before I would get my degree, but, I got it, and, at the same time, I got the degree, we had to do a thing called student teaching, or something. I got a job at Irvington High School teaching biology and chemistry. I thought that's what I wanted to do. I would be a teacher of biology and chemistry, but, at the same time, I guess that was September I got that job, September '46. You know, I can't remember any of the men I was with. I do remember I had to take a job and I worked at what is the old gym. I don't know if you knew of the old gym on College Avenue. It's still there?

AM: Yeah, it is still there.

NS: Next to ...

AM: The barn.

NS: Yeah, right, the barn. Well, the barn was a mess hall during World War II, and, after the war, it was also a cafeteria, and I worked in the basement. There's an elevator in there that goes from the basement up to the basketball court, I guess it is. I worked there with a guy named Bob Bell. He died recently. He was a lieutenant in the Army. We never talked about this at all. We never talked about our war experience. ... We washed dishes down there in this thing and we wiped trays, Christ. At that time, WCTC was being formed. It was September of 1946. It went on the air in December of 1946. Bob Bell and I got a job as announcers on WCTC. We were the first people on the station. ... There was a wonderful dish washer, a black man. ... The football coach, at the time, was a man named Harvey Harmon, who was a dreadful bigot. He was a big, hulking guy. He was in the Navy, walked like a duck, big waddle. Anyhow, this black man, who was our boss down in the basement of the College Avenue Gym, became Harvey Harmon for us. We used to interview him. We would get these big coffee mugs ... and that would be our [microphones] ... "Coach Harmon, what do you think about the game we're going to have with Princeton on Saturday?" We would do mock interviews with this guy. We were practicing radio while we were washing dishes and wiping trays. Well, the campus was just seething with activity. At that time, they were just beginning to construct that area in back of College Avenue. I guess, if you ... stand looking at the library, the current library, it would be that big field. ... I guess there's a parking lot there now.

AM: Yes, that used to be Neilson Field there, all the way down.

NS: Neilson Field, exactly, Neilson Field. We called it Nelson Field, right.

AM: Nelson, okay.

NS: Nelson Field used to have a track around it. I remember running around that thing a lot. Then, when the war was over, a lot of buildings were declared surplus, and the university got this huge building, an airplane surplus factory, and that became the dining hall, and that was being built at the time that I was [there]. ...

AM: Is that Records Hall that you are talking about?

NS: Records Hall, exactly, yeah, right.

AM: Yes, okay, that was the big barracks.

NS: That was Records Hall, and then, there was the cafeteria in back of it. ... So, there was that kind of excitement, the buildings going on, and the guys coming back, and just the excitement of the college, you know. There were no women around, they're all over at NJC. ... Yeah, it was still NJC, and then, it became ...

AM: Shortly thereafter ...

NS: Shortly after, it became Douglass College. ... I remember my classes, I remember that one class, ... terrible, that education class. That was just awful, a terrible waste, but, I had to get it to get credentials for teaching. I wanted to teach, but, at the time that I got my teaching job at Irvington High School, at twelve hundred dollars a year, that was the salary of a high school teacher, CTC was coming on the air. I used to teach from eight o'clock in the morning until twelve-thirty in Irvington, and then, drive down to New Brunswick. ... When the station went on the air, I was hired, and I did a disc jockey show ... beginning at three o'clock in the afternoon, and I worked until eleven o'clock at night, and then, I'd drive back to Irvington, and start all over again, but, I couldn't keep that up. The radio was much more exciting than the high school stuff, unfortunately. I would have been a hell of a teacher, I think, [for] high school. ... All those things you talk about, you know, that we talked about doing, I thought I could do it in radio. I thought, "Radio, by God, we're talking to hundreds of thousands of people." Maybe a thousand people, but, it's much more than a classroom and you could change people's minds. You had the airwaves and the microphone of power, bullshit. So, I started in radio, and was still working, and I still hadn't got my degree. I was still taking a couple of courses. [I] have no idea what I was taking. One of the guys I was taking a course with was Don Meaney, who became, eventually, a vice-president of NBC News in Washington. Don was a wonderful guy. ... His job during the war was, he was in the Navy, and he flew dirigibles over Asbury Park, from Asbury Park to Cape May, looking for submarines. My God, he was a wonderful guy, really just the sweetest man. [He] suffered from ulcers, stress. He went to NBC after our CTC business. This is 1946-'47, and I was working at WCTC, and still taking courses, and I got my degree in June of 1947. It was Don Meaney and Bob Bell, we were all at the station together. I remember it so clearly, because we were working, the commencement exercises were at four o'clock in the afternoon, and, of course, my parents came down for this thing. ... Governor Driscoll gave the address. I have no idea what he was said, but, it was at the gym where I had been washing dishes and stuff, so, ... all this was coming together. ... I remember wearing the cap and gown and being very proud of the fact that I had a Bachelors'. The ceremony was over at five o'clock and I had a six o'clock show to do. Don Meaney had a six o'clock news to do and Bob Bell had a basketball game, or some crap like that. He was our sports announcer, program director. That was my end of my association with Rutgers as a student. Then, at CTC, I stayed there until, I guess, '49, sometime in '49, and I got a job in television, in Newark, at Channel 13. You don't want to hear about that, but, ... what I wanted to say was that I had these great associations because of my association with the radio station. I was in New Brunswick all the time at Rutgers, and I got all of my associations with the people on campus, like Mason Gross, who was just an assistant professor in philosophy at the time I was there, and Houston Peterson, who was a professor of philosophy, and some of my old professors, who I just revered. There was a guy named Fred Beaudette at the College of Agriculture who was just the sweetest guy. He died of cancer. He used to have a pipe, he used to lecture with his pipe, and take the Bunsen burner, it was so dramatic, put that Bunsen burner up to his pipe. [laughter] There was a guy named Jacob Joffe

who was a pedologist and soils expert, who I used to correspond with when I was in the Army. Then, a lot of guys at the College of Agriculture, who ... [were] just wonderful people. ...

AM: So, you still kept in touch with your professors?

NS: Oh, yeah, very much so, yeah, always on a different level. It was really a different level. I could never get to call them by their first names or anything like that. They were always Professor or Doctor. I was a bit of a prude, still am a bit of a prude. I mean, these were distinguished people. You had to have some sort of reverence to them, and having been a PFC, you saluted everybody, no matter what. ... The president was Robert C. Clothier at the time. He was a stodgy Philadelphian. ... The guy I was most associated with was a man named Wallace Moreland, Wally Moreland, who was director of public relations for the university, at the time. He had Ed Isaacs and ... I'll think of it, sounds like a cow, but, it's not. (George Holsten) Isn't that awful? I worked with these guys for so long. McDonald, John McDonald. Anyhow, there were three or four men in that department who I got to know very well, and, when I was working at the radio station, I used to have these constant associations with the people at the university. In 1948, there was a bond issue whereby Rutgers was going to start a medical school. ... The Catholic Church was opposed to the university getting this. The Catholics, in their sermons on Sunday, just said, "You will not vote for this bond issue, you will vote against the university." Rutgers, you know, is a Dutch Reformed school, long before we were born, Althea, way long before. ... [It] called itself a state university, but, people didn't believe it. This is a Dutch Reformed school, ... in the late '40s. ...

AM: Why was the Catholic Church against the medical institution?

NS: They didn't want Rutgers to run this.

AM: Oh, okay.

NS: They didn't want state funds used by Rutgers. They would much rather have Seton Hall become the medical school. No, it was ... all sub-rosa, never talked about publicly in any way at all, but, that's really what happened.

AM: You just knew what was going on?

NS: ... I was working at the radio station, but, I knew what was happening because Wally would be coming over all the time, saying, "We've got to put on these news stories," and do this, and do that. ... Ed Isaacs used to work there. Ed Isaacs was a type-A crazy guy, wonderful. I learned everything from guys like Ed Isaacs, Wally Moreland, Jack McDonald, Mason Gross. Those guys really formed my professional life. They were just so ethical and just great guys, great guys. [I] can't speak enough about them. They're all dead.

AM: So, you were happy to see Mason Gross go on and become president?

NS: Oh, my. Well, you know, we weren't that close, but, Mason and I, ... I could call him Mason. We used to drink together, go out together. Good man, he's a wonderful man. ... Since I'd had so many of these close associations, Wally Moreland asked me to join the staff at the university, which I didn't want to do, but, he said, "Look, we have this program called the Rutgers University Forum. Will you moderate the Forum for us?" Every Tuesday night, it was done live at 8:05. It was on WAAT in Newark, and a station in Trenton, WTNJ, and an Asbury Park station. Anyhow, it was three or four stations live, none of this wire recorder or tape stuff. I ran the Rutgers University Forum. The previous moderator of the Rutgers University Forum was a guy named Mason Gross. He was the first moderator of the Forum. Then, I ran the Forum for many years. I don't want to go back over that. That was a long time. I was behind the scenes. I was the executive producer, I guess, for decades. There was Arnie [Arnold L.] Zucker, who took over it, and Roger Cohen. Anyhow, that was my association with the university. I loved the university. I really was so proud of it. It was Clothier, who I started to say, was this stodgy Philadelphian. He wasn't approachable in the way [the others were]. ... When he retired, Louis Webster Jones became president. Then, we went through that terrible period of the McCarthy hearings and the faculty saying they took the Fifth Amendment. It was just ... awful and the university buckled up. The faculty, who supported the men who took the Fifth Amendment, they were wonderful, but, the Board of Governors, they did not. It was awful, it was just terrible, you know. It was very divisive. It came much later, but, the beginnings of it were there. The fright that this man, McCarthy, threw into people, just terrible. Well, I don't know what else I can tell you. That's my association with the university.

AM: I see you were also a faculty advisor at WRSU for twenty-four years.

NS: Oh, yeah. Yeah, ... that's a misnomer, because students just went on their own like they should, but, I remember attending the elections of the leaders of the WRSU, and they used to go on for days and nights. We'd stay up until four o'clock in the morning listening to all the wonderful things this closed circuit radio station was going to do. Now, you're on the air now, aren't you?

AM: Yes.

NS: So, have an FM signal, but, at that time, you know, you could pick it up on the radiators in the dorms. These kids would fight for this thing. I was supposedly the faculty advisor because I was working radio, see, for awhile. Big deal, but, the kids went on their own and they did whatever they wanted to do, which is the way it should be. I was there only to represent the university when they had their elections. It didn't mean anything, but, I was there. The kids were wonderful. I shouldn't call them kids. These were mature people.

AM: So, there were no censorship problems with the radio?

NS: Never.

AM: Never?

NS: Oh, never. No, that would be the last thing in the world. When I started in radio, you couldn't say words like "pregnant" on the air. I mean that was [horrible], and H-E-L-L, no way you could say, or "damn," you couldn't say things like that. So, that was part of my background. Fortunately, I could never hear the student radio station. Sometimes, they would over-modulate and I would pick them up. I lived in Highland Park, and I would hear them, and I was so embarrassed by what I was listening to, I would turn it off immediately. It was 640 on the dial, something like that, on the AM dial. It was just awful. ... Well, I don't want to go into it. I don't want to be a judge, but, ... that's the way you learned radio. You ...

AM: Played around?

NS: You played around with it, and you got some kind of a feel of what it was like to talk to a microphone, which is pretty scary, in those days. It was way before television, of course. ... You can't do the things on television that you can do on radio, you know. Oh, boy, was I wrong.

AM: You were still working at Channel 13, but, the Forum really got you into the radio end of the business.

NS: I was working, yeah. I did the Forum until I started Channel 13, then, I started to do educational programs at Channel 13. Then, the university invited me back as a member of the department. That's not just a freelancer, but, I was a member of the department, and I left Channel 13, and I produced programs for the university, radio and television programs. We eventually got into television programs, but, most of it was radio. We did hundreds and hundreds of radio programs, thousands, ... literally, when I think about it. We used to do five different shows a week, Zucker and me, but, that's nothing. We did the "Report From Rutgers." I forgot the names. There was "World of Rutgers: Rutgers Report on World Affairs." Oh, we were really on top of stuff. Are we finished?

AM: Is the tape over?

SB: It will be soon.

AM: Okay.

NS: I don't know what more I can tell you about. I do remember how appalled I was that they were going to knock down, ... I had an office ... at 145 College Avenue, which was directly opposite the gym, which is now the stairway going into the dining hall.

AM: Yeah, it is the Brower Commons now.

NS: That's right and that's where I had an office. We had a house to ourselves and we had studios down in the basement. There was a guy in the art department, somebody named Alan Kaprow. Does that name mean anything to you?

AM: No, sorry.

NS: No. Alan Kaprow is one of the distinguished members of the faculty who is now an artist. Well, he always was an artist. The art house was on the corner. What's the street that just precedes where the graduate [school is]? ...

AM: Is that Hunterdon or Senior Street?

NS: Yeah, one of those streets. It was on the corner of Senior, let's call it Senior, and College. There was a tree in front. I remember, there's a big tree in front of that house. One day, I walk up College Avenue and this tree was decorated with toilet paper. It was one of Alan Kaprow's happenings. Alan Kaprow is a very distinguished artist. I think he lives here in California these days, but, I'm not sure, but, you can look him up, K-A-P-R-O-W. ... That tree got a lot of abuse. Toilet paper hanging in it, and then, somebody brought over a toilet bowl and shoved it under the tree. This was art. Mason Gross would approve of all of this stuff. Mason was the provost at the time. "These are artists," he would say. "These are people expressing themselves." So, there was this change that was happening on the campus.

AM: More acceptance?

NS: More acceptance and much more liberal, but, there was that fear again that didn't come. ... The '40s were vibrant, the late '40s, when the men were coming back from the war. It was vibrant. I mean, that's the only word I can think of. It was exciting. We finished our degrees, so, we went out and got jobs. Not me, but, people did. This is what happened. They got out, they went out, and they started families. ... I didn't think of marriage. I didn't think of marriage until maybe twelve years later, I guess.

AM: But, your wife was a graduate of Douglass?

NS: Yes, but, I didn't meet her until 1957.

AM: Many years later.

NS: Many, many years later. ... I really had no social life, if you want to know about my social life.

AM: This was after the war?

NS: After the war.

AM: When you came back?

NS: When I came back, ... I worked as a liquor salesman. My father was a liquor salesman in New Jersey and he got me a job with this company, sold Manischewitz wine. This was ... just after I finished teaching and before I went to CTC. I worked as a wine salesman, and, in those days, it was very difficult to sell wine, ... especially the wine that I was selling. It was for the Monarch Wine Company. The Monarch Wine Company are the exclusive manufacturers, distributors, of Manischewitz wine, which is really a big deal in the Jewish community, but, it also sold stuff, ... here in California, that wouldn't get very far at all, but, it used to be sold in the ghetto areas. It was a cheap wine, but, the problem was, we could get a lot of the wine, but, you couldn't get the bottles. ... They wanted pint bottles of this stuff, and you could not get bottles because of the war, and they hadn't tooled up yet, but, if you bought eight cases of gallons of Barbera, I remember, and I think there was a chardonnay, but, I'm not sure, but, they were pretty exotic. It was just dreadful, but, if you bought eight cases of the gallons, we'd give you a case of pints. So, that was the terrible thing I had to do. It was coercive. I used to load up these people with these heavy bottles, but, they really wanted those pint bottles. I hated that job, I just hated it, but, I never made as much money in my whole ... professional life as I made when I was a wine salesman, but, I hated it, and I gave that up. That was just beyond me. My father did very well though, but, the campus [was] much more serious than I had remembered it when I was an undergraduate. The discussions that took place in classrooms were more meaningful. That Shakespeare course, I'll never forget that Shakespeare. ... Oh, at the drop of a hat, I can still do some of the soliloquies from Hamlet or MacBeth. ... He was such a good teacher and we were so highly motivated by what we were studying, except that education course. ... If they still have that, you've got to drop it. That was a waste of time.

SB: We will send President Lawrence a copy of the interview.

NS: Okay. The faculty people, especially in the non-tenured faculty, was rapid turnovers. You got to be an assistant professor, but, you couldn't get any further, except the Economics Department, I remember that. 1947, the Economics Department was so strong, Bob Alexander. ...

AM: Bob Alexander, I know him very well.

NS: [Alexander] Balinky, [Kenneth K.] Kurihara, Monroe Berkowitz. These guys were so great. They were assistant professors, but, by God, I used to call on them and they would do programs

for us. It was wonderful. Bob Alexander, every week, he'd have a letter to the editor in the *New York Times*. Great guy, great guy. Did he ever fix his teeth?

AM: Also, he still smokes.

NS: He still smokes?

AM: Like a chimney.

NS: No kidding. Oh, wonderful guy. If you see him, give him my regards, would you?

AM: Definitely.

NS: Is he still teaching?

AM: No, his last one was in '93. It was the "History of Brazil."

NS: Really. ...

AM: But, he is still going very strong.

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

NS: ... Those guys, really. ...

AM: You would have been there with Gardner, Lloyd Gardner? [laughter]

NS: Oh, yeah. That's good. ... Lloyd Gardner, Dick McCormick, of course.

AM: Yes.

NS: Dick was the Class of 1938, so, we were almost contemporaneous. I was much later, but, I knew Dick when ...

AM: He is no longer a teacher, but, he comes into the library, the archives, a lot.

NS: Oh, sure. ... Let's see, McCormick, who do I remember?

AM: Do you remember Genovese?

NS: Sure, oh, yeah.

AM: Do you remember that whole case?

NS: Sure. Oh, I was very much involved in that thing. It was Senator Dumont, oh, yeah. Mason Gross was superb on that. He was so good on that. Eugene Genovese.

AM: Genovese.

NS: Yeah. He was, oh, the terrible thing about that thing was, here I was, producing radio programs about current issues, and I remember, one time, the one time the university said, "No don't invite him." I wanted to get Genovese on the air and they wouldn't let me do it. I remember that. I don't remember who it was.

AM: That was very big then?

NS: Oh, it was bitter, it was really bitter. Genovese, and then, ... that was the Vietnam War, the teach-in.

AM: Yes. We were the second teach-in in the nation.

NS: That's right. Michigan was first, I think, and then, Rutgers, you know. That hurt the university a great deal, but, Genovese is a distinguished scholar. He's a real terrific guy. I don't know where he is these days. ...

AM: I believe he is very conservative now.

NS: Is he really?

AM: He is up in New England and he has renounced everything.

NS: No kidding, really? He used to be ... at Rochester. Yeah, he's a scholar, a Civil War scholar, or a slavery scholar.

AM: I am not sure.

NS: ... He wrote a couple of books on slavery. You should read them. Let's see, there was Genovese, that didn't come until much later. That was in the '50s, but, I am trying to think of the guys in the early part. The College of Agriculture Extension Division is Korbobo, Christ, the director of public relations. All I remember is, I did a program with him on television, and he did a program on knife sharpening. That's all I can remember. Isn't that awful? The administration of the university at the time was very loose. It wasn't as Byzantine as it is now. There was the president, and the provost, and the dean of the colleges, and that was it, and then, chairmen of departments, but, now, I understand you got all kinds of [deans and administrators.] ...

AM: It has gotten too big.

NS: Much too big. Well, I don't know if it's [too big]. We were a small college. I don't remember. ...

AM: Especially before the war.

NS: Before the war, ... well, my class was, what? 350 guys in Class of 1944, something like that, but, not everybody came out. I remember a man named Helyar, who was the dean of the College of Agriculture, and Carl Metzger. Not Carl, Carl was the son.

AM: You asked if he was still alive, but, he is not.

NS: Carl is dead?

AM: Yes.

NS: Oh.

AM: I looked that up. ...

NS: Did you really?

AM: Because you asked in your last transcript.

NS: Yeah. Carl was very close to Mason Gross. We lost a lot of good guys. Dick Schlatter committed suicide, of course. ... He was close to Mason, also.

AM: Did you know Dean Metzger?

NS: Dean Metzger, yeah. Dean Metzger was before the war. I mean, ... before I went into the Army, let's put it that way. I remember, we had a march up College Avenue and we used to sing a song that ...

AM: The Amsterdam Dutch?

NS: Yeah, about the Amsterdam Dutch. He objected to that. Did I mention that?

AM: Yeah.

NS: Really? My God.

AM: That was great.

NS: I am beginning to repeat myself.

AM: That is quite all right. A lot of people have stories about Dean Metzger.

NS: Yeah, oh, Dean Metzger was something. We had compulsory chapel and, coming from an agnostic family, I did not attend. That was pretty awful. The pressure was terrible. I hated it.

AM: Was there any of that after the war? The chapel no longer was mandatory.

NS: No. I don't really remember what happened, but, I really couldn't get involved in that kind of stuff anymore. That was just too petty for us.

AM: So, the atmosphere was much more loose.

NS: Oh, yeah. I don't know if I mentioned this, but, when I was a freshman, I had to wear a beanie, and white socks, and a green beanie, or some stupid thing like that, or green tie. All of that disappeared, you know, afterwards, after the war was over.

AM: You could not really do that anymore?

NS: No, that had all changed. None of those traditions, let's say.

AM: Were you sorry to see that go?

NS: It didn't make any difference to me. I couldn't care less. The thing that I remember, also, we had to learn the songs, had to learn the Rutgers' songs. To this day, I can repeat, "On the Banks of the Old Raritan." Can you sing, "My father sent me to Rutgers and resolved that I should be a man?" Do they say that or did they change the song? They change the words?

AM: I am not sure.

SB: Only at football games. They still sing it.

NS: Do they still?

SB: It is still there. The Glee Club still sings it at football games.

NS: Yeah. Is Soup Walters still there? Soup was the head of the choir for maybe fifty years.

AM: I am not sure.

NS: He's got to be around. I would have heard if he had died.

AM: That is right, you also saw Rutgers go co-ed.

NS: Yeah. ... That didn't make much difference to me, whether it was or not.

AM: That was 1972.

NS: Yeah, ... I had no interest in that at all. I thought it was about time. ...

AM: You had three children. ...

NS: I still do.

AM: Oh, sorry. You have three children, Jane, David, and Adam.

NS: That's correct.

AM: None of them went to Rutgers?

NS: ... None of them went to Rutgers, right. Adam was admitted to University College. He's a lousy student, but, he didn't go. He was admitted, but, he didn't go. No, none of them went. Jane went to the University of Wisconsin for a year and a half or so and dropped out. Now, she's taking courses at the University of London. ... David is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania. He's an assistant track coach, or a track coach, at Yale University, as we speak. They didn't care about Rutgers at all. I mean, I was too close. They would never go. I would talk about the university all the time and they just didn't have any interest at all. I like Rutgers.

AM: I do, too.

NS: I got soured after I retired, though.

AM: Why is that?

NS: I got taken off the mailing lists, so, I have no idea what's going on there, absolutely no idea what's going on. The only time I ever hear from the university is the phone-a-thon, asking for funds, and I do subscribe to the RAM, or whatever it's called. The Rutgers ...

AM: Alumni Monthly.

NS: Yeah, Alumni Monthly. ... From time to time, I hear from them, but, I have never, never heard from anybody at the university. You'll find that happens, too. I mean, ... you're gone, sliced off. It's very painful, but, I've gotten over it. I live in California.

AM: It is beautiful here.

NS: ... I talked mostly about the physical changes after I came back, but, I should have been talking about the people, really. Guys like Mason Gross came, you know, vibrant, Dick Schlatter, vibrant guys. The Economics Department [had] very vibrant people. In mathematics, I had a mathematics professor, I guess, when I was a freshman, Fred Fender, [who] was terrific. ... Then, war came along and he worked at MIT, on what are now computers, but, he was working on these big things. He came back and he taught. He was teaching at Rutgers. [I] got to know him pretty good as a friend. Ernie [Ernest E.] McMahon, who was head of University Extension, I think he was a major in the Army, came back, and Hamilton Stillwell of the University Extension. Harry Stark, who was a professor in the Institute of Management Labor Relations, Harry was not in the Army at all, but, he worked in Washington during the war, in the Quartermaster Corps. Harry is one of my dearest friends and he just contributed so much to adult education. He's just a fabulous guy. So, there was a turmoil in the university, and people, and faculty people. There was a tremendous excitement. ... I think it would be interesting to do a paper on this some day, to see ... how many doctoral papers ... [and] theses were generated by ...

AM: During that period?

NS: During that period.

AM: That would be very interesting.

NS: I'll tell you, it was really exciting stuff going on. ... All the stuff that had been generated during the war, like the mosquito repellent, that was at Rutgers. Something D-10 or D-12, what the hell is it called? What is it called?

AM: I am not sure.

NS: Some kind of crap. You put it on and that was developed at Rutgers. Hydroponics was developed at Rutgers by two guys at Rutgers, at the College of Agriculture. All of this stuff was now becoming commercially available and ... there was a lot going on. There was a thing called, something that was developed at Rutgers, it was at the College of Agriculture, it was something that would prevent soil from combining. It would make it more friable. We got involved in that, and Rutgers was one of the things on that, and then, we had streptomycin with Waksman. ...

AM: Selman Waksman.

NS: Selman Waksman. Also got to know him fairly well.

AM: So, there was development all around?

NS: It was just a turmoil of excitement of education. You know, this is what it was all about, as far as I was concerned. ... When I was at CTC, I would try and do news stories, or interviews, with some of these people. That was the "Rutgers Report on World Affairs" and none of that is extant now, I don't think, or if they are, nobody can play these old recordings that we had, but, there must, there's got to be [a record]. ... A lot of it was destroyed in a fire, a lot of the recordings that we had made. They were stored down at the WCTC transmitter, down in Highland Park, and there was a fire in the transmitter shack. All that disappeared. It's a shame, absolutely wonderful historical material. The other thing that I thought about was, we never talked about our experiences. I can't remember, any time, talking about my experiences to anybody, not to my family, not to my close associates. We all had stories, but, not one of us revealed them. As a matter-of-fact, my class, Class of '44, published something on ...

AM: The Class of 1944 Military Book.

NS: And, I was reading some of this stuff. My God, there's a lot going on there, like, we had a general in our group. ... I didn't know that, and I didn't know about the other guys, and some of the things that they had done, and some of the things that they had been through. Mine is really very petty, compared [to them]. We never, never talked about it. I didn't learn about this stuff until fifty years later, about my colleagues.

AM: Do you think there was a general feeling of acceptance?

NS: It's over.

AM: Right. "Let's just move on?"

NS: I think so. I don't think it was done consciously, though.

AM: Right.

NS: It wasn't done consciously. ... Most of the guys wanted to start families and had to make a living. You couldn't exist on the GI Bill, you know. You had to work. You had to get a job and there was a lot going on. Oh, my God, there was so much going on. The missed opportunities are the things I'd look back on. Oh, my God, I missed my opportunity, I missed this, this, this, and that, but, not really. You don't look back in anger.

AM: Did you ever join any veterans' associations?

NS: There was a group called ... the ADA, Americans for Democratic Action, something like that. There was a guy on the College of Agriculture campus, he was a nematologist, a classmate of mine. I can't remember his name, I see him though. He's got pimples all over his face. I remember that and he came back. He had a high squeaky voice and he was in the South Pacific. He was studying nematodes. He was big on this Americans for Democratic Action, but, I never signed up for anything. Many years later, because of the injuries I had, I didn't think I was getting enough of a compensation. I joined the Disabled American [Veterans]. ... Is that what it's called?

AM: The DAV, is that what it is?

NS: I forget what it was. I don't know if it was the DAV or the Veterans of Foreign Wars. [It was] the Veterans of Foreign Wars, VFW, because I thought that they might be able to help me make a claim. They didn't help. Anyhow, but, I never joined, never was involved in anything like that. I would never have joined the American Legion, never. That's a prejudice that goes back long before I was in the Army. That was something quite different, but, the American Legion was a fascist outfit, as far as I was concerned. No, I never joined anything. Many years later, I joined the American Civil Liberties Union. I was on their media committee, national media committee, but, that had nothing to do with the war, or anything, ... except that the guy who invited me was Reitman, Jules Reitman, who's the brother of Norman Reitman. Norman Reitman, no, nothing?

AM: No.

NS: Norman Reitman was a member of the Board of Governors, I think he was. He was a doctor in Highland Park. Norman is a heart specialist and his brother, Jules? Julius? anyhow, Reitman, Alan, Alan Reitman, was in the class before me, 1943. He invited me to join. He was a big shot on the American Civil Liberties Union in New York and he invited me to join his committee. I was [in] way over my head. They were all lawyers, and they knew all the things like litigation and stuff like that, ... but, it was wonderful. It was very exciting, but, I'm not a joiner. Mostly, I have nothing to contribute that I felt it was important enough. If I wanted to contribute, I'll write a letter to the editor. I never get published.

AM: Well, you did a lot of educational work and educational programming.

NS: Well, I don't know. I don't know. The only educational experience I remember was after the war when I was doing student teaching. ... I was teaching science at Irvington High School and there was a little kid sitting in the back of the room, he was a football player, sitting over in the left hand corner there. He was always sleeping, always sleeping. I could never motivate him. I figured, "Well, look, if you're not disturbing the class at all, you can sleep. Win the games, fine." We got on a part of the program, we're talking about yeast, and how yeast is dry, and then, you add water and sugar, and it proliferates, it cloned. How about that? About four days later,

this kid came up to me with a packet of pictures of yeast and he said his mother works at Fleishman's Yeast. He got all excited. ... We were talking about something he was really interested in. ... I got to him, I got him. He became a hell of a good student. He got so interested in biology and that's my one success experience that I remember so clearly. Otherwise, you know, you get somebody who comes up to you and says, "Do you remember when you said, ..." and you have no idea what you've said. That student comes up and says, "Do you remember, you said," and on and on. "Oh, Jesus, I didn't." You never know. Then, with the radio programs, nobody ever listens. I'm sure nobody ever listened to these programs that we used to do. Then, I did a lot of television programs, which I had hoped, somehow, ... it's terribly frustrating. Very frustrating, but, my war experiences didn't do a thing for me later in life, except make me want to exist, continue to live. I wanted to live. By God, I wanted to live.

SB: Do you think that that attitude contributed to the turmoil and the activity at Rutgers after the war?

NS: Oh, yeah, oh, yeah.

SB: People came back with sort of a focus on their experiences.

NS: Sure. That's a good question, because a lot of guys in the war didn't do anything. I mean, they had jobs, but, they weren't significant. I remember utter boredom, being so friggin' bored all the time. It was terrible and you couldn't do anything. You couldn't do anything because you were under this terrible structure. It was boring. There was nothing you could do. There was no planning, nothing. Even if you were an officer, you couldn't do anything, because you had another guy above you saying, "You can't do that," or whatever. I think, when that disappeared, and the freedom came back, really, to do what you wanted to do, we did a lot of things that we wanted to do.

AM: Do you feel the GI Bill really helped you to be able to do that?

NS: Oh, there's no doubt about it. There's no doubt about it, that was one of the greatest things. The things that followed from the GI Bill, the Fulbright Scholarships, that was just great. The Rhodes Scholarship, all of that stuff that followed. ... You know, you can be very cynical about President Clinton and his talking about education, but, if he really means it, God, take him up on it. That's the only thing, really. Education is the biggest thing. You don't want to start a war, that doesn't do a thing, that's a waste. That's a dreadful waste for everybody. I mean, people got very rich during the war and I read about these things. It's just infuriating, just infuriating. Then, when I read, as I was telling you, I was reading this book about my battle at Metz. ... Oh, I know what I want you to [read], there's some terrific books by a former Rutgers professor.

AM: Oshinsky?

NS: No.

AM: Much earlier.

NS: No. Paul Fussell, ... he was a professor of English. I didn't know him well at Rutgers. This is after the war, but, he was a sergeant in the Army. I didn't know this when I knew him at Rutgers. He lived in Princeton, didn't associate at all with Rutgers faculty at all, and he mentions this in one of his books. He wrote and he was a poet. Another guy is John Ciardi, a poet. He was brought by Mason to the campus, John Ciardi. Susan Sontag was a visiting professor at Rutgers because of Mason Gross. Anyhow, Paul Fussell, his first book was called Great War and Memory. It was about World War I and about the poets and writers of World War I. [It was an] excellent, excellent book. Then, he did one on World War II, on poetry. ... This was his war, our war. Then, the last thing he did, just recently, and I can't remember the title of it, unfortunately, but, read that one, because that one, I shouldn't be telling you to read that one, but, the last thing he's published, it's autobiographical, about this WASP kid who was born here in Pomona, California, and went into the Army, and taught at Rutgers. He's now, I think, ... a professor emeritus at University of Pennsylvania. That's the last I heard of him. He talks about his experiences and that's one of the first times, again, that I heard somebody really expressing what the war was all about. There's an English writer, too, who I don't remember. He did three volumes on the war. This is all muddled in my mind, unfortunately, but, I do remember that, in my case, I was an infantry man. Only ten percent of the whole Army was infantry and that's scary. I don't know how I got out of it alive. I didn't get out of it alive. I died. I'm telling you, it was awful. I just don't know how they do it, how it was done. When you go to these movies, you know, Battle of the Bulge, nothing, nothing. Such a terrible waste, but, ... I can't express it. I fell apart when I was trying to talk about it. I still do. I still can't get it out of my system. There's no way that you can really describe what the hell this was all about, the stupidity, the utter stupidity. Well, I've said that before. I missed a lot. I missed your youth, I really did. My love affair in the Army was through correspondence, a lovely, young lady, in Pittsburgh. I never saw her, but, I used to write to her every day. [I] sent her a war bond once, you know, it was a war bond, for her birthday, and her father sent it back to me. She was just a child.

AM: You had met her while you were at the university, right?

NS: I met her at Pittsburgh. At Rutgers, my social life at Rutgers, I didn't have any. I'm very shy. I was a member of the band, University Symphony Orchestra, and that was my social life. I was in, I guess it was called, Queen's Players.

AM: Yes.

NS: That's Winterset. ... Then, I grew up. I was seventeen at that time, and then, I was eighteen in the Army, nineteen. I missed all of that. I missed everything. I have great regrets about it, I

really do. ... I still, to this day, don't know how to dance, much to my wife's very great discomfort. ...

AM: Dismay? [laughter]

NS: Dismay, okay.

AM: Is there anything else you might want to add?

NS: No, the only thing that I would add is good-bye. You've been very tolerant, thank you.

AM: Thank you very much.

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

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