RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH MELVIN SILVERMAN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Melvin Silverman on November 9, 1994 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick with Kurt Piehler and

Travis Richards: Travis Richards.

KP: I guess I'd like to begin by asking a few questions about your parents and your community you grew up in. Your parents immigrated from Austrian-Hungarian Empire.

Melvin Silverman: Right.

KP: What brought them to the United States?

MS: I'm not sure. My mother, I think, came because she had some relatives here. Oh, yes--my father came because he became disgusted with school. He was about twelve … as he told me. And he figured he knew enough, so he didn't want to stay in school anymore, and he told his parents he was going to America. So he walked from the border of Austria-Hungary to Trieste. He was a tinsmith's apprentice. They wouldn't let him get on a boat because he had trachoma, not glaucoma, trachoma. And so he found out there was a Doctor in Vienna so he walked back to the doctor's house. As he told me, he said there was a long line of people there standing in front of the doctor's house, waiting to see the Doctor. So since he didn't want to stand in line, he was twelve years old, so he went and bought a newspaper and walked up to the front of the door and said, "Newspaper delivery for the doctor, please." They let him right in. Now when he came in the doctor wanted to know why he was there. He said, "I have trachoma." The doctor said, "Do you have any money?" He said, "No, but I can fix your roof." So the doctor fixed his eyes. Trachoma is not that difficult to cure. He went up to fix the roof which was a tin roof and as he was fixing it, he fell off and landed on his chin and he bit through his tongue. He showed me teeth marks on his tongue. So with the trachoma cleared up, he got on his boat for 25 dollars and came to the United States, 12 years old.

And when he got off the boat he was looking for a cousin of his on Gates Avenue in Brooklyn. He pronounced it "gut-es." Gates is spelled G-A-T-E-S, but he didn't know how to pronounce that but he finally found his cousin. And then he got a job, and he did all kind of things. He was--as a tinsmith he had a lot of talent. For a while he used go through the hinterlands of Pennsylvania and when he found a farm house he would wait for the farmer to leave, and he would knock on the door and when the woman came to the front, he would say "Is your stove cracked?" And of course cast iron stoves cracked. And he offered to solder it for 25 cents. It was a great deal. And of course he would solder it, take his money and run because as soon a they fired up the stove the solder would melt on out. He was an interesting fellow.

KP: How did he meet your mother?

MS: He was, I think, a second or third cousin or some other relative. And she, from her relatives, decided to go into the shoe business. I think she needed someone to help her out. So she remembered my father, Willy, and met him through family connections. She married him, and they ran a shoe business until their respective deaths. In fact, my brother is just about closing that store up now.

KP: When you say they ran a shoe business, did they make shoes?

MS: No, they sold them -- Boston Shoe Company in Perth Amboy.

KP: Oh, okay.

MS: They sold shoes.

KP: Sold shoes.

MS: Yes, and my brother took it over, and now he's retiring at the end of this month.

KP: And is the shoe store continuing or …

MS: No, closing it down.

KP: And how long had the business been there?

MS: Since 1917.

KP: How did your father and mother come to Perth Amboy? What lead them to come?

MS: I'm not sure. I think my mother found the place because there were a lot of Hungarians that were living here. She spoke Hungarian, Polish and Slavish. And Perth Amboy was on the main route from New York to the shore. So she said, "Okay, let's settle here," which they did.

KP: So your parents liked to go to the shore a lot?

MS: Well, yes.

KP: You were born in Perth Amboy and you grew up in Perth Amboy. What memories do you have of Perth Amboy? What sticks out in your mind?

MS: Well, when I was growing up, Perth Amboy was a very interesting town. It was about 25 percent Jewish, and it was about 75 percent central European Catholic. And it was socially non-integrated. If you stepped out of your milieu, you got yourself beat up. I was not very large. … I used to remember in Easter it used to be hell on earth. Because the priest would get up on the pulpit and say the Jews crucified Christ. And boy it made life miserable for me. However, there were some advantages too. If you got lost, as I did every now and then when I was young, just walk up to any cop and tell them who I was, and he knew who I was. He knew who my parents … [were], and he would take me home.

KP: Because of the shoe store?

MS: Yes, yes. … I remember when I left Perth Amboy, after I graduated from Rutgers, I went to the University of California. I went to a bank to open up a bank account. And they wanted to know where I lived. It was shocking because I'd go into any bank in Perth Amboy and tell them who I was and you know, if I wanted to open up an account, they'd fill in my address. They'd fill in everything for me. And in fact, when I lived in Perth Amboy for awhile after I left the Army, I wanted to borrow some money from the bank. The First Bank and Trust Company it was, on Smith Street. And I went in to see the Vice President. I told him what I wanted to borrow, and he said, "Okay." And he went in the back and got a check for, 7,000 dollars and gave it to me. And I went home. The next day I deposited the check. About a week later I get a call from the bank. The teller said, "You haven't signed the note." And I said, "What's a note?" And then I had to go into the bank, and they told me the note was the obligation for borrowing the money. "Oh, okay. I'll sign the note then." See this happened because during the Depression my father used to give that Vice President advice and occasionally money to keep him alive because the bank had a very interesting policy. They'd cut your wages and demanded the back wages be returned to them. Yes, Perth Amboy was an interesting place. On one side it was … not very large. A place where when you were young, you had to watch out for your contemporaries. But once you were out of your age group it was a very supportive environment.

KP: In other words you knew the bankers. You knew …

MS: I didn't know the bankers. They knew me.

KP: They knew you.

MS: Yes, in another instance of the social setup: my mother didn't drive the car very well. I remembered once coming home from school I saw the car parked in the middle of the road, and this cop was directing traffic around it. And I wanted to know what was going on. … And he said to me, "Well your mother decided to go shopping, and she left the car where usually does, wherever it is. And I want to make sure nobody hits the car."

KP: It sounds like your parents had a very successful business.

MS: No they didn't. But they managed to survive during the Depression as I look back on it. … They supported themselves. They were not very successful then but when the war came along. they did better. When the war came along the government rationed shoes. Since my father sold Nunn Bush shoes and other higher quality shoes when you bought a pair shoes every six months you wanted to make sure they would last. … So his business went up phenomenally. So he did well because of World War II, because of rationing.

KP: But until then?

MS: He did just about-- he did okay.

KP: I talked to someone whose parents owned a store in the Depression. He said one of the things they used to do was they used to turn out the lights until a customer came in. Did your parents have to do that?

MS: No, no never did that. They never did that. They always sold the top of the line. They sold Stride Right Shoes for children, Nunn Bush for men and Enna Jettick for women. It was not high fashion. And in Perth Amboy every dollar counted, of course, during the Depression. So they just-- they did all right. But it was World War II that really made them a little bit of money.

KP: I've been told and I've read that Perth Amboy was in some ways quite a port and also a Navy town in some ways. Do you have any memories of this?

MS: Not Navy sailors. -- Sure down at the bottom of Gordon Street they had a small, small Navy base, but it used to be quite a port. Other merchant sailors would come into town from ships anchored in the bay, and they would buy shoes. And the fact that my parents spoke a half of a dozen languages helped a lot and also because they were honest. I mean a guy would buy a pair of shoes and come back six months later and say they didn't fit. That wouldn't work at most stores, but my father would look at the shoe bottom if the bottom wasn't worn, if the shoe … was still in it's original box, and he spoke to the sailor in his language. He'd either exchange it or give him his money back.

KP: So he developed quite a following among sailors.

MS: Well … the store still does. When my brother finally decided to close the store after much urging from the rest of us, about three months ago-- people would come into the store and say, "Why are you closing? You know my grandfather when he was a child bought shoes here. My father and I did." And so I guess it's a following. I guess it's the way he operated it. I know when I left Rutgers I got a … teaching assistance … job in the University of California in Berkeley. Because, even though I graduated from Rutgers as a Mechanical Engineer, I couldn't get a job in '49. And I remember my wife and I arrived at Berkeley on a Saturday morning. I'll never forget this, and the faculty office wasn't open, so we found a hotel and then went to the Y.M.H.A. for a dance, my wife and myself. And we're dancing there … Saturday evening, and within a half an hour this fellow came up to me and taps me on the shoulder and says, "Is your name Silverman?" And I'm in California a half an hour. And I said, "Yes." He said, "Is your father William Silverman." I said, "Yes." He said, "Well come on over. I want you to meet the family." It turns out that he was one of the people that my father used to support. During the Depression there must have been at least a dozen physicians who were then studying and there must have been about twenty lawyers and, of course, that bank Vice President (but he was only a teller then). My father would hire these people to work in the store on Saturday and the job that they had was to sit in the back of the store and study. He would pay them a day's wages. And he was one of those guys.

KP: How did this begin?

MS: I have no idea, I was very young then. But other things happened to me during that time. … See I wear glasses. I know when I was about ten …, no nine, my grades were dropping like hell. I couldn't see the blackboard. And the school nurse told me that I needed glasses. … I went home and told my mother. She said only old people wear glasses. I said, "I need glasses." She said, "No, no, no, you don't need glasses. You'll grow out of it." So, I remember Bootsy

Cole now. His name was not Bootsy, but … Nathan, Nathan Cohen. He changed his name to Cole. He was on Market Street. He was an ophthalmologist and a plastic surgeon. And I went to see Bootsy. … I'm nine-ten years old. And I went in. He knew me, everybody did, even then. And he said, "Why are your here?" I said, "Because I can't see anything." He did a refraction and he said, "You need glasses." I said, "Fine, I need glasses." And then he ordered the glasses and the glasses came in a week later. I came in to get them fitted. Then he called my mother, and he said, "Melvin is here. He needs glasses." I remember the conversation because I could hear the conversation through the door of his office. He said, "No, no, Mrs. Silverman this is a no cost. This is a government program. You don't have to worry about it." I mean the whole thing must of been about twelve dollars, including glasses. So I got my glasses and I could see. And when I was about fourteen one wicked day this eye swelled up. I went in to see Dr. Cole, and I had a sty. And he operated and bandaged it and everything. He called my mother and said, "Can I have permission to operate?" Meanwhile the thing is over. "No, no, no it's still part of the government program." So, all the time I went to see Dr. Cole, I got free glasses and free treatment. Because my mother never believed I needed glasses. But my glasses happened because my father gave Dr. Cole money on Saturday when he was studying to become a Doctor. My mother didn't know about that part.

KP: He was doing you a very nice favor.

MS: He wasn't doing me a favor at all.

KP: Was it in fact a government program?

MS: It wasn't, no. It was because he was one of those guys who my father helped…

KP: He was one of those people who had been … But you don't know why your father started that.

MS: No, all I know is that he did it. He also supported … his sister in Detroit, which, I guess, is a good thing because whenever I go to Detroit it's sort of like wow! Because they say I look like him, Willie's son. And when I bought my first house in Edison Township, we were living in Metuchen. And the builder said, "The house is not going to be ready for another month." We had to leave the apartment and the choice was to either to go move in with my parents or rent a room. … I had two kids. No I had one son-- … Anyhow, so I called the builder. I said. "Can we move in early?" And he said. "Absolutely not." And then I called … my attorney and said, "What can I do?" My attorney said, "I'll call the other attorney." He called the other attorney. And my attorney called me back and said, "You can move in tomorrow." So I moved in. … The builder showed up later in the afternoon. He said, "What are you doing? You can't stay here? We still own the house. You know, you haven't closed or anything." I said, "All I know is my attorney said to move in," the builder in high dudgeon. Did you ever see a man in high dudgeon? He stomps out, and he comes back three hours later. He says, "My attorney said not to bother you." I said, "Who is your attorney?" He said it was Jack Bernstein. I knew Jack Bernstein. He was one of the guys from the back of the store. So, you know, Perth Amboy was unusual-- at least as far as I can see now-- was an unusual place to grow up, but then I didn't

think it was unusual. I didn't think it was unusual that you go anywhere you like and say this who I am and right away everybody knows who you are.

KP: So it was small enough to do that.

MS: It wasn't small. It was a large town. I mean 45,000 people. …

KP: But your father, your family obviously had a presence in that town.

MS: Yeah they knew who they were, and I guess I thought that everybody was like this because if you have no other data upon which to base your analysis, you use what you have. When I moved to California I found out I was a stranger, and then you have to do all kinds of things, like tell people where you live and what you're doing and all that stuff. Perth Amboy is not that way anymore.

KP: No, Perth Amboy has changed a great deal. Your father, was he active in any community organizations?

MS: Yeah, he was in the Merchant's Association, and he was in the Temple Association. That's about it. He was a … very interesting fellow by the way. He was one of the brightest people I ever met. He and I used to go to museums. My mother used to say it was a waste of time. But we would go to New York. We'd get on a train, go across Staten Island. The ferry was a nickel then. Rapid transit across Staten Island was 40 cents. It was cheap. We spend a day in the Museum of Natural History or one of those things. … He'd ask me all kinds of questions and when I couldn't answer we would go to people who were in the museum, and we'd ask them the questions. And he would remember. So, I guess, that if he had more of a formal education he could have done something else, but as it was he was-- well he had a great idea that still works. Every time we'd go to New York we'd stop at the corner of Broadway and 42nd Street because he read somewhere that if you stay there long enough anybody you ever knew went by. And we would wait there for about ten minutes, and he'd say, "We're looking for people from Nyatchavitz," where he came from. And would you believe one day some guy came by who he knew from Nyatchavitz. Every now and then in New York when I go by there I stop. I say to my wife, "Let's look around and see people from Perth Amboy come by."

KP: Have you done that?

MS: Yes! And it happened. In fact, … my wife and I were on a plane going from Aswan to Abu Simbel in Egypt a couple years ago. That is my second wife. She's from New York. She doesn't believe that you know anybody from your home town because in New York, you know nobody. I was sitting next to this lady, and we got to be talking, and she told me … she's from Morristown. I said, "I know that town." Then she asked me "Where are you from?" "I'm from Perth Amboy." And she said, "Do you know a fellow I went out with 25 years ago. I forget what his name was." Then she said, "Oh yes it's (Sheppy?)-something." I said, "Oh yes (Sheppy Seawich?). I know him." And my wife went just was very surprised. She said, "How can that be? We're on a plane here in Egypt and you both know people from Perth Amboy." See it happens. Do you remember Dore Sherry … from the movies?

KP: No, I don't.

MS: … He was from the 1950s. He was from Perth Amboy. Did you ever see the movie *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* … with Bing Crosby?

KP: No, I've read the novel, but I haven't seen the movie.

MS: Well in the movie … one of the songs … refers to Perth Amboy because Dore Cherry was the head of the studio at the time. That's one of the minutia of life.

KP: Your father, how did he feel politically about the New Deal?

MS: He didn't know it existed.

KP: He didn't care very much about politics?

MS: No. He thought they were all losers.

KP: Really.

MS: Yeah, it still carries through, of course.

KP: So was he a Republican or he just …

MS: I don't know.

KP: So you never talked about politics.

MS: We talked about important things like, where do meteorites come from? What are the rings around Saturn composed of? Stuff like that there.

KP: Your father, it sounds like education was very important to him. Did he want you to go to college?

MS: Oh yes, but I knew it was sort of a given.

KP: It was just understood you …

MS: Just understood, yes. … I mean you just don't stop.

KP: But your mother seemed to be more ambivalent about education or at least-- did she want you to go to college too?

MS: As long as she didn't have to pay for it. She didn't care one way or the other.

KP: But for your father it was a given that you would go to college?

MS: Well, yes. Actually it was for both of them. It was just that on a scale of one to ten, I'd say that, Ethel was about a six and Willy was about an eight, where ten is like wow and one is like zero on an ordinal scale.

KP: Your high school, what type of high school was it? You said Perth Amboy was very …

MS: Perth Amboy High School, yes, it's on, gee, I even forget the name of the street now. Oh, well.

KP: You said your community was in many ways very Balkanized.

MS: Yeah!

KP: But what about in high school?

MS: Same thing. Same thing. I remember when I graduated-- I graduated, let me see if I can remember, 24th, or 22nd, in a class of 400 and something, and of the first 50 people, 40 of them were Jewish. … It was just a different environment. None of us played football. Nobody did any of those things, you know. It was a case of where you went for different things. It was a scary high school.

KP: In what way?

MS: Because of these other guys. … I mean it was like if you just looked at a guy wrong, and you know, "I'll get you after school." I got to be quite a runner.

KP: So Perth Amboy had a real tough side to it.

MS: Oh, yes. At least I saw it. Of course I might have been an anomaly because I didn't stop growing until I was 24. When I went into high school I was five foot one.

KP: And you kept growing.

MS: I kept growing. When I was in the Army-- I was in the Army at seventeen. And I was one of the few people who loved KP because you could get all you could eat. And even in combat, you know. Every now and then we'd get some new second lieutenant who would come up with all kinds of crazy ideas like inspection and you're on the front line. And … he'd line us up. He'd say, "Did every one shave today? Who did not shave?" And, of course, I'd raise my hand. He'd come over to me. "Why didn't you shave?" I said, "Because I have no beard, sir." You know.

KP: And what would he reply to that?

MS: He was not equipped to reply to that from Officer's Candidate School. So he would sort of stomp off, you know. I guess it was a very difficult time.

KP: You were growing up in the 1930s. What did you think of what was happening in Europe? How much did you know as a kid growing up?

MS: I didn't like it. And it was-- see I understood then more German than I do now. Because I haven't used it that much. I could listen to these speeches, and I was thinking to myself, "This is not a good thing. This is not going to end up well." But I could detect that same thing in Perth Amboy. When I told my father I was going to study engineering, he said, "You're never going to get a job." Because Jews don't get a job as an engineer. … There were all kinds of quotas. And fortunately Rutgers had no entrance examination. All you had to do was have a good grade in high school. So as soon as I was in my senior year of high school I applied to Rutgers, and they accepted me, and I came here in the summer of '43. And I was here for about six weeks, and I was flunking out because it was different. In high school I didn't have to do much homework, because I was very bright. But in Rutgers they had very bright people, too, you know. And I was looking at this physics book, and I thought, "This is not good." So I had enlisted in the Army, and they called me up which was probably [what] saved my fanny. Because when I came back in '46 I had a different frame of reference.

KP: So you came to Rutgers very briefly in the …

MS: Yeah.

KP: In the summer of '43.

MS: Oh yes, I was living in Van Nest.

KP: But then the Army drafted you.

MS: The Army grabbed me, right. Because I had signed the enlistment papers. And I enlisted in the A.S.T.R.P. which was--I don't know whether you know …

KP: Yes, … I forget what the acronyms mean, but you were in the …

MS: Army Service something or other.

KP: … I think Training Program.

MS: Yes, right. … But high school was not a very, was not like they show it on TV now. … [You] came in, did your work. You went home, stayed out of the way, and you'd get through high school.

TR: Did you favor intervention as early as say 1939?

MS: Me?

TR: Yes, personally.

MS: I was lucky to stay alive in Perth Amboy up to 1939. I had difficulty getting home from high school. Are you familiar with Maslow's hierarchy?

TR: Okay, yeah. …

MS: Well, I was down at the survival level. I was not at the self-actualization level.

TR: Were you aware of … the overall feeling at the time? … Were more people wanting to fight or were you just …

MS: Fight?

TR: Wanted to go to war with Germany?

MS: I don't know.

TR: You don't know.

MS: I don't know. I felt they were going to draft me after high school. And so I figured I might as well enlist.

KP: You mentioned that you had a number of memories in Perth Amboy. You would often get beaten up …

MS: Yeah.

KP: … Partly because you were Jewish. Was there any German-American Bund activity that you were aware of?

MS: Oh, sure. Sure they used to talk about it all the time. And there was-- up in North Jersey they had a series of camps. And I think they had some here out near Edison. It was a big thing marching around and all that stuff.

KP: Did you know anyone in the communities in Perth Amboy who was active at the time?

MS: No, because I lived in a semi-cocoon, okay. I knew if I went out of this semi-cocoon it was not a good place to be. And actually I had a great number of friends who were not Jewish who [I] used to play with … all the time. In fact, my mother and my father would be in the store and she would have somebody to take care of us, a housekeeper. And … on the weekends I would leave at 9:30 in the morning and go up to (Hall?) Avenue and go playing around the wharves and clubbing rocks with my friends and come back in time, so they wouldn't catch me from the store. When they said to the maid, "Where was he?" "Oh, he was here all day long." But, you know, it was …

KP: You were sort of aware that it was there, but …

MS: Yes, and … as far as I was concerned this was the semi-cocoon in which I grew up and the world outside that cocoon was a very nasty place that was going to get me just because of who I was.

KP: So it was nasty both across the town and across the ocean.

MS: Oh, yes. … But the across the ocean was far away. I much more worried about surviving in Perth Amboy.

KP: You said you weren't doing very well at Rutgers. Are there any other memories you have of those several weeks?

MS: Yes, I got sick. I tried to smoke a pipe. I remember I threw up on the lawn outside of Van Nest. And I was thinking about it, and I thought to myself, "Um, it's good fertilizer." …

KP: Why did you come to Rutgers?

MS: Because it was there!

KP: It was there. You hadn't thought of trying to go to a New York school?

MS: You couldn't. I mean you had all these bright kids in New York and there were quotas. So it was an unwritten law. I mean, … as I said before, when my father found out I wanted to be an engineer, he said, "This is a waste of time. Why don't you study business administration?" And I said, "That's a waste of time." Which it is, as a matter of fact. Not that I'm prejudiced. There's objective evidence to support that. But, here we are. It was a given, if you know what I mean.

KP: Yes.

MS: A given. Also, Rutgers was not the greatest school in the world. There were others that were much better. But it was here. And you didn't have to go through all kinds of machinations, and I didn't think there were any quotas. So there you are.

KP: Where were you when the Pearl Harbor attack took place?

MS: High school.

KP: Do you remember the day at all?

MS: Well, I thought to myself, "This is not a good thing." But I was a sophomore in high school. It was far away.

KP: It was still far away.

MS: Yeah. Far away.

KP: Did you think at the time you would be serving in the military?

MS: Oh, yes.

KP: Even though it was distant, you knew …

MS: I said, "This is not a good thing. Somewhere around there I'm going to be in trouble." My brother was already in Rutgers. He graduated from Rutgers. He's four years ahead of me. And he was in R.O.T.C. So he managed to graduate and get his lieutenant's bars. And, of course, get his leg all shot up in a month. He stepped on a mine. But, I thought, "Unless this thing calms down, which I doubt …"

KP: You enlisted in the Army.

MS: Yeah.

KP: Had you tried the other branches?

MS: No. You'd drown in the Navy. And in the Air Force you're up in the air somewhere. … You know this may sound to you sort of like a half jocular approach, but I was a kid. You know, I didn't know anything from the Navy. I knew they go out on ships somewhere.

KP: It's interesting because a lot of people joined the Navy because they were aware of the sinking, but they liked the idea of clean sheets and square meals and the same thing with the Air Force. But you didn't like the idea of drowning.

MS: I didn't like the idea of drowning, no. Because I had been in and around water all of my life on the Raritan River and it hurts when you drown. Because a couple of times, you know, you get under water and you can't get … air. And so-- and besides I thought to myself, "They wouldn't accept me in the Air Force because I was near sighted." In those days you had to have eyes like an eagle, I think. So here we are.

KP: They called you up and took you out of Rutgers.

MS: Yeah.

KP: Where did you initially report to?

MS: Oh, outside of Syracuse.

KP: So you didn't report to Fort Dix for your indoctrination.

MS: No, no, no, no. I went to, where the hell did I go? A little town to the west of Syracuse. They had an arm of Syracuse University there, and they had about 300 people there. 300 kids,

… children, seventeen. And this was the whole outfit … So for about three months, until September or October, I was at this arm of Syracuse University. … Auburn

KP: Auburn, New York.

MS: You see, when you get past of the age of 35, if this ever occurs to you, you still have the data, but the access mechanism gets screwed up. So it's Auburn, New York where I was. And that was nice because there was a branch of the Enna Jettick Shoe Company over in New York, so if I had any problems, I could call them up, and they would do whatever they could to smooth over the problems in town or wherever I wanted. If I needed some extra money or anything …

KP: Because they knew your father.

MS: Oh, yes. … And I spent from, I guess it was July, August, and September in Auburn and got some credits from Syracuse University, and then I think we were supposed to go to the A.S.T.P., to college, and the Army sent me to Fort Benning, to the Infantry School, as they did all of us. And we were in the Infantry School, which was sort of an interesting experience. Not one I'd like to repeat. … I mean you couldn't sleep at night because OCS was next door. And these candidates would be out there in the middle of the night, screaming all kinds of commands, trying to make their voice lower, so that they could sound more authoritarian. There's nothing like trying to drift off to sleep and having some clod outside going, "Atten hut. Left face," … in a high voice. And after we were thirteen weeks in OCS, excuse me, in the Infantry School, we were all transferred to the 87th Division, except some of us who were not. I forget who the hell it was, but one guy was a son of a senator. He didn't go to the 87th Division.

KP: Where did he go?

MS: I don't know, probably some public relations office. I saw his name many, many years later. He was running for office. He was defeated. Made me feel better. And we went to the 87th Division in Fort Jackson, South Carolina. And there we were supposed to be trained to go overseas. And there was a problem for the 87th Division because can you imagine a whole division full of 17, 18 year olds? Did you ever hear of a more unruly group? Who didn't want to be there. It was interesting. … The NCOs and the officers were older. They were old men. They were in their mid-20s. And they'd be in training, and you'd go to an obstacle course and they'd say, "Okay, men." And, of course, we'd all look around. And then he'd say, "Okay, all you men hit the obstacle course. That's the one in black. Next to it is the one in pink. That's the one for wimps." He shouldn't have said that. Because the whole company went for the wimps. He … told us, right? I remember one night, we were supposed to go and train for infiltration. And you're supposed to crawl on your belly, and they're firing machine guns over your head. And we could see that the machine guns could not be depressed, so we were not going to be hurt as long as you stay on your belly. And you get 180 guys going into this thing and crawling on their bellies. And this was in the middle of the night. And a half an hour goes by, and nobody comes out. 45 minutes goes by and nobody comes out. And they finally stop firing and turn on the lights. We were all sleeping, lying on our bellies sleeping there. And I remember specifically one time they had training. They showed us movies. And they would turn out the lights, and I think … in no more than 30 seconds, you'd hear crashes all over the place. People

would fall off their seats. Crash right on the floor. And then they had a brilliant idea. Okay, they're going to have us all wear helmet liners. And no chairs. You have to sit on the edge of the table because then if you fell off, they'd hear it. You know it'd be terrible. They'd turn out the lights and would you believe within 30 seconds there'd be crashes because guys would fall forward, land right on their head. It wouldn't hurt them. And they'd sleep on the floor. … And it was terrible because they tried this discipline stuff where the NCO would get up and say, "Dig a hole." You'd dig a hole. He'd throw a cigarette in. "Cover it up." Okay, cover it up. "I want the cigarette." So you'd dig it out again. Instead of getting angry at him we would dig, and we would dig. Normally for an adult, from an adult's frame of reference it would take them maybe two hours to dig it down and two hours to re-dig it. We were children. So it would take us four hours because we had to rest between each shovelful, you know. We wouldn't get angry. And the NCO would be stomping around. Terrible. And I loved KP because I could eat. And Ethel's cooking was not the greatest. I thought Army food was wonderful.

KP: Really?

MS: Really, I thought it was wonderful.

KP: What made it so good?

MS: Because they had cold cuts. You see in my house, when I was growing up we had steak and lamb chops and chicken and what have you. And if we were very good we could have a hot dog on the weekend and a soda. And I thought that hot dogs were very expensive. It was only when I got into the Army that I realized that it was the other way around. And I had never had many cold cuts when I was growing up. So, Sunday morning they gave cold cuts. I thought it was wonderful. I'd … eat the cold cuts. I'd have pancakes. I never had pancakes at home. I thought Army food was terrific. In fact, when we're in combat and we lost people we'd never … report them to the first sergeant for a couple of days until he caught up with us. Because they used to send food up for the guys who were killed, and we'd eat it. It was not the normal--actually, it wasn't until we had a captain appointed to us from New York that we-- that they began-- because they were getting frantic. Back at Fort Jackson, there was this 87th division, and they had to send them overseas, but we weren't capable-- you had to pass a certain examination, a series of examinations and we weren't passing. The whole division, full of screw-ups. So what they did was they had something called an Expert Infantryman Badge. They had a series of about ten or fifteen tests you had. … Are you familiar with this?

KP: Not fully, no.

MS: Okay, Expert Infantrymen test means you have to qualify in several weapons. Qualify means marksmen, sharp shooter, or expert. You had to do a 25 mile hike in eight hours with a full field pack. You had to be able to do a forced march of nine miles in two hours with a full field pack. And you had to keep your weapons clean no matter what was going on. You had to do field firing, a whole mess of stuff. And he posted a notice. He said, "The Expert Infantrymen Badge"-- I think we were getting 21 or 25 dollars a month, I forget what. If you pass the Expert Infantrymen Badge you got promoted to PFC which meant another three or four dollars a month

and that increased your rank. So from 180 guys in Company F who were really screw-ups, I think 175 made Expert Infantrymen.

KP: Because there was an incentive there.

MS: Oh, yes. I was an expert on the carbine and a sharp shooter on the M-1. Before that I couldn't hit the target. I couldn't hit the target. I mean, "Where's the target?" It was out there, you know. But once they said that, I mean, I got a great score. And the guy in the pit was not helping. So it was legal. And would you believe a week afterwards they have a retreat, and we're all standing there at attention. They blow the bugle, two guys … fall asleep. Their rifles drop over. Three guys forget to show up at reveille. But they couldn't [do anything]. You know, we had passed Expert Infantrymen, so we were ready to go. … But it's a difference in the framework of leadership when you understand the nature of the people you have to lead.

KP: I just wanted to go back a little. In the Army, when you first initially reported at Auburn, did it seem like a shock?

MS: No, because I'd been to camp. It's the same thing. I've been to summer camp.

KP: … Where did you go to summer camp?

MS: Well, I went to, let's see there was a camp when I was about six or seven up in the Watchung Mountains. At that time it was still wild. And I used to go to Camp Cedar Lake, the YMHA camp. It was sort of the same thing. You had to clean the bunks. You had to, you know, wash the Johns. You had to make your beds. It was no different. To me it was camp. When they paid me at the end of the month I thought, "Hey, how about this? This is a nice camp." They gave you clothes. They fed you.

KP: That part of the Army you liked.

MS: Well, no, it wasn't a like. It was sort of expected. The clothes I expected because I knew. But the living conditions were basically the same as if I were in camp. And at the end of the month they actually gave you money for being there. And, also in the Army, … I knew everybody that was in the outfit because they were all from in and around Perth Amboy and New York. And if I didn't know them directly, I knew somebody who knew them.

KP: How long were you up in Auburn?

MS: Three months.

KP: Three months, and what did you do in Auburn? Did you train?

MS: No, I went to school. … I was part of Syracuse University. We were taking classes.

KP: And how were you doing academically?

MS: Pretty good. Pretty good. It was Business Administration. It wasn't Engineering. That's easy, you know.

KP: And you were there, how much military training did you receive?

MS: Oh, they used to, you know, close order drill and arm and hand signals. But it was sort of like, this is just another part of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, you know, part of the whole work of art.

KP: At Auburn, did you feel you were more in the Army or more in school?

MS: … It was more in school. You know it was sort of like a camp-school. In fact, the Army itself, until I got into combat, was more like a camp-school. I mean, these guys with bars on their shoulders used to come around and tell you to do things and you had to salute them. You had to call them "Sir." … So you called them "Sir." You saluted them. But, you know, it was not a big deal.

KP: At this branch of Syracuse, was it only A.S.T.P.?

MS: Yeah.

KP: There were no civilian students?

MS: No … Actually it was a building that was designed specifically for the A.S.T.R.P. I understand that after we left they just closed the whole thing down.

KP: And your professors, were they civilians or military?

MS: They were part of Syracuse.

KP: They were part of Syracuse.

MS: Yeah.

KP: You had gotten used to this academic routine. Did you manage to finish a semester there?

MS: Where? At Syracuse?

KP: Syracuse.

MS: Yes, one semester.

KP: One semester.

MS: And they put us out.

KP: And was that a shock, or did you expect it.

MS: No, it was a surprise because they had given us all kinds of assurances that we were going to continue on. The war was going to continue on for many, many years. And they needed people who had an academic background. And as soon as the first semester was over we were in the Infantry School.

KP: Did this clue you in on the Army, the way the Army worked or we're you cynical about this at the time or …

MS: What do you mean, cynical?

KP: Well, that the Army made these promises and then they took back their word.

MS: They always do that. But, that's the nature of the Army. That's sort of like saying, "I don't like the way the mule kicks." But that's a mule. I did not expect positive things from the military experience. And sure enough, they met my expectations.

KP: Fort Benning, was that a shock going through basic?

MS: It was a little tougher camp. But you had to do the same thing as you did in camp. Climb ropes. Fall down. You had a chance to fire rifles and machine guns. That was fun. And grenades. And I didn't like being shouted at. But, I figured, "Well, maybe they had an immature childhood." So, you know, play the game. It was a game. A game. Actually, I do remember one positive thing, now that you're talking about it. There was one time when they gathered us all together, and they had this combat veteran come out and talk to us. And he said, "The reason they're shouting at you and the reason you have to go through this is because they are concerned about your surviving." And I thought to myself, "That makes sense." Then I looked at these non-coms and I'm thinking to myself, "Well, that may have been the intent, but these guys are stupid." And they were. They literally were. And in most of our opinions-- because we were all pretty bright kids who had signed up for this thing. And these non-coms couldn't even speak English correctly. So we didn't laugh at them, but on the other had, it's sort of like a--I'm not quite sure how to put it, but at that time, with no experience, as I recollect-- it was sort of like you walk up to somebody and he says …

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

MS: You walk up to somebody and he says, "We got to get the hot dogs for the (---?)." You think to yourself, "Something's wrong here." And when this guy would say, "Well, we got to carry you up the field." And I'd say, "Carry me?" And he'd say, "Yeah, up the field." And I'd say, "Well." And … what he meant was, "You got to go up the field. You've been directed to go up the field." It was only when we got to Fort Jackson and we had this captain who came from New York, and who was an expert on the M-1, who started to speak English differently, … and … he got this Expert Infantrymen thing going, that we began to straighten out, at least as far as the Army was concerned. But the rest of it was like, "You want me to dig a hole, I'll dig a hole." … Also, one interesting thing, these non-coms used to get drunk all the time. And I don't know whether it was a social milieu or not, but it was sort of like, a guy comes-- they'd have their room

at the end of the barracks. They'd come in Saturday night late, and they'd be as drunk as a skunk, and you could hear them. … In my mind, being drunk was not a good thing. You just did not do that. I tried it once. I went into Columbia, South Carolina and bought a bottle of some whiskey and drank about a pint of it, you know. … And got very drunk. And threw up. And we got back to the barracks still drunk. Woke up the next morning, Saturday morning, which we didn't have to do much. I thought, "I don't like that." So I couldn't understand why they would do that, at the time. The frame of reference is interesting.

KP: Now from what you were saying, in Fort Benning you were with a bunch of New Yorkers.

MS: New Jersey guys.

KP: New Jersey guys.

MS: All from the same outfit. They just put us all in one place, which was a mistake for them.

KP: And then you have these …

MS: Same outfit, the whole thing was transferred to Fort …

KP: You'd just go to Syracuse to …

MS: That's right, to Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

KP: And, you were with a bunch of NCOs who were … predominately from the South?

MS: Yeah.

KP: Career Army NCOs. What about-- there seems to be something of a cultural clash.

MS: How polite.

KP: Well, one, you've mentioned language, and the differences in education.

MS: There were a few guys who managed to, shall we say, understand what was happening in the ranks. Unfortunately, one of them, Sergeant (McArter?) was a guy from Alabama. He was killed in the Battle of the Bulge. He was the kind of NCO that understood what was happening in the minds of the people he was supposed to supervise. And, even though he did have a southern accent, which we were not used to, still he was one of the few guys who would know how to manipulate this group of children. First of all, he didn't scream. He spoke in a normal voice. And he would say, "I think I might need some help carrying out the garbage cans." And, of course, he'd get four or five guys jumping up to help him. As opposed to, say, "Okay, you, you, you, you, get those cans out." It's a different frame.

KP: And he got that sense that this was a different group.

MS: Oh, yes. He started out screaming, but he was with us in Fort Jackson, and I think that within about a month his voice dropped in volume. And instead of-- after that he never told us to do anything. He'd say, "I think I'd like to have this done." And it would get done. Or, "Do you want to give me a hand with this thing?" And sure enough, people would do that. And, he'd come in the morning and he'd say, "Did anybody want to come out and police up the area?" And, of course, everybody got up, got dressed. … We were dressed, of course. Everybody said, "Oh sure, yeah, let's go." And we'd all go out.

KP: Whereas in other units, there was just shouting?

MS: Yes, I mean we heard other things going on in other platoons, and we'd compare notes. In fact, a couple of guys used to say, "Hey, you got a good one."

KP: You grew up in a cocoon you said in Perth Amboy, and you were dropped in the South with part of the Army. What was that like in terms of-- you don't get off base very much, but you do get off base. What did you think of the South?

MS: Well, it was an interesting thing because, if you go out in the social environment and you don't … say your name is Silverman. You say your name is something else. It's sort of like you fade into the environment. … I did that once or twice as an experiment. Because the rest of the time you go to a USO or something and you say your name is Silverman. They look for the horns on your head. They look for various peculiar things. If you drink a beer they say, "Gee, I didn't know you people drank beer," you know. So it was-- outside the camp I never felt threatened as I used to do in Perth Amboy. But, after the first few times that I was out socially, I would think to myself, "What an interesting environment. I want to know what I can do." And sort of change things around. So, there we were.

KP: During your training, did you sense that division might run into trouble in combat?

MS: Problems? What kind of problems?

KP: Well, in terms of getting prepared for battle. That this was a very …

MS: Oh, we weren't getting prepared for battle. We were in camp. Those guys were getting prepared for doing something bad and going into battle. It was only when we did the Expert Infantrymen Badge that they managed to get us prepared. If the captain hadn't thought about this idea and put through regimental headquarters we probably never would have gotten out of the United States. Because we never could have passed our qualification tests.

KP: It was that bad of a unit.

MS: Oh, yeah. We were terrible. I mean, you'd get back in the barracks at … five thirty or so and you rush up to the PX because you're dry. … You'd drink, two cans of 3.2 beer. Come back, and half the outfit would be drunk. You just take one when you're dehydrated. You stand at revelry, and you can't hold your rifle and it falls over. I mean, that's not a good thing to do.

And you can't put the whole outfit on KP because you have volunteers. It wasn't a case of where we were disobeying anything. We were following the rules. It was just that …

KP: You were falling over.

MS: We were falling over. You know, I mean you go out in a 25 mile hike and half of us would drop out because we had blisters, or "My back hurts," or "I don't know … what's happening. I have this funny feeling in my head that it's going to explode." These guys didn't know what to do with it. They were, you know, backward southerners. Instead of saying, "Okay, get up and move," they were afraid that we were really sick. And of course, as soon as the hike was over we'd say, "Oh, I feel so much better." Or you know, you go out and fire a rifle, and you miss the target entirely. How can you send an outfit into combat like that? One thing we were very careful of, when we went for grenade training, we always paid attention. Because you don't play games there.

KP: You have in these guys from New York, New Jersey.

MS: Oh, yeah.

KP: Still in Jersey and then these southern NCOs.

MS: Yeah.

KP: What about your other officers? Your captains? You mentioned there was one very sharp captain.

MS: One very sharp captain that came in in Fort Jackson. He stayed, but he was killed on the Rhine.

KP: What about your other commanders?

MS: Lieutenants?

KP: Lieutenants, captains.

MS: Zeros, zeros. I mean, these guys were not perceptive. I have a background in organizational behavior now. So therefore, perhaps, what happened then would be, shall we say, affected by what I know now. But I think what was happening was that the, they had accepted the Army doctrine that they were leaders. And by definition, since they were leaders, people would follow them. That is not the way the world works. At least in the world I was in. It may work in some outfits like the Seals or the Marines or something like that. But I doubt very much if you get to be, from my prejudiced viewpoint, a leader in the Seals or the Marines unless you recognize that you have to deal with subordinates. These guys did not. They were lieutenants, ergo, they were the leaders. So you did what they told you, but you … So you said, "Oh, yeah, yeah. Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Yes, sir, I'll police up. Yes, sir. Yes sir." And then you would go and goof off. You know, it was not a court martial offense to goof off. Because we had an excuse.

… Even during the Expert Infantrymen Badge you did firing during the day, in cities and villages, and came in at night. They didn't tell you to clean your weapons. But by that time I was Expert Infantrymen. We all set there, and we cleaned our weapons. … Great, and the next day, we'd go out in the morning, and go out for firing. But before we were firing, this officer came through and said, "Did you clean your weapon last night, solider?" And I'd say, "Yes, sir." He'd say, "Let me see it." And I gave him my weapon. He looked at me, and he said, "You did clean it." I said, "That's what I told you, sir." And he didn't know what the hell to do, because he had to mark down okay on my record card. Because-- I don't think that most of the officers had any idea that the people they were supposed to supervise were different from what the book told them. Does that make sense?

KP: Yes. It sounds like they were 90-day wonders.

MS: Well, yeah, it could've been 90-day wonders or what have you. But, they left a complete void in my head.

KP: What about your colonel of your regiment, Bodnar? Do you have any memories of …

MS: He was a fat, fat slob who used to walk around so I was told. That's about all. I never saw him.

KP: What about your commanding general, did he have any reputation in the unit?

MS: Never saw him. Didn't pay attention to him. My unit consisted of-- the maximum of--in the beginning, a maximum of about a 170 people. And as the war went on, in the Battle of the Bulge, it was like twenty people. And by the time I got sick on May 5th, it was like seven people. That's it. The whole war.

KP: That's the war you …

MS: That's the war.

KP: When did your unit hear that you were going overseas?

MS: About three days before it happened.

KP: And where were you? Were you still in Fort Jackson?

MS: Yes, we went to Camp Kilmer. And then from Camp Kilmer we got on-- Oh, we were loading on the … *Q.E. I,* the whole division. I mean, if the Germans had sunk that boat they would have got a whole division plus. The whole division was on the *Q.E. I.* And as they loaded us I thought to myself, "This is wonderful." Because the Red Cross was there and they gave us milk.

KP: You hadn't had milk in a while?

MS: … No, I had it on KP. But, I thought to myself as I got on the boat, "These people are smart. They recognize you're dealing with children." You don't offer them coffee.

KP: They offered everyone milk.

MS: Yeah. And you could only get one cup at a time because when you're standing there you're getting more of it more, you know. Yes, I remembered in the Army that was the thing that bothered me. They gave me coffee a lot. I didn't like coffee. I wanted a glass of milk. "What is this, soldier? You drink milk? What are you, a wimp?" "Yes, sir. Give me the milk." You know and then they would give you coffee.

We got on the *Q.E. I*, and we went over, and it was a rough voyage. We had four guys sleeping in a vertical row, you know. And we were by ourselves, no officers or non-coms. They had real quarters, I guess. Because it was a fast ship, supposedly the U-boats couldn't get us, because the ship was so fast, they said. But it was rough. I think half the division was seasick. That place smelled terrible by the time we got to Greenock in Scotland.

KP: In Camp Kilmer when you got the orders to go, did either at Fort Jackson or Camp Kilmer, did any men go AWOL?

MS: No.

KP: Or …

MS: No.

KP: No. You didn't have any experience …

MS: Not that I knew about.

KP: … of running away …

MS: No.

KP: … or self inflicted wounds or …

MS: No! No. None of them ever did anything like that.

KP: On your voyage were you concerned at all that a U-boat would in fact get you? It sounds like that was a real fear.

MS: Oh, yeah. Yes. I mean … about every half hour somebody would say they saw a periscope, you know. You'd want to rush up to take a look at the periscope, but they wouldn't let us up on decks because upper decks were only for officers. So I spent a lovely six days, I think,

down in the hold of the *Q.E. I*, sleeping second from the bottom. And it smelled full of vomit from the second day out. It was a terrible voyage.

KP: Did you get sick at all?

MS: Oh, I was deathly sick. I always get seasick. It's only recently that when we were in England about three years ago, we found this stuff, Qwells. Did you ever hear about it? It's great. You take one little pill, and you can go through the most vicious storm. Nothing. Several tears ago, my wife and I were coming back from these Scilly Islands, and it's a flat bottom boat, you know, even though it goes out to sea. Because the harbor is four feet deep at low tide. And coming back, we hit a storm. And a flat bottom boat in a storm is not a good thing to be on. It didn't bother me. I'd walk around on deck. The boat is going up and down and all over. Down below they have cots, because they know people are going to get sick. And my wife doesn't get sea sick either. I think we were the only two who were not affected besides the officers. Everybody else was sick. … Qwells are wonderful. But I got sick on the *Q.E. 1* going overseas. They didn't give us any Qwells. And they used to feed us by putting the food on our mess kits. You'd got through a long line. And you had to pass the engine room. So therefore, you're down in the bowels of the ship, you're walking past the engine room to get to the chow line, what do you smell? Diesel fuel. So the guys who were not sick used get sick on the way up. So you slosh through this vomit. By the time you get to where they are going to put these greasy potatoes and pork chops in your thing, you know, you're not too interested. Yeah, right. It was an interesting experience.

KP: Did you parents keep any dietary laws?

MS: Oh, yes.

KP: And what about in the Army? What was your reaction to eating all kinds of different foods?

MS: It was great!

KP: So you enjoyed eating …

MS: Yes, it doesn't make any difference to me. In fact, the food was great in the Army, compared to my mother's cooking.

KP: Where did the *Q.E. I* dock?

MS: Greenock in Scotland. And than we off loaded and … our outfit went to Altrincham in England. It was outside of Manchester. As an interesting aside, I was on a fellowship at the University of Manchester last year, so I had a chance to go back to Altrincham. I couldn't find the place where we were billeted during the war but then I really enjoyed Altrincham though. It was nice.

KP: And you were glad to get on land again.

MS: Well, yes. But Altrincham was very nice. I didn't know where the hell it was in England. And we were living in an empty house. The whole company was in a row of houses opposite a young girl's school. The oldest girl was about nine years old, and we used to watch them play soccer and make book on who's going to win. We didn't have anything to do because we were in a town. So we used to go downtown, and they had all this rationing. But we had money, so we used to buy meat pies and go to dances. It was a great time.

KP: So you enjoyed being in Scotland?

MS: Scotland, it was not. It was outside of … Manchester. …

KP: Oh okay. So it wasn't Scotland then.

MS: No, last year, it was the University of Manchester that I was at and Altrincham was on the outskirts of Manchester itself. During the war, when we were there, we had a great time.

KP: You mentioned that you were betting on the outcomes of the soccer game. Did you gamble much?

MS: No. I learned how to play dice. … Even now I don't gamble. I mean I went on one vacation down to … St. Kitts, several years ago, was it? And as part of the hotel they had this casino. I was sitting there playing Black Jack. This was a couple of years ago. And I was winning. … I had started with 50 bucks. I had 150 bucks then. My wife came by, and she said, "You don't look like you are having a good time." I say, "No, I have to wait until I lose it all." She said, "Why?" I said, "Oh, there's not a good reason." The novel idea was that I didn't have to gamble anymore. So I quit. But gambling …, no.

KP: But did other people in your unit gamble?

MS: Not too much. I mean, you know, nickel and dime stuff. Not too much. It was not a hell-raising, hard-drinking outfit.

KP: It was an outfit that preferred to drink milk.

MS: Oh, yeah! Yeah.

KP: And would have rather to have been back at Syracuse.

MS: Oh, yeah! All of us. Oh yes, right. … It was an interesting outfit, now that I think about it in retrospective. To me, it was just a continuation of camp. Now we had weapons.

KP: When you say it was an interesting outfit, what … hallmarks …

MS: It was just a continuation of what I had been doing all my life. … It was not a change, a drastic change up to that point.

KP: Now you had a very good time in England, outside of Manchester. How long did that last?

MS: Only about a month. Four weeks or six weeks. Then we went to-- we took trains to Southampton and took the boat to Le Havre. Got off the boat. It was terrible, because it was pouring rain, and we had to hike about 22 miles, and then we had our two man tents. And I remember now, we camped in this field that was just flooded with water. And you had to put down your half tent shelter. You'd share it with another guy. And it was wet. And we were wet for, oh, a good week before they finally loaded us onto, what was it, forty and eights? Do you know what a forty and eight is? Forty people, eight … horses. And those trains… took us up towards the outskirts of Metz where we got off. Then we got on and after driving awhile, we got off transportation trucks. They took us up to the front line at Metz.

KP: Where your division relieved another division?

MS: Yes. But who knew what division.

KP: So your world was very much confined to this unit of 170.

MS: Oh, yes. Well, except later on. But, you know, in retrospect, it's a good idea, I think, that armies use young people. The reason is, when you get a little older and you have experience in the world, in my opinion, you would never do the things that you would do … when you were a young person.

KP: Really, are there things that you look back on and say, I can't believe I did this?

MS: No, I can believe I did it. I remember vividly shooting one Wehrmacht captain for his pistol. He was shooting at me, of course, at the time. But I had a choice of targets, and I picked out this guy because he had a pistol on him.

KP: Did you get the pistol?

MS: Oh, yeah. I got the pistol. And when I got sick one of the guys took it and gave it to me in New York in a paper bag about a years after I got back to the States. He said, "You are not allowed to have guns in New York. So here it is in a brown paper bag." It was a Lugar. But, I would never use that gun. I mean, the function of the Army training is to train you to do things that you have not been trained to do for seventeen or eighteen years. For seventeen or eighteen years your mother has told you to be nice, be kind, don't hurt anybody. And in thirteen weeks they have to train you to say, "When you hear this noise, somebody says shoot. You will shoot and kill somebody who wears different clothing than you do. And you will not think about it." And when you get older you won't do that as easily because you have more of a data bank, in my opinion. But when you're eighteen years old, it's not a problem.

KP: At the time you did not give much thought to the idea that you would be killing people who wore different clothing. They were the enemy and you …

MS: That's right.

KP: You were told to shoot them.

MS: I was not told. You were never told you had to fire your weapon. You were just placed in a position where, "Make up your mind. They are shooting at you. You like that? Fine. You don't like that. You have to shoot back."

KP: Did everyone in your unit shoot their weapon?

MS: … Pretty much. It was a case of where-- again, nobody ever told us to shoot at anything. But, when you're in combat, you realize that that guy is trying to kill you. And you don't want to die. Of course, after you are in combat a while, you are never going to die anyhow. I mean this is a silly statement. But as I recollect, … the framework that I had was, "I'm immortal."

KP: Really. … People have often said when they first go into combat they feel immortal.

MS: No. When I first went into combat I was scared out of my gourd. Because we went in at night … There's nothing to see. And nobody's there. And you're just in this trench. And, as a matter of fact, the next day. We got up to move out. We moved into about a half a dozen Panzer tanks. An infantry company in the middle of a half a dozen Panzer tanks is not a good thing. We lost, I think, 35 people in the first hour. And, I think I survived because there was a mortar hole that I fell into. And my pack opened up and everything dropped into the hole. … And my legs were out, but my body was down. And I wasn't going to move, because these tanks were about from here to the next building. And if you moved, they just pivoted around and killed you. And they couldn't put artillery in, because we were there. So, for at least six hours, I laid with my face in this hole and when it got dark, the tanks moved out. Because then we could get up and move, and we lost a lot of people, including our lieutenants. … I remember when I got up, I thought, "My God, who ate all those K-rations?" I must have eaten them. And as I was getting up there was an explosion at my right, about twenty yards. There was an explosion at my left at twenty yards. I said, "Oh, shit, mortars are coming in." And I began to get up and the next thing I knew was I was being carried along. Graves Registration had me because shrapnel had hit from here to here. … Had hit the rim of my glasses. Probably that's what had saved me. Had cut the frame of the glasses through. I had a wound from here to here. It was only a flesh wound, and [it] knocked me out. It cut off my boot. And part of my uniform was gone. I thought I was dead because blood pours out, you know, when you have a head wound. So in the mud, you look dead-- but somebody said, "this one was still alive" so they dumped me back into the mud and they left. And I sat up. I have no glasses and everybody is gone. So I stumble back to the battalion aid station, and some medic put a band aid on. That was because it didn't need stitches. And they say, "Okay, you're okay." Unfortunately, they didn't record this. You know I've written four letters to the Army to get a Purple Heart, and they still wouldn't send me one. They sent me a Bronze Star. I got that about two years ago, would you believe?

KP: But you never got a Purple Heart.

MS: Never got a Purple Heart. I should have gotten it. I didn't think it was important then. But it counted as points to get back to the States after V-E Day. You know that. But anyhow, so I went back to the outfit and there was about half of us left. And we have a new lieutenant from the south. And -he wanted me to go out on patrol, and I said, "I'm sorry, Sir. I can't go because I can't see." And he said, "You can see. You can see me." And I said, "Yeah, but I can't see so far." So he said, "Okay." Because he didn't know what to do with that. So I stayed there, and they sent in a requisition for glasses. Would you believe, two days later I was reading an issue of *Stars and Stripes*-- because we were in reserve. He comes by. He says, "You're a gold-bricker. I'm going to have you court-martialed." I said, "What for?" He says, "Because you're reading the paper. You said you couldn't see." I said, "Lieutenant, let me explain myopia." And I'm explaining it to this guy, and it's going right over his head. So he said, "You're on guard duty." So in the middle of the night I go out to guard duty. I take a BAR. … I'm out there, and I'm scared, which is not a good thing to be. And I hear a rustle out there, and I say, "Who's there?" And I don't hear any sound, and I let off about a half a dozen rounds and the lieutenant screams, "It's me. It's me." I say, "Okay. Come on in." And he comes in and he says, "Why did you fire?" And I say, "Because I can't see you!" And he went over to talk to the captain, and they had a big confab. I heard voices. The lieutenant was screaming that I was trying to kill him. The captain was saying, "He can't see. He always wore glasses." You know, it sounds funny at the time but …

KP: You must have been scared.

MS: I was scared out of my gourd because I was as far as that from the tank, as I say, the next building. I could hear the guys dying around me. There was one guy called (Princeavelli?) … killed right then. It took him three hours to die. He was screaming all the time. Nobody could get to him.

KP: Did any of your friends get killed in that action?

MS: Yeah, (McArter?) got-- no not then. He was killed later on.

KP: The people you knew in the unit, you were good friends with, they were gone.

MS: Oh, yeah. The lieutenant was killed the first day.

KP: Now … do you remember roughly-- this was in December … when your first action took place.

MS: I think so.

KP: Was this part of the Battle of the Bulge?

MS: No, this was before. This was when we were down in the Saar. We were in Saar. We were in a holding pattern and then we moved forward, and we got into a bunch of woods and dug holes. Some of us didn't dig deep enough because the Germans used artillery. And what they did was aim at trees. And what happens is when you hit a tree you get shrapnel. … When it

lands in the ground you get shrapnel, but it's an up pattern. But when it hits a tree it's a down pattern. So you got to dig deep. So we lost some guys there.

KP: Did you dig deep enough?

MS: Oh, yes. Approaching China.

KP: Did you learn the importance of digging deep after the tank attack? Why did some guys not dig deep enough?

MS: I … have no idea. All I know is when they say "Dig in," I dig in! See, then I didn't think I was immortal. Also, I didn't have my glasses. I didn't have my glasses until we got back to Rheims.

KP: Did you get any replacements for your unit?

MS: Yes.

KP: When did they arrive?

MS: I'm not sure. But, it was sort of like, they came, introduced themselves. We said, "Hello." And they were sort of like not there, if you know what I mean. I mean, the guy was there. But he was not there. He was not somebody you knew. And, actually, in my opinion, they really didn't count even though … they used their weapons and what not. Because you just didn't know them very well.

KP: Your unit, your division moved north to, of course, Bastogne.

MS: Yeah, well at first we were pulled back to Rheims. And we got showers. Wow. We got clean uniforms. We were there for two or three days. And then they put us on trucks, and we went out at night. Drove for what seemed liked hours and hours. They said, "Okay, you're out here." And we were out in the snow. And we had to pitch our tents again in the snow. But nobody was going to pitch their tent, because there are all kinds of rumors around about Germans dressed in white uniforms coming out and stabbing people. And by that time, you slept in your sleeping bag with the zipper open and your rifle with you. And the first night was a killer because it was cold. And after that it got worse.

KP: When you say it got worse.

MS: People were getting killed every day, every day.

KP: From snipers, from …

MS: From rifle fire and from-- we … were at the south flank of the Bulge, closing in south of Bastogne. And we ran in. It was a village called Pironpre. I remember it, because I read the book. And we were attacking across this field, and that's when Sergeant McArter was killed.

And a couple of other guys were killed. And I forget what the other sergeant's name was. It was (Schiller?), or something like that. And the word had got back that, "(Schiller?) got killed." By the time I had got to the back it was, "Silverman got killed." And, you know, I'm pinned down. And I'm lying there. They finally let up on fire and the rest of the outfit came pounding up. And I remember one of the guys looked at me, and he said, "You're alive." I said, "I think so." He said, "Boy, we were really pissed off." I said, "Oh, that was nice."

We got up to this hill, outside of Pironpre. … They had a couple of Panzers in the town. And we stopped. We were held there in reserve, and it was cold. And it was so damn cold that in the middle of the night I got up and went over to the captain, the captain's hole. I said, "Can I got back into town?" He says, "What for?" I said, "I want to get warm. I'll be back in an hour." What is he going to do? Court-martial me? So he says, "Okay." So I went back into town which was about a hundred yards back. Not Pironpre. It was another town behind it. And there was a ruined building there that we had a fire going. We warmed up. And I walked back in an hour. And during that hour there was a shrapnel and an artillery attack on our position, and we lost a dozen people. In fact, Delmer Johnson was killed then. And in 1965, I was back in Europe, the wife and the kids. We flew into Luxembourg. We flew Air Luxembourg, you know. And we went past-- we went to the military cemetery. And there was Delmer Johnson. It was, … -- it was a bad feeling. There he was. I knew Delmer. Anyhow, so I got back from my hour in town and the Graves Registration was really picking up the bodies and what have you. And then we went on attack on Pironpre and cleaned out the town.

KP: It sounds like one of memories you have of the war is just this big unit of 150 just being depleted to nothing.

MS: That's right. That's exactly right. We had replacements. But they didn't count. They were sort of like faceless people.

KP: After Pironpre where did your unit go?

MS: We continued … to squeeze the Bulge. And finally one of the outfits, I think, met up with the British. I'm not sure. And then we turned and went into Germany. We attacked a city of (Ormont?). It was the middle of the night, and we found this German walking around, a German civilian. And the captain called me up. He said, "You speak German." I said, "Yes." So I asked him which way (Ormont?) was. And he kept giving me a run-a-round. And I finally threatened him a little bit. So he said, "Okay, I'll take you to Ormont." He took us to the outskirts of the town. And that's when artillery came in. And that's when we hit the dirt. And I'll never forget that. It was-- I heard-- you know, you can hear artillery. How the hell does the joke go? After a while when you hear it you can run a hundred yards, dig a fox hole, get in the bottom and start "Our Father who art" before it hits you. And a shell slammed into the ground five feet away from me. And it was a dud. Yes.

KP: You seemed to have had a lot of close calls.

MS: Oh, yes. And we took (Ormont?). Just wrecked the hell out of the town. There was nothing left. We were angry. And …

KP: So when you say you wrecked the town what did you …

MS: We destroyed buildings when there was nobody in them.

KP: Really, you just decided to …

MS: Yeah. It was not a good feeling then. Because we were losing our own people. We had lost McArter a couple of days before. … There were very few prisoners. … It's sort of like you do things when you're a child that you would not do as an adult.

KP: So your unit didn't take very many prisoners?

MS: Not then. And then we went on attack through the forest. … I couldn't walk, because the bottom of my GI boots had been worn smooth. And I kept slipping and falling down. And I fell down and in the middle of the night we walked past this lump of snow. And one of the guys in the outfit behind me went over to investigate. And it turned out it was an 88. And there was a canvas covering it. And under the canvas cover were three German guys. So we shot them.

KP: … They were hiding?

MS: They were hiding. So you shot them, and you put a grenade in the breech of the 88 and you went on. And I kept falling down. I fell down so much that that night the Captain said to me, "You better get back to Battalion Aid Station. Something's wrong with you." And I went back, and it turned out I was running a 103 fever. And they were supposed to go out tank hunting that night, so one of the guys borrowed my BAR, and he kept back in the morning, and he was really angry at me. He said the thing didn't work because it was frozen solid. There was a block of ice right down the barrel. Frozen solid. So that was the only time I got sick then. And then I got lost. Because it was, you know, the middle of the night, and I started to go back. And I got lost, and I couldn't find the outfit. I wandered around for a while, and I came to the brow of a hill. And I figured, well, that's a good place to stay. Nobody else is around. I dug a hole, of course.

KP: And you were alone.

MS: Oh, yeah.

KP: In the combat zone, so you have …

MS: I dig a hole. So I dug a hole. And I'm digging and digging, and I get down pretty far. I'm throwing the last shovel of dirt over, and I hear a WHAMO and the tree in back of me explodes. What happened was an 88 had hit the tree about three feet high, and I was down in the hole, so I was all right. That was the only shot fired. I got down in the hole, and I stayed there until dawn. And when dawn came I looked down, and there's this valley. And there's the beginning of the Siegfried Line. … So I could see the tank traps, concrete things. I said, "Wow, wow, how about that?" And I see this metal door, and I saw one guy run into it, a GI run into it. The door

slammed shut. Well, we must have it. I waited until about mid morning and nothing happened. No more artillery coming in. What the hell, nice day, sun shining. So I get up, walked down. Get to the door, slam on the door and announce--. "Who's there?" The door opens, a hand pulls me in and the door is slammed shut. A minute later the door shakes as an 88 hits it. It turned out that the Germans were probably watching me just walking along in the open and hoping to get a shot when my buddies opened that steel door. Several buddies from my outfit were inside, they recognized my voice. Close call …

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

KP: This continues an interview with Melvin Silverman on November 9, 1994 with Kurt Piehler and …

TR: Travis Richards

KP: … at Rutgers University in New Brunswick. Before you got to the Rhine, are there any other memories you have of that which sounds like very awful combat.

MS: It was! I mean, it was cold. My boots were smooth on the bottom. You did not walk. You ran. And when you run and … your boots are smooth and it's cold, you slip a lot. You fall a lot, and your weapons can get frozen. Because a bolt of an M-1 moves back and forth as does a bolt of a BAR, as … [does] a machine gun.

KP: You also lost most of your officers it sounds like.

MS: Yes, well there was a reason for it, because the ones we went into combat with quickly got shot. And we'd get replacements in. This is sort of a peculiar thing. I remember we got one brand new second lieutenant, and we're out there in a holding position, and artillery starts coming in. Now you can see artillery pattern as it lands. It's looking for you. It can't see you, because you're infantry, but it's looking for you, and you can see it's over the other end of the valley, and its marching down the valley, okay? You can see it's coming. So what do you do? You get up and you get the hell out of there. But this lieutenant says, "Okay men dig in." I look at him, and I said, "What are you talking about? I'm getting the hell out of here." He says, "We're going to court martial you, or I'll shoot you." I said, "Take your choice," and I took off. And everybody else took off. And the only guy left was the second lieutenant. And he's screaming at us for about two minutes and then artillery got him.

KP: It knocked him.

MS: It killed him. … Maybe I shouldn't have disobeyed him. On the other hand, it's always nice to live.

KP: It sounds like you learned quite a bit very quickly about combat and how to survive.

MS: … When you're in deep trouble I think most of us would learn quickly.

KP: But there are several who didn't. I mean it sounds also …

MS: Is that right?

KP: Well it sounds like someone who didn't dig their fox holes deep enough, those who didn't realize …

MS: But then you learned from that, okay. First you dig your fox hole deep enough because you're scared out of your gourd. Somebody who is not scared-- well, yeah, that's a good point. We had a couple of guys in our outfit who were really macho. They hate the Germans. They hate what they're doing. "I'm going to go out and kill as many as I can," you know. And "I'm not afraid," and all that stuff. They got killed.

KP: In your type of action you saw you could get killed pretty easily.

MS: Oh, yeah.

KP: You walked the wrong way on the road.

MS: That's right.

KP: You …

MS: That's right. If you're macho you are going to go out there ahead of the outfit. You're charging. You're going to kill that tank with your M-1 rifle. You're out of your bird. I mean you see movies, or at least I used to see movies of World War II, where there people would charge and the bullets would be flying around them, and they would get to their objective and kill thousands of enemy and burn the tank-- they're out of there-- that's … Hollywood. Now occasionally, sure some guy, I was watching TV once where some veteran actually charged through machine gun fire and took out two machine gun nests. But that's …

KP: That's rare.

MS: That's like winning the lottery. Most of the time, you don't win the lottery. So therefore, and if you do something heroic, I don't know if it is heroic or not, but a couple of times I ran out to get somebody who was wounded and would carry him back. It depends upon the, let me put it cynically, it depends upon the temperature of the gonads of the officer as to whether he is going to write you up for a medal or not for your bravery. Really. And you really didn't care about the medal. I wasn't thinking about a medal.

KP: You were trying to save your friend.

MS: Yeah. And the reason I was trying to save my friend was, it was safer for me, if I had a friend around, rather than one of these replacements. Very prejudiced viewpoint.

KP: So it sounds like you weren't motivated by your officers.

MS: Hardly.

KP: What kept you going?

MS: The situation. You didn't have to fight. You could run away. But, … (Bernie Rooney?) was around and … Hy Bershad and those guys. … If you ran away there would be a hole.

KP: So you were concerned about your comrades.

MS: Oh, yeah, sure. … To my surprise, they were concerned about me. Especially when this rumor came around that I was shot. … Everyone came charging up. They should have been pinned down. They charged and cleaned out a couple of nests, because they thought I was killed and, they were really pissed off. I said, "It's not worth it guys. Stay down," you know. I never got to be a non-com though. Never got promoted. … Not then but I got promoted after the war.

KP: … But when the gap filled in, they would bring in a new sergeant or a new …

MS: Oh, yes, they'd bring in a new sergeant, bring in a replacement. They'd make-- oh, there was one platoon sergeant, (Jesse Bordalawn?). I think he could get the prize for dumb. They made him a second lieutenant in the field. But come to think of it, what happened to second lieutenants, maybe that was poetic justice. But he did survive.

KP: But you said he was very dumb.

MS: Oh, Jesse.

KP: How dumb was he?

MS: How dumb was he? He was-- he not only didn't understand who he was commanding, but when he would give an order, he never stuck around to see if it was done. So it never was done. That was when he was a staff sergeant.

KP: As a lieutenant?

MS: As a lieutenant, in combat, who paid attention to him, anyhow? As an officer would come back and say, "We have to be at point X-35 on the map by 10 a.m." We'd say, "Okay." Or, "Yes, sir," as the case may be. We didn't have the map. We didn't know where the hell X-35 was. We just had to go that way.

KP: So the war …, in some ways, was very limited. You occasionally were in *Stars and Stripes,* but otherwise you had no clue.

MS: Well *Stars and Stripes* kept us … informed as to what was going on. But my war was a very, very limited, dangerous operation.

KP: Did you ever …

MS: Well, once I nearly shot General Patton.

KP: How did you that?

MS: Well, we were in Germany. We were posted to guard this airport at Limburg. The Army is very interesting. They were worried about trench foot. Do you know what trench foot is? Okay. So you dig a hole. It's raining. What happens to the hole?

KP: It fills with water.

MS: It fills with water. So you are in water up to your waist, okay, which is better than getting killed. Everyday about six o'clock, just as dusk comes, up comes this staff sergeant, "Here's your clean socks." You've got to get out of the hole, take off your shoes, take off your socks, put on your clean socks, put on your shoes, [and] get back in the hole. Okay. So … we were there for about three days, which is a long time. And this was about the third day, and the sergeant comes up and gives us our clean socks, and I'm … saying, "This is completely irrational, getting back in the hole." But we got back in the hole. Especially since you had the water had warmed up a little bit, because you've been in it all day long. And we are by the side of this road, and this trail of jeeps comes by. They're going about 30 miles an hour, which was fast. And mud is splashing all over. It goes past me, and I fired about six rounds of my BAR in the air. The jeeps come to a grinding halt, back up. Out hops this older guy. And he's got a pearl handled pistol. … He's got stars on his helmet. He says, "Who fired that?" I said, "I did, sir." He said, "What's wrong with you?" I said, "We're in a hole. We're guarding something. Slow down. You're putting mud on everybody." And he looked at me and he said, "You're absolutely right, soldier." And he gets back in his jeep and drives off. … One of the jeeps in the back, a colonel comes out, and I salute, of course. He said, "What did the general tell you?" I said, "Who?" So he said, "Oh, okay. … What's your name?" I gave him my name. I figured if he court-martialed me, you got to go back to get court-martialed. Out of the line of fire, you know. But, anyhow, nothing happened, of course. Maybe I should have shot him. That'd teach him to drive fast. Better than giving him a ticket, huh?

KP: Given the legendary role that Patton has for many Americans, especially with the movie *Patton*, do you ever look back on your meeting him?

MS: This is the first time I mentioned it. … These things are bringing up a series of things that occurred.

KP: You never really had thought that …

MS: No. Who cares? I mean Patton was-- he's there somewhere. I was worried about controlling my end of the airfield.

KP: Now you had liked Army food.

MS: Oh, yeah. It was great.

KP: But when you were in the field, how did you like Army food?

MS: It was great.

KP: How much K-rations did you have and C-rations?

MS: Well, I had, we had K-rations and C-rations. I used to eat them all with relish. And everyday, whenever possible, we'd have hot food brought up. They'd bring it up. They'd leave it for us and then run back, of course, at night time. And as I said, we rarely would report wounded or killed people until it was absolutely necessary because they used to bring up enough food for them, which we would eat. All of us.

KP: So you were well pleased with the food even in some of the worst fighting.

MS: Yeah.

KP: What about the medical care when you would go to Battalion Aid?

MS: I only went there once. … Actually, I was there three times. Once, when I was wounded, and they didn't write it down. I still didn't get my Purple Heart. Second time when I had a 103 temperature, and they said, "Okay, you stay in tonight." And they gave me aspirin or whatever they had. And the third time was when I went back May 5th. … I went back, because the guys around me said, "You're becoming a menace. You are not up there with us. You are slow. What's the hell is happening with you?" And I said, "I didn't feel good." And finally after three or four days they said, "Go back to the Battalion Aid station. They'll give you an aspirin." I said, "All right." So I went back, real quiet. It was towards the end of the war. And this captain examined me. And he said, "Well, soldier, you have two choices." And I said, "And what's that, sir?" He said, "You can stay here for a couple of days and go back to your outfit." I didn't know the war was going to end. "Or, we can send you back immediately." I said, "Well, I'll stay here a couple of days." And he writes up a ticket, and he hangs it on my chest. And he says, "You sit over there." So I sat over there. Ten minutes later in comes a couple of these orderlies, you know, the first aid guys. They look at tag on my chest. They say, "Okay, lie down over here on this stretcher." So I lie down on the stretcher. They pick up the stretcher and next thing I know I'm in an ambulance. I say, "What the hell is going on?" They said, "Shut up." All right. The ambulance goes away. It's going away from the fire. I love it. Go to an airport. And next thing I know the ambulance opens up, and there are two PWs [who] grab a hold of me, you know. And they're carrying me off. "Where are we going?" "The airplane." They put my stretcher on the airplane with guys really wounded there. I'm thinking to myself, "There is something wrong with this picture." And the plane takes off. First time I had been in a plane, you know.

KP: In your life?

MS: Yeah, it was a DC-3. And it flew, I would say the top altitude was 150 yards. We'd go past a town, and the plane would tilt its wings, so it … wouldn't hit a church steeple. And it had a

Red Cross on it. There was a nurse on board, and I said, "I think there's a mistake." And she looks at my tag. She says, "Lie down, solider." She was a officer. I laid down. The plane stopped. The doors open. The PWs come in. They start unloading the stretcher. And I said, "Well, I can get out now." "No, stay on the stretcher." So I stay on the stretcher. And these two … undernourished guys carrying me across this airfield. It must have been 500 yards. And I think they were going to have a heart attack. They get to the hospital, and they put down the stretcher. I get up and walk into the hospital. And the receiving nurse looks at my tag. She says, "Okay, go on over here and get into bed." And I say, "What is wrong with me?" And the doctor comes by and says, "You have infectious hepatitis." I said, "Oh." I thought it was all a mistake. And I say, "What's suppose to happen?" He said, "Nothing. You're supposed to rest. You're supposed to eat good food, and you're supposed to exercise a little bit." So there I am in the hospital with guys really wounded around me. And that night all hell broke loose. I mean they were firing all over. And you should have seen the ward. Everybody hit the deck. We were trying to dig a hole in the concrete with our fingers. What had happened was the war was over and all the back echelon guys who had never got a chance to fire their weapons began to fire them all over. … I mean it was terrible. Ammunition exploding all over the place, and you could see tracers going across the sky. It was about an hour's worth of bombardment. I finally found out what happened. I said, "The war ended. … Fine, now I'm in the hospital and the war is over." So I stayed there for about six weeks at Bar Le Duc, France. Great. What a great time. The only thing is, the classic thing happens at two o'clock in the morning. Some nurse wakes you up and says, "It's time for your shot." And I say, "What shot?" And she says, "You're supposed to get so and so and so and so and so and so." I said, "Are you sure?" She says, "What do you mean, soldier?" I said, "Are you sure?" So she looks at my chart and says, "Oh, it's for the guy next door." Which was a shot of … penicillin, or something like that. But I didn't need that. There was nothing they could do. So I was there for six weeks. Nice place.

KP: When you say it was nice, the hospital was very nice?

MS: The hospital was great, grounds were great. I wore my hospital … bath robe. You walk around in your slippers. You play ping pong, … and you listen to the radio, and you read the newspaper, *Stars and Stripes*. And you just goof off. And every week or so they'd come by and they'd check your eyes to see if they're still yellow. I don't know if they did blood tests or not. But after about six weeks … they'd say, "Okay, you're all right." Fine. Then they'd send you in for a psychological examination. Because they had four categories: one was combat, two was reserves, three was I don't know what, and four was like after women and children. And there was a psychiatrist examining me, because I was a combat veteran. And he … [asked] me stupid questions. He said, "How do you feel about combat?" Come on. …

KP: What did you say?

MS: I don't remember. I know it was something non-sequitur like, whatever, you know. … Oh yes, I remember. I was drumming my fingers on the table. … He said to me, "You're nervous." I said, "Yes sir." That of course made me a category four, so I didn't have to go back join the 347th Infantry. Instead I was assigned to the Motor Pool in Rheims. Which was nice, I liked that. I liked that.

KP: Before taking up with the motor pool, I just wanted to take you back to the Rhine. You were on the Rhine. When did you cross the Rhine? When did your particular unit cross the Rhine?

MS: It's in there.

KP: You don't …

MS: I know we crossed on a truck because the bridge had already been established. But as soon as we got on the other side out and into the vineyards-- [have] you ever been to the Rhine?

KP: I've been by Karlsruhe and Stuttgart

MS: Okay. I lived in Stuttgart from … September of '45 to March of '46 in Vaihingen. It's still an army base, U.S. Army. Let me see, outside of Koblenz there are vineyards and vineyards are in sort of a semi-shale environment as I recollect. So you would be climbing these hills through these vineyards and this shale would be slipping out from under your feet, and they'd be firing down on you. You hit the ground, but what you're landing on [is] shale, and it was not a good thing, but eventually we got over the first hill. Once you got over the first hill, it wasn't so bad. But the vineyards were a pain in the butt. Because you would have to cut your way through them. You know the vines are sort of like solid …

KP: Yeah, solid rows.

MS: Solid rows, yeah.

KP: So you literally had to cut.

MS: Yeah, you couldn't get a … good field of fire. … Actually I think … what happened was that we used mortars and artillery howitzers to get the guys behind the hill. Oh (Grough?). That was his name, (Grough?). He was behind the hill, but I think he left by then otherwise he would have caught it. You know who I meant? The guy who … was in this real estate company I had been consulting with in the early '70s. He was in the German army at the time.

KP: Oh yes, yes.

MS: So he had taken off, but they cleaned the rest of them out with howitzers and mortars.

KP: You were fighting in Germany, and you spoke some German. How much contact do you have with Germans?

MS: Actually it was Yiddish mostly, which was an advantage because I loved to watch the faces of the Germans turn white when I spoke Yiddish as opposed to German. A terrible feeling you know. To say look I'm putting terror in this guy's face just because of the language I'm using, but they understood me.

KP: What did you think of your adversary now when you were coming to-- … I assume you were capturing more Germans.

MS: Lots of them. What did I think of them? I didn't think of them.

KP: It was just a job, or they were just the enemy, or …

MS: They were just the enemy. Actually, come to think of it, though, there was one time when we were beyond the Rhine, and we were moving ahead fairly fast and … our squad came under fire from a little brick store house it must have been. And by then we were grizzled veterans, … so we laid some machine gun fire down on them and stopped the firing. And there was no where they could go because it was just a building in the middle of a field. So I hollered at them to surrender and this childish voice hollered back that they would never surrender. And I realized that this was the Hitler Youth, you know.

KP: And you knew they would rather have milk than coffee.

MS: Yeah, but these were not even seventeen. These were thirteen or fourteen year olds with weapons. They could kill you too. … So one of the guys said, "Okay, I'll cover you, use white phosphorous." Do you know what white phosphorous is?

KP: No.

MS: White phosphorous is a grenade, used against personnel. It gives a white explosion and anything that touches it will burn. And the building was storehouse. We could see grain. So what you do is you lay down a fire, keep your heads down. You throw a couple of white phosphorous grenades in there, and you'll kill everybody inside. So we had a discussion. And the final answer was we'd put about 30 rounds through the door and then went on. Then we went on. We could have killed them all.

KP: But you didn't.

MS: Yes, we didn't. It was a momentary aberration, I guess.

KP: Did you ever encounter any slave labor camps?

MS: Oh, yeah.

KP: Concentration camps?

MS: Yeah.

KP: Which camps, do you remember?

MS: Well, there were a couple of smaller ones where they had a lot of Russians. Then it got to be a little bit different. The environment of the outfit changed. We, if we had run into the camp

before we ran into these kids we probably would have killed them all. After that it was-- unless, as I recollect, unless there was no weapon on the German, we shot him. And actually, we took prisoners, and then we had these little field wagons, and we'd take a couple of prisoners, and we'd hop into a field wagon. We'd say, "Pull." And they'd pull us along as we'd go. And then when the prisoner got tired we'd say, "Okay, halt, back." Find another prisoner to pull the wagon. So it was sort of like using them as horses. We were not happy campers after that.

KP: After discovering the camps.

MS: Yeah. Not happy campers at all.

KP: How bad were the camps that you saw?

MS: Well I don't know how to measure it. Give me some examples of measurement.

KP: For example, how emaciated were the people?

MS: They were dying. They were dying. There was a short fire fight in one of the camps, and by the time we got there, which was about ten minutes later, the guards had been killed.

KP: By the inmates or by your fire?

MS: By us. By us. … It was … interesting. I guess that's the word.

KP: You mentioned that growing up in the thirties you had heard some of Hitler's speeches. Was this your worst fears confirmed?

MS: What worst fears?

KP: About what Hitler intended to do in terms of the slave labor camps?

MS: Well I hadn't thought about it. All I thought was this is not a good thing. … See all the information I had received was second hand. … Therefore-- I guess it was because I was young--it didn't mean a personal thing. It was just a bad thing to do, what's sort of like, well, their attacking Van Dyck Hall. It's not a good thing to do. Let's make sure they don't attack Van Dyck Hall, okay. It is perhaps a poor analogy. But when you … saw the camps it was a different arrangement.

TR: Did it become more personal at that point?

MS: Well it, if you can imagine it-- I don't if we would use the word personal, because we had killed people. How do you differentiate? What it means is you become more vicious … As I said before, now that I think about it, if we had seen the camps before we ran across these Hitler Youth, we would not have let them live, I think. But who knows, you know? Maybe some leaders of Germany today are there because we decided to move on. But it was not a good experience.

KP: What about your contact with civilians in villages and towns?

MS: They rarely spoke to us. And it was a case of as we started to enter Germany they'd hang all these white flags and of course, we would have to search each house. And they would stand outside, and we'd get some directions from them. The regiment would say, "Send all the civilians to the church." So we would send them all to the church. Then we'd be gone in about an hour and a half anyhow, because the MPs would come up, and I guess, they'd do whatever they had to do. Because there was nobody in front of us.

KP: In Germany, at what point did the really tough resistance stop for your unit? Was it February or March?

MS: It was a sometime thing.

KP: So sometimes you'd have nothing.

MS: Sometimes you'd have nothing and sometimes you'd really have to clean out a nest of people. But it was … nothing like the Battle of the Bulge where you have large numbers of tanks backed up by infantry backed up by artillery. It was just … enough people to kill you, but a maximum of fifteen, twenty at one time hold up in a small little town, and you'd just-- either we'd call for artillery if we could, but if we couldn't get it with artillery we'd have to go clean them out, and we'd clean them out. It wasn't a case of where somebody would say, "Clean 'em out." They were there. … And at that time nobody said, "Well, we have to reach point 34 on map 28 like in the Battle of the Bulge." In fact, we never saw anybody. The only time we saw anybody from the company was at night when they would try to find us with the food. Then they'd find us. We would eat, and they'd be gone. And then, I think, in March or so, we finally got our ham radio so we could tell them where we were.

KP: But otherwise you were just keeping …

MS: Just going. Nobody said, "Stop." We'd get up in the morning. We'd … get some fresh water if we could. Put it in your helmet. Wash your face. Didn't shave, of course. Once I found a hand clipper, so we … took time out for hair cuts all around.

KP: How often would you get a shower?

MS: Shower?

KP: Shower?

MS: Shower? What's a shower?

KP: Did your unit ever get rotated off the line once you were in Germany?

MS: Nope. Not that I recall.

KP: So from the Bulge on, you were in constant combat on the line until May, until you got ill with hepatitis and the war ended.

MS: Yes, right. I mean, it wasn't a case of where it's continual combat. Because it was a couple of days when you were just sort of walking along, and you see the white flags, and you go into town, and you investigate, watching out for booby traps. In fact, it was sort of interesting, and [we] sort of developed a standard operating procedure of our own. Come into a town, get a hold of a Burgermeister and say, "We are going to search the town." He'd say, "Yes." "You are going to accompany us." "Oh, I'm a civilian," and he'd carry on like that. "That's fine. If there are no booby traps, if there are no problems, if there are no Germans, no problem."

KP: And would that always be the case? Would the Burgermeister tell you sometimes?

MS: Yes, sometimes he'd tell us, "Well, there's going to be a bit of a problem on the outhouse on the left front of the thing." We'd say, "Fine. Point it out." He'd point it out. I'd get one of the guys with a radio. I'd say, "Drop a round in there."

TR: What kind of booby traps did you run into?

MS: Wire, mostly. Nothing fancy. Nothing like you see on TV, just a couple of wires. … Once we ran into a German town, and I found this bag of money, literally. It was a bag of money, and it was German money, you know, from the inflation, so it was millions and millions of Marks. … I said to one of the guys, because I had read about it, I said, "Hey, look at this stuff." He said, "Keep it." I said, "It's not worth nothing." We found another bag of money, and it was Belgian Francs. There was hundreds of thousands of Belgian Francs, and they said, "What's this?" I said, "Ah, it must be the same kind of shit." So when we burned the house we let it burn. Later on that month, guess what we got paid in?

KP: Francs.

MS: Belgian Francs.

KP: So you would have been …

MS: … I found, … a camera that I kept. And, of course, I shot this guy for his Lugar.

KP: Where did you shoot him in regards to the Lugar.

MS: You mean in his body or physically located in the world?

KP: Where in the world? What action?

MS: It was in the end of February, the beginning of March.

KP: And he was one of these …

MS: … What happened was, he was in a Volkswagen. And he had about a dozen infantry walking across this field, and here comes this Volkswagen surrounded by infantry. And they start to fire at us. Of course we hit the dirt. And we'd say, "Okay, who do you want?" And you'd pick out the guy you'd want. You'd fire on him. Because otherwise, you'd waste your ammunition. And this officer gets out of his Volkswagen and starts waving his pistol, and I say, "He's mine."

KP: Where his actions idiotic? Did his actions remind you of the stupid things your own officers did in training and later?

MS: I have no idea. All I knew was he got out, and he started waving his pistol which he should not have done.

KP: He must have been a very good target.

MS: Oh yeah.

KP: Are there any other memories you have of combat …, or of experiences either in the Bulge or in Germany itself before the war ended?

MS: We were in Luxembourg for a while. And-- oh yeah, my brother showed up. We were in Luxembourg. I forget where the hell it was, but I was out on patrol, and I come back, and there's my brother. No, actually what happened was this, I'd come up to company headquarters, and there's a half track. I looked at the half track, and it's weapons were covered with condoms to keep water from coming in. This is a standard thing. And I said--and it was the Fourth Division, and I said, "That's my brother. He's the only guy who would do that in a combat zone." And I walk in and sure enough it was Alty there.

KP: Why did you think it was only your brother who would …

MS: Because he's like that. He's like that. And sure enough it was him. And we talked to each other, and we spent the night in a potato farmers basement. Which was a good thing, because they wrecked his half track the next day. The Germans threw some artillery. And it was interesting, he told me it was interesting, because he walked into company headquarters, and he walked up to the First Sergeant (Sager?), who was not a nice person. He was not honest. And he said, "Sergeant." And the sergeant said, "Yeah, Silverman, what do you want?" And he looked up, and he saw the bars on his shoulders, because you don't wear bars in combat. But Alty wore bars. And he said, "Yes sir." Alty said the sergeant was very confused. First of all, Alty doesn't wear glasses. So he was confused because I didn't wear glasses, and I was wearing lieutenant bars. So then Alty introduced himself and said, "Where's … [my] brother?" (Sager?) said, "He's out on patrol. He'll be back." So he came back, and that's how we got together for one night. And then-- … in 1965, when I went back to Germany, I happened to go through Luxembourg, and I found this same guy who owned that potato basement. And we talked, and he was in the Wehrmacht. He claims he was drafted. Okay. But, you know, we exchanged cards and what have you. So that was one thing. I knew it was Alty. I could tell from the half track because the

half track was polished. And this is in the mud of Luxembourg. It was clean. There wasn't a bit of dirt on it. The insignia was perfect on it. He was head of a reconnoiter platoon. … He stepped on a mine later on. He still carries metal in his legs. But Alty's neat. He's neat. He's a neat fellow. He was shaved, too.

KP: I get the impression you were quite grungy and dirty.

MS: Oh, yeah. But it didn't bother us. Who were we going to offend?

KP: What about chaplains? Did you ever have any use for them?

MS: We never saw them.

KP: You never saw chaplains.

MS: No, never saw them. … I think they had some around … at regimental headquarters. Oh, when we were in Fort Jackson it was very … helpful. One of my best friends was a fellow by the name of (Bernie Rooney?). So on religious holidays on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Bernie and I would go to services. And on All Saints Day, is it?

KP: Yeah

MS: We'd go to services. And the first sergeant would always say, "Where are you going?" And I said, "I'm sorry. I can't be trained today, Sir, I'm going to services." "Which services are you going to?" And I mentioned the Catholic services, and he'd always get this funny look on his face, especially when Bernie would say he was going to the Jewish services. We used to take every holiday off. It was a day off.

KP: So he … was Catholic.

MS: Yeah, he'd go to the Jewish services, and I would go to Catholic services. We'd go to both, of course. Of course.

KP: You'd alternate.

MS: No, no, not alternate, whatever there was. We'd go. I mean even if it was St. Swithian's Day, which is July 17th. We would go.

KP: But once you got in the field, you never saw … a chaplain.

MS: No. … Unless they had a rifle. And chaplains didn't carry rifles. It was-- I don't know whether it's unusual or not, but very rarely were we more than a hundred yards from the front line, … even in reserve. When we were in reserve, I mean, for example that Pironpre village was down here. We were up on the hill here, maybe 600 yards away. We were supposedly in reserve, while one company was attacking. That company got beat up, and if you take a look at the book you will find that the F Company finally went in and took the town. But when we took

the town, we destroyed every building in it. But meanwhile we had taken a lot of casualties up here. So reserve in our outfit meant 600 yards, maybe.

KP: If you were lucky.

MS: Well, if we're lucky, yeah. … And actually when you're in reserve you're still in combat. So you still maintain your readiness. You still keep your weapon with you. You still make sure it's clean. You're still awake.

KP: You mentioned you enjoyed your hospital very much.

MS: Oh, yeah. It was great. Wonderful. I had great food. Didn't have any special diets. Oh, yes I did. I had a special diet. It was high protein. Can you imagine what that means to a kid who is still growing? It was great. Everybody would go in, and they would have Spam or what have you. Not me. I had to have a steak. All the time. And I would say, "Where is it?" And they would say, "Ah, we're having …" And I said, .".. No, no, … steak, please." It was great. I loved it. Actually you know it sounds to me, as I listen to my voice, as though this was sort of a fun kind of camp. I don't intend it to mean that. What it means is that from … what I know now about psychology, which is what my doctorate's in, that I think what I was doing was building a mental wall, okay. And the wall let in certain things. You don't get yourself killed. You see an enemy, you kill him. You eat as much as you can, because you never know when you're going to get your next meal. You keep moving. You don't go by yourself anywhere. You make sure you're surrounded with people you know, if not surrounded, at least with two or three and try to dig as deep as you can every night. … So even though it' sort of semi-, I don't want to use the word "funny," but semi-pleasant, as it were. It was not a pleasant experience. I would not like to do it again.

TR: You seem very comfortable with the events that happened.

MS: Comfortable?

TR: Well, it seems that you can speak about it fluently.

MS: Yeah.

TR: Yeah. …

MS: Because I wasn't … because of this wall.

TR: Yeah.

MS: Okay?

KP: Because a lot of people did not talk about the war and a lot of people …

MS: I haven't. I mean look at the … who are you going to talk to? I don't go to bars. Okay? When you sit around the table [what] … we talk about now are, "How much did your portfolio go up last month?" That kind of thing. Which is not the same thing as discussing World War II. And I have contacted several people I knew in the Army, middle '60s and what have you. It's not the same thing.

KP: There's some people who join veterans' organizations right away and war is a very …

MS: … Were they in front-line combat? (pause) Were they?

KP: Some are and some are not.

MS: Yeah?

KP: Yes.

MS: I can understand where they would want to join a veterans' organization if they feel that the experiences they have should be shared and discussed and going on. But … in my research, my own research that I had to do for my degree, one of the things I sort of came to a conclusion is that, what happens to you becomes part of your data base. You cannot relive it. Okay? … My present wife calls me a "survivor" if you will. Because there's something else going on, the only reason you look back is to say, "I don't want to do that again." That's all. Or "I did that, it was a great thing." But at this point, even if you did something really smart and really good, you're not going to be able to repeat it. Because the major variable is time and age, so it is always different, even if the same people are there and they rarely are. So as far as I'm concerned it's a data bank, so you say, "Ah, okay, what am I going to do tomorrow?" I don't know whether this is a positive framework or not, but it's one I had [to] think through for myself, because I had to become a therapist for awhile, when I was working on my degree. One of the things you do is they find out how you are. … And I'm never going to be a 34 waist again. I'm never going to join the Army again. I don't know … if that over answers your question or not.

KP: No, that was fine.

MS: Okay.

KP: You were transferred to a support unit, the motor pool. What was that job like?

MS: Oh, it was great. I loved cars. … First thing they did was give me a driving test, naturally a guy from the South. He says, "Can you drive a car?" I said, "Yeah, who couldn't drive a car?" Apparently people from Alabama couldn't drive a car.

KP: Well, they often couldn't read.

MS: Yes. Right. So he said, "You got to do a driving test." I said, "No problem." I get in this car and I'd forgotten you got to let the shift out, or the clutch out, easily. So the jeep went tuk-tuk-tuk-tuk-tuk-tuk … and finally got it going. He said, "Okay." … Then he put me in a two

and a half ton, deuce and a half, truck. "Can you drive a truck?" "Yes, I can." (laughter) I'd never drove a truck before. … But I remembered to let the clutch out easily and you double shift, double clutch on a truck. That I'd read somewhere, I doubled clutched … got my driver's license. He says, "You're a messenger." [I] said, "Wonderful." So what I had to do was I had to drive from Rheims to Paris, pick up the mail and drive back. But they forgot to tell me how long I could stay in Paris.

KP: So how long did you stay?

MS: Oh, I used to stay for days. Then one day the MPs picked me up. And I said … oh, … I don't know how it happened but somehow I got, see, Bernie was wounded in the first encounter we had with those tanks. I never saw him again. Next time I heard of him, he was this first sergeant of this Engineer General Service Regiment in Germany, which was after the war. And I don't know how … I found him, but I found him, and I talked to him on the phone. And he said, "Come on out here." You know, I said, "Great. Get me transferred." So he wrote a letter to the commanding general saying that there's a dearth of people who are technically qualified and they're very well needed and he particularly wants PFC Melvin Silverman. So the next thing I know the orders come down, one line for me being transferred, and about ten other guys because they had to get rid of them, they had too many people.

Meanwhile, I'm in Paris, right? And the MPs picked me up. And they said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "Well, not much." [laughter] So I go into the stockade. And they strip search you and the sergeant of the stockade, this is … a stockade for hardened criminals in Paris. I'll never forget it, it was July 14th …

KP: Bastille Day.

MS: Bastille Day. Yeah, right. So I'm … in the jug. And this sergeant looks down and he says, "Silverman, … we don't get guys like you in here." And I knew exactly what he meant. So I said, "Uh, huh." I was not going to play around with this guy, he's an MP sergeant. So they search me, no weapons, surprise, surprise. They … give me the overalls that says, not PW, but P on the back. He says, "Okay, out there with the rest of the guys and crack rocks." I says, "I can't do that." He said, "Why not?" I said, .".. I have an incipient hernia." I had a[n] appendicitis operation, … it was a little weak. I said, .".. I have an incipient hernia." He said, "What does that mean?" I said, "Well, if I lift anything heavy, the gut will break open. If the gut breaks open, I go to the hospital. And I'm going to tell them you told me to break rocks after, you know, … but whatever you want, sergeant." Some comment he makes like "Oh, you guys." He says, "Okay, in the storeroom." I go in the storeroom, and this sergeant says, "What are you here for?" I said, "Improvement." He says, "Okay, clean that window up there." I said, "Okay, what with?" He says, "Here's some tissue paper, some toilet paper." It took me twelve hours to clean one side of a window that was two foot by two foot. You know, you got to check out each little piece, step back and examine your work, go back and rub a little bit, step back and examine your work. Sergeant came in and said, "How you doing?"

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

MS: And he said, "Well, this is going to last long because we're having the prison doctor coming at the end of the week." I said, "No problem with me." So I'm back in the storeroom. I finished the one window, and I was working on the second window and about mid-day the head honcho comes in and says, "Silverman, in there. They're coming to pick you up." I said, "Okay." And there was (Bernie?). And he has got his master sergeant stripes on. And he says to the sergeant, "Is this the prisoner?" The sergeant says, "Yeah, he's yours." So (Bernie?) says, "Okay, give me the papers"-- because they had papers, you know, the indictment, or whatever they have. I get my uniform on. They put the handcuffs on me. They give me to (Bernie?). (Bernie?) takes the papers. We get in the jeep. And the sergeant comes out, and he takes one handcuff off and handcuffs my other hand to the rail of the jeep, so I shouldn't escape. You know, because, I'm a vicious criminal. Then he says, "Is that enough for you, or do you want me to tie him up?" … (Bernie?) says, "No, I think I can handle him. He's a little guy." And off we go. We go around the corner, and he stops. He undoes the handcuffs. He rips up the papers and throws them in the garbage. He says, "Ah, shit, you know, why did you get caught for? Let's go." We went back to Rheims. I picked up my stuff and drove off to …

KP: You could have been in serious trouble. … You could have been court-martialed.

MS: Yeah, for what? … AWOL. That's all, AWOL, right? But then I had a defense. I could have said, "I didn't know I was supposed to get back right away. My orders are in the …"-- I was ready. I had figured all kinds of defenses. It probably wouldn't work. But what the hell, right. Besides, the Army was in such a turmoil. People were going back. There was reorganization. They were getting ready for the war in Japan. The whole outfit was moving by.

TR: How did you spend your time in Paris, when you were there?

MS: You don't want to go through that, do you? You don't want to know all the names! I mean it was-- actually I did have one thing I can tell you about that's allowed. There was-- we were assigned to this hotel room-- this was legal-- this hotel room. And it was night time and we get up to this hotel room. … There was another guy assigned with me, PFC, and he had to go to the john very badly. And he runs in and he sees this john. I don't know whether this is polite or not, but he drops his pants, drops a load, and its a bidet. He had never seen a bidet. And he's looking around to flush it. And there is no way you can flush a bidet. So he doesn't the hell know what to do, okay. So there was a number ten can they used for cigarette butts. … I said, "You better do something about it because we're going to be inspected …, and we can't have a bidet full of crap here." So he takes this number ten can, and he scoops up all the crap as best he can, you know, gets most of it in, and then he flushes the rest of it down because the bidet you can't. … He says, "Now what do I do?" I say, "I don't know. Throw it out the window." (laughs) So, this hotel-- we had a room inside a court yard, and there was a garage door or a basement door that was at an angle to the wall. And he drops the can out the window. And we go back inside and hear this terrible racket. And about ten minutes later up comes this colonel, and he is covered from head to foot with shit. … He wants to know, "Who did that?" And we are looking at each other. We said, "Did what, sir?" You know, we don't know. What had happened was the can had hit the angled garage door and stayed there, of course, but the crap had flown out. (laughs) And there was a colonel walking by, and it had got him. And this colonel went up and down that hotel three or four times, and he smelled awful. … So that was one thing that

happened when we were in Paris. And there were several other occasions where I found it wasn't so bad to get drunk … I had my picture taken. I still have it.

KP: You must have enjoyed-- I've been to Paris. It's a lovely city.

MS: Well, remember, this is right after the war. I'm an American in uniform. I was king of the world. And when I was transferred to Germany, working for Bernie, I got a furlough, and I had a choice to back to Altrincham. I decided to go to Switzerland. I had never been to Switzerland. So, I went to (Lausanne?), and I went to the Lake of Thun. I liked that. And I went to-- what's the other major town in Switzerland?

KP: Geneva.

MS: Geneva, on the lake. And I remember it was around Passover. Yeah, … early '46 … And I'm walking down town, and this kid comes up to me, and he says in Yiddish, "Are you Jewish?" And I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, come along." So I followed him, and … I forgot it was Saturday morning. we went to a *shul*, and … he loaned me a *talis* and they gave me the *aliyah*. It was very nice. I began to think about it later on. I thought to myself, "There's something to this social interaction business …" But it was an unusual experience, I thought. Because this kid's job was to try to find American soldiers who were Jewish. And I remember in England once, when I was downtown. I was sitting in this bar, and this guy comes up to me and asks me if I'm Jewish. I hesitated a while but then said, "Yeah." … He said, "Can you join the *minyan*?" I said, "Yeah, sure." I'm drinking here, and I'm ready to go out, and he wants me to join the *minyan*. Do you know what a *minyan* is?

TR: No.

MS: You need ten men over the age of thirteen, thirteen and over, in order to have certain prayers. And he needed-- there … [were] no Brits around, obviously. So he would go to every GI at the bar, and he happened to hit our outfit and in about five minutes he had his *minyan*. So, you know, you went over to where he was, and it took us about a half an hour and when we were finished we went back to the bar. And all the girls were saying, "Where did you guys go?" We said, "We went for a *minyan*." "Oh, what's that? Is that a kind of a party?" … So anyway-- but those are some interesting things that happened.

KP: You were in Germany in '45.

MS: Yeah.

KP: What was Germany like after the war?

MS: There was no question. It was not a nice place to live. It was-- they say it was completely destroyed, but I don't think it was destroyed enough, was destroyed enough. It was hard living. But, at that time, I thought not enough. And we were given the ground rules. The standard orders were no fraternization. But it was an interesting place to live.

KP: In what way was it interesting?

MS: Well, when you were a child … and you walk down the sidewalk and everyone gets out of your way, that's interesting. You know, when they refuse to have eye contact, that's interesting.

KP: So in a sense GIs were very much shunned.

MS: No, feared. Feared is the word. And I owned a house. I bought a house with about six cartons of cigarettes. It came with a housekeeper. And some other people, which don't really count in our discussions here. And, when I was off duty I'd go back to the house and hang out. And then when I left, I sold it back to the housekeeper for, I think, 100 Marks or something.

TR: Did your view of the German people change at this point?

MS: No.

TR: No. At what point of your life did it? Because it changed because you have friends that were in the Wehrmacht. … Can you look back at a certain point in your life and say "that's when … I didn't hold a grudge against the German people anymore?"

MS: Well, I don't know. It's sort of a gradual thing. But my wife still holds grudges. We were in the West Indies, I forget what island it was. And we were at some resort, and we were at dinner, and this couple came in. This was in, … must have been in the late 70s, early '80s … And they sit down at another table, and they started to speak German to each other. Lizzie turns around and looks at them. She says to me, "I hate them." I say, "Why?" "Because they look to be your age." I said, "Oh, okay." She has no … change in frameworks. … I lost a lot of relatives. In fact, towards the end of the war I got a letter from my mother stating that one of my cousins was still alive in Czechoslovakia, and it turns out after the war he and his wife were brought over by my uncle, and he's the only one left over there. They had a large family. My mother's family had about, oh, 30 people in it. And they're all gone. He survived because his wife-to-be was one of the people appointed by the guards to keep track of people who were selected for the gas chambers. So … she said she needed help, and who did she pick out? She picked out the guy she was engaged to. …

KP: You were in Germany, and one of the things I have been most intrigued with-- several people have said, is that the attitude--there could be some quite hostile Germans.

MS: Oh, yeah. However, one of the interesting things, I thought, was when I ran into a hostile German, it was a pleasure to take him down a peg. And that even meant physical interaction. And we were armed, and we wouldn't shoot them. But one of the things we learned in basic training was … how to use a rifle as an offensive weapon. … And one of the things was, if a German hurt an American solider, that would be a terrible thing for the German because once it happened, and rather than go through all kinds of formalities, a couple of the boys hunted him down.

KP: One person I have interviewed recalled driving in a Red Cross marked vehicle at night and being shot at while driving in isolated woods. He would be driving in a wooded area.

MS: No, [that] never happened to me, because I was in the city.

KP: Another case, he said on the Autobahn, the bridges had been bombed out and there would be barriers, but often … the Germans would take away the barriers, so you would be driving along, and you could go … into the river.

MS: Were these people combat veterans?

KP: No.

MS: That's the reason. … I couldn't tell you, but I surmise that if any of the people that were in my outfit had run into an obstacle like that, they would stop and hunt. Which is not a good thing [to] talk about later on. But, then again, you're talking about, literally, children in uniform. And we weren't about to suffer any personal indignities, because-- on the other hand, there was the time I was driving a two-and-half-ton truck in town and it was very wet and slippery. And I saw a group of children, fifteen children, being led across the street by a nun, or somebody you know. This was about 100 yards down. And I touched the brakes and the two and a half started to slide, and it was going to go-- it was aiming right for that group of kids. And I leaned out of that cab, and I started to scream in German, "Get out of the way …" "Get out of the way." "Get out of the way." Honked the horn, and turned the lights on and everybody scattered. The thing skidded right through where they were. So it's not a clear picture of complete antipathy towards the Germans. It depends upon the situation. I don't think you're interested in having an interactive discussion with anybody who is firing at you. Neither are you interested in, at least I wouldn't be interested in, hurting someone who obviously was in the way inadvertently. Does that make sense?

KP: Yes, that makes perfect sense.

MS: You come across, you're driving on the Autobahn and you come across where they have taken the barriers out, and you find it. You stop, you leave one guy in the car and you hunt.

KP: So that's what you would have done if the barriers had been missing.

MS: Absolutely. … You hunt, you know. And one of the things is that, then it wasn't a case of being afraid of getting into a fire fight because I had been in so many of them. So you hunt and you fix the problem.

KP: You mentioned that occasionally, you did have some altercations with Germans. That Germans occasionally, caused a problem. Do you remember any incidents?

MS: Well, the only one was at the *Burgermeister* in the town outside of (Feign?) that we were at, once tried to give me a hard time. Because here I was living in a house that belongs to

Germans and what do you Americans have to do with it? We dissuaded him from this kind of conversation in the future.

KP: I take it you didn't want to make the Army a career.

MS: Well, actually, I was thinking about it.

KP: Really. At the time you …

MS: No, actually, … when I came back, my discharge came up in March, ‘46, and I was coming back here. And at the time I was going to be discharged they said, "Would you like to stay in the Army?" And I said, "What's in it for me?" And they said, "Well, you'll maintain your rank, and you will have a secure future." I said, "Yeah, but what's in it for me?" And they wouldn't commit themselves to anything. I said, "I want to go college. I want to get another degree. What's in it for me? Can you offer me that?" And they said, "Well, we don't have such programs." I said, "So, let me see if I understand this. You want me to stay in the Army, but there is no indication other than money that you are going to pay me to re-enlist, that anything positive is going happen to me." And the sergeant says, "You know, I don't think you'd make good Army material." And I said, "Sergeant, you're very perceptive." So, I stayed in the reserve, and then when I got out they had these correspondence courses. I did one correspondence course on law, and I realized that that was a waste. So after six months or so I got out of the reserves.

KP: You mentioned that in Germany you supervised a quarry.

MS: Yeah.

KP: How big was the quarry?

MS: What do you mean? In terms of physical size or people or what?

KP: People and …

MS: Well, there was about 30 workers and what they did was they blasted the rock, and they put the rock in these little railroad cars, open sided railroad cars. They were not very large, about as big as two desks, on a little railway. And then they pushed them up to an incline and dropped them into a chute where a grinder … broke up the rock and depending upon how long you ran it, and the size of the gravel, or what have you, for building purposes. Because we were an engineer general service regiment. Which meant that we built roads and did all kinds of repairs. And so they needed the quarry. … The quarry was not owned by the Army, obviously. We just were there. And so every week the owner would come up and say, "You have to sign a receipt for so many tons of stone." And I would sign it: "Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck," … what have you and put a date down. And he would walk away satisfied. I'm sure he got paid for it. But the people who were working the quarry were no problem. No problem. They were older guys. I had less trouble with people who were older than I was then. I guess older means in your 40s. That was ancient. Because we had a few young people, who were thirteen, fourteen, who needed

to work to make a living. And they would not work, okay. And since I was eighteen myself, or nineteen, I forget which, I worked right with them. You know, I would push the cars up, push it in, get the power going. A couple of times the owner gave me a hard time. He said it was *keine Strom* [no power], and I would go down to the connections, and I'd see where he had disconnected a power line, or something like that. And I would say, "Connect it." "Oh, *keine Strom*." I'd take out a rifle and say, "Connect it." And all of a sudden it would be connected. … I guess in most Army outfits if something goes wrong you call a specialist in. But I knew enough about that stuff right now. So after about the second or third time I took him aside, and I said, "If the power gets disconnected again, I'm going to hold you responsible. And holding you responsible means signing no more tickets. Which means we will be taking out all this gravel, and you're never going to get paid for it." And after that there was no problem. You know, (Bernie?), when I finally told him said, "Why didn't you kick him a few times?" I said, "Nah, this was easier. I knew where his weak spots were. He wanted to get paid." So you'd do it that way. It would have been more satisfying to beat him up. Probably more fun, too. But the job was to get the gravel out and so that was the job. Oh, and I nearly got-- I was riding in one truck, and I didn't watch where I was going, and one of the guys hollered at me. And I turned around to look and what he was doing was warning me that there was a low beam coming. So I found it with my head, and I was out for about an hour. And the guys in the quarry, the Germans, "Are you all right?" "Sergeant, are you all right?" And I got up and said, "I guess I'm all right." And I was. It didn't hurt that much, just knocked me out. That's the first time I thought about that. How about that?

KP: You had a lot of responsibility in this quarry.

MS: Yeah, I was running it. Nineteen years old, king of the world. Without me, none of the roads would be built. Yeah.

KP: And supervising 30 people.

MS: Yeah, it was easy, though. Literally, it was easy. Because the first time you walk in, you're an American soldier and you got stripes on-- I got to be buck sergeant. He promoted me. (Bernie?) promoted me. He went into the commanding … colonel. And he said, "Silverman is a great guy. He knows all about engineering. He knows all about …" I didn't know shit. So next thing I knew, I was a sergeant. So I had stripes, and I had a rifle. When I walked in the first day, everybody sort of stood around. They weren't quite sure what I was going to do. And I said, "Let's get to work." And at first, they were goofing off, but I was out there pushing. "Why isn't this stuff coming out?" "Well, the trucks are slow." "Okay, let me help push." And I would push. And then, after I pushed we greased the wheels. How about that? What a major advantage, right? Then it was easy to push. And the *Strom* kept getting disconnected. Except the third time I said, "You're not going to get paid." So after about a month of that it was no problem. Everybody would come in and show up, you know. And I'd sign their paychecks for them, and they'd get their Marks. And they would work. And, … as I say, we had a couple of young fellows in there. They were there for about a week. … I don't think they tried to sabotage things. But they were not helpful, and they were not working. And they would be a couple of cases where one of these little trucks would be thrown off the rails. So I called them in. I said,

"This work is too hard for you. You're much to smart for this. You're out." So they were gone. But it
was not a bad job. Except for getting knocked on the head, of course. That bothered me. But then I had a hard head. It was an easy job. An easy job. You didn't have to go to reveille, you know.

KP: You were, in a sense, a factory manager, quarry manager.

MS: Yeah, quarry manager. And I'd get up when I wanted. I'd go into the mess hall, get my own chow. Go out to the quarry. "Everybody here? Stuff going? The quarry running?" "Yep." "Okay, see you guys later." I'd go back to my house, spend the morning. Come in for lunch. Go back to the quarry. "How are things going? Trucks loaded up? How many two and half's went out? Good idea. Okay, [I'll] sign off your pay checks." I'd go back and … within the first few weeks that I was there they had fixed up one of the buildings, the general service regiment had fixed up one of the buildings as a bar and a sort of a place where were could go. Because we had a non-fraternization policy, a legal non-fraternization policy, which, of course, was broken immediately.

KP: The non-fraternization didn't work?

MS: Oh, no. You've got all these hormones running around. There were no men, and all these young ladies who were hungry. Terrible, huh? Sexist. Different time. Different life. Different situation. That's why I say, you have to be young, and not have much experience to be very effective in the Army.

KP: Did you have a lot of Germans who said they were no longer for Hitler?

MS: Oh, yeah. They were all against him. Every one of them was against him. We'd say, "You're right." And I would say, "What did you do about it?" "What could we do about it, one person?" Have you noticed yesterday when the voting was on, did you realize there was somebody who said, "I didn't want to vote because what difference does it make?" Not quite the same thing, but you understand the nature of the input. That's sort of the way I felt.

KP: You went back to Germany in 1965.

MS: Oh yeah.

KP: And you went to the cemetery you mentioned.

MS: Yeah.

KP: What prompted the visit? Was it strictly travel for recreation?

MS: Well, at first it was. But then … what actually happened was we had this cheap fare. … What is it? Luxembourg …

KP: Luxembourg Air.

MS: Yeah, right. We got to Luxembourg. We had a car, and we were going to drive down to France to the Le Havre. And we were going to go down to Switzerland. And I was trying to get out of Luxembourg City. And I'm driving and I'm driving and I'm driving, and after about a half an hour of driving my first wife says, "You know, I've seen that same policeman three times." And she was right. So, I stopped, and I said, "How do you get out of this town?" And the guy spoke English, or course, and gave me directions. And the directions went by the cemetery. And I go by a cemetery, an American cemetery. And I say, "Let' stop." So we stopped. … After that I said, "Well, you know, we really should explore Luxembourg and the rest of it." And I remembered some of the places I'd been. And, you know, one of the places in North Luxembourg-- well actually what happened was we had a car with a D on the license plate. And no matter where we stopped, nobody would talk to us until we opened our mouths. Because it was a Deutschland, a German car. And so, we got to this one town in Luxembourg. It was about three days, and I said, "This has got to stop." I called up the car rental agency. I said, "I need another car." "Why?" "Because this is a German car." "Well." "Nobody talks to us." Would you believe, within two hours we had another car with a French license plate on it. That was okay. And we actually found some places that I had been in Luxembourg, and we came-- we drove up to this one courtyard, and it was a winding courtyard. And I remember coming up this thing, and I remember fighting the way through the gates. And we turned the corner of the gates, and it was sort of, what do they call that? I forget what the psychological term is, but they had this tiger tank as a memorial in the middle of the courtyard, and it's gun was pointed straight out. They had concrete around the sides, but all I could see was the muzzle of this gun with the flash deflectors on it. As I drove in I yelled, "Out of the car!" Everybody looks at me, you know. I pulled the brakes on right out of the car, and I almost was on the ground, and I thought to myself, "What is the matter with you?" And another time, a day later, we drove past this small town. We got out. We walked [to the] outskirts of the town. We found a pillbox that had blown. …

KP: That your unit …

MS: No, I had blown. You know the shaped charges? … When you take a shape charge and you hang it on a pill box, and it punches a hole through the concrete, and the concrete sprays inside and kills all the occupants. We had punched a hole in this thing. Blown the roof off. The roof had settled a foot down, so you couldn't see out through the slits anymore. But it was just grown over and just was still there. And in '65 we drove into (Ormont?) in Germany. Remember (Ormant?)? Beautiful town. Clean. Sidewalks. I got hollered at by a cop for … jaywalking. … I apologized. He said, "Oh, you're an American. Oh, good. We love you! It's all right!" Yeah, right. We drove into Germany. It was no problem. Okay. We're coming out of Germany, we come past a border guard. There's no border guard going to (Ormont?). And the guy stops the car, German. He says, "Where's your pass?" I say, "What pass?" He said, "How did you get into Germany?" I said, "I drove." He said, "Who are these children?" I said, "They're mine." He says, "Where's your passport?" … On our passport we had the pictures of the kids, so we didn't have to get new passports for them. So I show them our passport. He said, "Whose car is that?" I said, "I rented it." I'm thinking to myself, "I'm getting more and more pissed off at this guy." But he's a civilian, and I'm a civilian. So I'm waiting. And my first wife is saying, "Tell him who we are. Tell him who we are." And I'm saying, "Excuse me, why don't

you stay in the car." I could see myself in some German prison. So I get out of the car, and I show him my passport, and I show him the rental agreement. I tell him where we entered Germany. And he said, "Well, that was illegal. You shouldn't have done that." I said, "Okay, I'm sorry, but I'm going back out now." He said, "Well, you don't have insurance." I said, "This is all I got." And he says, "Okay, but you are going to have trouble getting back into Luxembourg." I was crossing back into Luxembourg. So I said, "Okay." So he let me go. I get to Luxembourg, and they wouldn't let me go. The insurance papers had to be there. Some green papers. So I called up the rental agency. I said, "Remember me? I'm the guy with the D on the license plate? Now I have no insurance." So it took three hours. They drove up from Luxembourg City, gave me the insurance papers, and we went on. But it was interesting. Getting out of (Ormont?) was a lot tougher than getting into, both times. So, yeah we went around to some places. I went to Koblenz, and I went to a couple of little towns. I remember one town we were in, before Koblenz where there was a greenhouse. Do you ever have the urge to break a window in a greenhouse?

KP: No.

MS: Can you imagine a whole company of children? They see a greenhouse. We broke every window.

KP: In the house-- just to …

MS: We fired-- we must have shot off a couple of hundred dollars worth of ammunition. … Every pane was broken. There was nobody around, of course because this little town was burning. I went past the town, now, … toward Koblenz. The greenhouse wasn't there. It just shows you, right?

KP: Did it surprise you how fast Germany had rebuilt?

MS: Oh, yeah. We went-- in '65 when we went back it was like there was never any war. When I left it in '46, people literally were starving during the wintertime. They were living in lean-tos. Because everything was wrecked. … Actually we, the GIs, in '46 were living in a Wehrmacht barracks in Vaihingen, it's V-A-I-H-I-N-G-E-N. It's outside of Stuttgart. And I think the U.S. Army still lives there. And that barracks was standing. So we just took it over and lived there. But we had the best, the only really habitable thing in the area, in this little town. I think Stuttgart now has expanded to include Vaihingen. … But in '65 I … [said], "Let's go down to Stuttgart." She said, "Enough war." So we went on to France. But, she … did not have the same frame of reference as my present wife has. My present wife hates Germans, since World War II. Still hates Germans of a certain age. … As long as your under 50, she treats you like a human being. If you are over 50, automatically you are a member of the *Waffen SS* … to her.

KP: Your first wife, she did not mind being in Germany?

MS: No. Not at all. She said she didn't. She was a different kind of person, though. That's probably the reason we got divorced. But who knows who was right, and who cares? One goes on, right?

KP: Travis, do you have any questions in terms of Germany?

TR: In Germany, no.

KP: You came back, and you decided the Army wasn't for you.

MS: Yeah, after all-- I mean it was the same Army. But now, you know it was …

KP: You'd seen a lot of the world. Had you traveled much before the Army?

MS: No.

KP: So you really had seen …

MS: I'd seen Europe. I'd seen London. And I've been to London a few times. And I'd seen Altrincham. I liked Altrincham. It's not so nice now. Altrincham is a working, … blue collar kind of town now.

KP: You'd seen France. You'd seen …

MS: Well, yeah, but what I'd seen in France, I really didn't like. Because it was really a wasteland. You know and it's not a case of the French, which I have since grown personally not to like. Except for engineers. Engineers are wonderful the world over. Not that I'm prejudiced of course. But, actually, I've taught several classes in Paris. … It's true, they're all the same. Because we, as engineers, all go through the same homogenizing process. We all have to learn mathematics, physics, chemistry, and what have you. And unless you think logically and clearly, you don't graduate. So the political, and the personal and the social stuff becomes secondary. Because … you're conditioned to think one way. But, anyhow, no, she didn't. It didn't bother her too much. … I guess she lived in a different cocoon. My present wife, of course, is not Jewish. But she still hates Germans. Very liberal. Oh! How is it, "You can be ultraconservative, but you can never be too liberal." That's the way it works. Politically speaking, that is. It's an interesting arrangement. Nice girl, smart. …

KP: You left the Army, and you came to Rutgers.

MS: No, I left the Army, and I went to high school.

KP: You hadn't graduated?

MS: Oh, I had graduated. But I had graduated a long time ago, you know. I mean it was almost three years before, and I remembered Rutgers where I was almost failing. Syracuse was different because it was business administration. But I wanted to be an engineer. So, at that time Perth Amboy High School they had catch-up classes, if it were, for veterans. So I had to go back and do beginning calculus and go through plain and solid geometry, and all those other things that I had sort of forgotten. So I understood a little bit more about it. So when I went

back into Rutgers-- automatically in June I entered Rutgers-- I was equipped. And physics was okay then because I knew what they were talking about.

KP: You were in Perth Amboy High School for how long? …

MS: Four years initially.

KP: But when you came back for the refresher?

MS: I went in … in April, and I was there for about six weeks.

KP: You were with the regular students? Was this during the day or …

MS: No, this was with veterans. They were all veterans. I mean we were grizzled veterans of nineteen and twenty. You know, not like those children of sixteen and seventeen. So, it was a case of where they had special classes.

KP: Special classes, so you didn't mingle with the rest of the student body?

MS: No, in fact, it would have been very difficult. Very difficult. I think it would have been difficult. Because, at least my interests were not the same. And … also, I think, in six weeks we covered a year's worth of work in mathematics and what have you. So it was a different frame of reference. … Even though we were in the same building at the same time, it wasn't an evening class. You could tell who was a veteran and who wasn't.

TR: Did you find being a veteran a help or a hindrance to learning the material?

MS: Well, I found it very useful because when I went to Rutgers the first time it was-- I went from an environment where I really didn't have to study too much, because I was very bright. I went to Rutgers. Hey, there are other guys who were brighter that I am, and there's a lot of them. And they understand stuff that I didn't understand. It was quite a psychic shock. But when I went back as a veteran it was … a different idea. Because when you come out of a semi-cocoon in your beginning lifestyle if you're suddenly dropped into the outside world, it can be a shock. Many people gradually become acclimatized, especially today. … You can watch on television, you can watch a revolution going on. At that time, you'd find out about it, maybe three or four days later. It was fast. But you wouldn't see it when it was happening. So you had a different frame of reference. A much more, shall we say, parochial frame of reference. And when I was a veteran coming back it was a different frame of reference. In fact, the academic staff used to comment on it a great deal. They could tell when you had veterans, even though we may have been the same age as other people coming in. They could tell who the veterans were.

KP: Because you just …

MS: We were prepared. We asked questions. "I don't understand what you're doing, please explain it." "But I just explained it." "Explain it again, please." And except for one professor, I wonder if [James J.] Slade is still here. He can't be.

KP: No, I don't think so, but I've heard that name. Someone …

MS: Slade. Yeah, he was interesting. If you like weird. He was teaching …

KP: Did he sell his notes? …

MS: Yeah, that was the guy with the notes.

KP: Yes, I've heard that name.

MS: Yeah, he was … ambidextrous. And he would come in at the beginning of the class, and he would start writing. As he talked he would write. And we were supposed to copy down what he was doing. And he would go across the wall, the back wall, front wall. Just as he got done the bell would ring and off he would go. And we would be sitting there taking notes and not having the foggiest notion of what the hell happened. In fact, I took the final in there, and I just-- I think I pulled answers out of the air. I got a B+ in the course. I haven't the vaguest idea why. Well, he was interesting. (Dogerty?) was nice. (Dogerty?) retired. I don't know if you knew him.

KP: No, I didn't.

MS: (Dogerty) was okay. He … taught thermodynamics. He was okay. Byron Pelan graduated with me. Did he retire yet?

KP: I don't know.

MS: He's over there on the other side of the river.

KP: Yeah, Rutgers is so big that it is difficult to know everyone on the faculty.

MS: Byron was brilliant. Byron was the kind of guy-- he made you very angry. He was a nice guy, but he made you very angry because he could sit and listen, and he understood it immediately. He joined the faculty immediately. He was in the faculty of engineers as soon as he graduated. Brilliant guy. But being a veteran, I think, had its advantages because it was-- at least in my point of view-- less a respect for authority because the person was standing up in front of a class and more of, "You're here. I want to learn something. So if I don't understand I'm going to ask you again and again." The toughest classes I had were the beginning ones in '46 because they were the beginning chemistry. Do you still have chemistry classes here, Chemistry 101, where you [have] 2,000 students in a room?

TR: Yes.

KP: Yes.

MS: Not that I'm exaggerating. The professor looks about the size of six inches way down there. And you can't ask a question because he'll never see you. Okay, is that … still the same

thing? Well, those beginning ones are tough. The later on one[s]-- at least when I went to Rutgers the whole engineering school had about 120 people in it broken up among all the disciplines. I think there were 30 … mechanicals who graduated, which was a lot. I don't know whether that's relevant.

KP: No, no. This is very relevant.

MS: It is? Oh, yeah.

KP: And so you had a tough time in the introductory courses. But when you got to the smaller it seemed easier.

MS: Yeah, when we got to a course where we could ask questions. The … beginning courses are easy. You write down what he tells you. When it comes to the exam, you regurgitate what you heard on a piece of paper. If it matches what you were told to some degree, you get an A. If you've got a good memory, you're in, right? If you want to understand how it fits into the real world, you're dead though, because you're never going to find out. I remember when I went to Berkeley, and I was teaching classes myself. I was teaching freshman classes, and the classes were huge. And I would have office hours every day after class, every day. Then finally the dean called me in one day, and he said, "You have to stop this." I said, "Stop what?" He said, "You have a train of people outside your office all the time." And I said, "Well, they're asking questions." I said, "The object is to provide information." … So finally I had to cut back on the office hours, because it was interfering with the other professors. What?

KP: I can imagine the scene.

MS: Well, I was going to be on the faculty at Berkeley until one day I realized I was not qualified, because I went to a faculty tea, and there was this professor talking about residual grinding stresses in cast iron-- remember this is a mechanical engineer--and I had this irresistible urge to throttle him because that's all he talked about. When I came home I said to my wife, "I am not going to make it, because I cannot sit there for the 30th time and listen to residual grinding stresses in cast iron. Ah, maybe if he went in to steel, titanium, but cast iron?" So, as it turned out I did some seminars at Berkeley. I've done some--this was about 30 years after I left in the middle '50s. And one of the guys in the class asked me why I left Berkeley, and I said, "Because residual …" He says, "I know who it is, and he's still doing it." And would you believe I had lunch with him, and I'm sitting there. We're talking about old times. He said, "Let me tell you about the latest advances in …" I couldn't believe it. So I guess I dropped out of academia, formal academia, for the same reason as the Army.

KP: There are certain similarities.

MS: There are certain similarities, right. On the other hand, if you get to be full professor, you can be really nuts. That's all right. It's sort of like in psychology, how do they say, "When you're poor, you're a psychotic. When you're middle-income, you're innovative and different, and when you're wealthy, you're eccentric." So there you are. What else?

KP: How did you meet your first wife?

MS: Oh, she lived next door.

KP: Where did you live?

MS: In Perth Amboy.

KP: Oh, she was [in your] hometown.

MS: Yeah.

KP: Had you corresponded during the war?

MS: No. Never knew her. The girl I corresponded with was in the same high school class as I. And I meet her at the 50th reunion of my high school class. She looks the same. Would you believe? Except she's got gray hair. She's still thin, attractive, very smart lady, and all that. It was nice to meet her. I met my first wife, because she was living a couple doors away. And there we are.

KP: How crucial was the GI Bill for you?

MS: Very. You remember my mother.

KP: Yeah, who said, "Who is going to pay for it?"

MS: Right. I said, "I'm going back to Rutgers." She said, "You know, we don't have much money." And I knew they were making money hand over fist because of the rationing. So I said, "Right!" And so the GI Bill was really supporting us. Actually, I got married when I was in my last year at Rutgers. And I had the GI Bill and I used to work in a shoe store weekends. And I made twenty dollars for Friday night and Saturday, and that supported us. … My wife worked in a dress store on Saturday. Then when I graduated, I couldn't get a job. So I saw … this notice on the bulletin board: "Come to Berkeley. Come to Stanford." So I sent letters off to them. And then universities run, I guess, differently than they do today. At least I hope so. Because what they did was they took a look at the transcript, and they said, "Oh, a transcript, good. Smart guy. We need him." I hope today they do more than that. Anyhow, so they both sent me letters of acceptance, and I sent a letter back to them. I said, "I have a wife who is going to school. Will you allow her to go free." Stanford said no. Berkeley said yes. So, I went to Berkeley. Very easy. I graduated …

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

KP: This continues an interview with Melvin Silverman on November 9, 1994 a Rutgers University in New Brunswick with Kurt Piehler and

TR: Travis Richards.

KP: You were saying your wife got free tuition to go to California.

MS: Yeah, what happened was that I got this letter back, and they said, "Yes. We'd be glad to take her, and we'll give her free tuition." It turns out in California if you're a resident for a year, you're a resident. You get free tuition. So they offered me the munificent sum of 120 dollars a month as a teaching assistant, and I was getting 110 dollars from the government, and I was working at a shoe store on Saturday because if you sell shoes, you can get a job any time, believe me. If you ever want to drop this professor stuff, go and sell shoes. So I'd sell shoes on Saturdays and she could work in a dress store. We had more money than we know what to do with. We had faculty housing at 28 dollars a month. We used to eat in the faculty dinning room, a dollar a day. My hospitalization, all my expenses were paid. Her-- she cost me, I think, 60 dollars a year. When I went to have glasses I went to the optometry school, and the examination and the glasses cost 18 dollars. So it wasn't a bad deal.

KP: And you studied engineering at …

MS: Well even before that we got this acceptance so I said to her, "We're going to California." We were married in '48, and she said, "Gee, I don't want to leave home." I said, "Well, you've got a problem." So when I graduated I said, "We're going to California," and I had purchased a 1949 business coup with some money I got when I was married. Do you know what a business coupe is? It's a two door car, a coupe, with no back seat, ostensibly for all the samples. So we packed all our worldly belongings in the car and off we went to California. That was when, you know-- anyhow, we got faculty housing. And I was working on a masters in industrial … engineering. It wasn't a bad deal. I mean, she was finishing her degree at Berkeley. And I tell you, we were living off the fat of the land. Can you imagine that? I mean, come on 325 dollars a month? And then … a year later I got a letter from the government saying … I had used up all my GI Bill, and they had overpaid me by six months. Would I please send the money back? Or justify it, which they shouldn't have said. I sent the letter back. I told them the truth. I enclosed sales slips. I said, "With this money I bought this overcoat, this clothing. I'm paying this rent," and so on down the line. And they sent me a letter. They said, "Fine, thank you. Never mind." And then I studied for my P.E. license, and I passed that. … I got to be a registered professional engineer in California, and I did my research on high-speed metal cutting. That was interesting because my wife used to be my assistant. And I had set up the tooling, did all the background work, written the thesis and all that, and one of the guys on my committee was not interested in metal cutting. And he led me to believe that he was not going to approve my thesis. So there I was. I had a choice. I could either register for a doctorate, which the dean wanted me to do, and continue on, or do another thesis and get out with a masters degree. So I waited. I thought about it, and I figured out what to do. I waited till the Christmas holiday, and on my committee was two guys from industrial engineering, one guy from metallurgy, and I think another one from outside … the department, civil engineer. So Christmas vacation, … I went to the metallurgist, and I said, " This is my thesis. Could you sign off on it?" And he said, "But your chairman should sign first." I said, "He's skiing." So he read it, and he signed off on it. And then when the other guys came back I gave it to the chairman, and he said, "I'm not going to sign this. I told you what I wanted to do." I said, "Well, we've got a problem here. Because metallurgy signed off and it's going to look like you don't believe metallurgy." So a week later he signed it. The

other two guys signed it, and I got my masters degree. I went in to see the dean, and I said, "I think I'm going to go out in the world now." And he said, "Why don't you go for your doctorate?" And I said, "Well, residual grinding stresses in cast iron …" He says, "Me too, but I'm sticking it out." So there I was. … Since then, by the way, I have also a M.B.A. out of Baruch.

KP: Oh, I used to work there.

MS: Yeah? Where?

KP: I used to work in the 18th street building. I was a researcher.

MS: Oh, what is this, Lexington Avenue and 21st?

KP: I worked in that. Yeah, there were various branches. … I mean I was in the building on 18th.

MS: Yeah, I registered for a doctorate there. … I completed all the work, and I had written several books, and I failed my orals. The reason I failed my orals I found out later on was--see I was making very much money as a consultant, and they want to learn how to become a consultant. And I thought they wanted me to … tell them what I knew about my research. And one of the guys said, "What about this consulting?" And I sort of passed it by, which caused me to fail my orals. So I left, so they gave me a M.B.A. Then I went to the New School, and received an M.A. clinical psych, and I have my doctorate in industrial social psych from the Union Institute.

KP: So you've gotten a number of advanced degrees.

MS: Yeah.

KP: It is an understatement, but what prompted you to get these degrees?

MS: I realized very early in that the world seems to think you know something when you have a degree. Whether you do or not is not relevant. What it does is it opens a door for you. Once you get through the door, you've got to perform, of course. So if you have a doctorate it doesn't mean you're smart. First of all, it means you're stubborn. You have a high tolerance for bullshit. Okay? But the thing is, it helps to open a door. Once you're through the door then they say, "Now you've got to do something." But without the admission card you can't get through the door. So therefore I kept trying until I finally got through the door. Now I teach at about twenty universities, short non-credit courses because it pays more. And I'm on the online faculty of the University of Phoenix. I don't have to go there. You know about that?

KP: No.

MS: Their classes are on the computer. So I log on once a day, and I see what the class has done, and I correct their papers and send them comments. Then I log off. … They're all over the

world. And I have a letter of invitation from the University of Malta, so I may be going there if the Fulbright people decide that I'm acceptable. Life goes on. You don't look back.

KP: In reflecting back, do you think-- it sounds that being a veteran … in a sense really toughened you for the world, that you handled college and your career a lot differently than you might have if you hadn't gone.

MS: Absolutely. I handled a lot of things in life very poorly. If one compares one's behavior-- excuse me. Let me restate that. If I compare my reactions in situations to those I see on TV and [in] the movies as, shall we say, models of behavior, in many cases I acted immaturely, poorly and not suited to the situation. However if I had not been in the Army it would have been even less mature than the immature behavior that I exhibited. I don't know whether that makes any sense.

KP: Yes that does.

MS: I don't think that from my experience with other people, I don't think that we're all suave and sophisticated and handling situations well and able to extricate ourselves from impossible things like you see in the popular press. But I think if you go through an experience where for an extended period of time your life is at risk you begin to think about things differently. And if it doesn't work out, well you say, "I survived." At least I do. There are some people that don't. I've had patients when I was doing clinical psych that did not survive. And they kept talking about experiences that happened to them as if they were life threatening. But they're really not.

KP: … Did you ever encounter any veterans who …

MS: No I haven't. … No I never had any veterans as patients.

KP: But as someone who was veteran who went through-- people trying to really kill you.

MS: Yeah.

KP: How did you try to-- did that help you in your working with those types of people, therapy? Did it give you insights you might not have had?

MS: Yes. I think so. In fact, … now that I think about it, it was probably one of the reasons I decided not to stay as a therapist. Because when you sit behind a desk, and you listen to someone who complains how their mother treated them when they three year and four years old-- I'm probably being vicious but just to make the point. And if the person is well paid economically, in good physical health, has a happy home life, has well brought up children, and they're complaining about how their mother treated them and you have thoughts like, "Why is this person sitting here? Go out and get a life." This is not the thoughts of therapists. This is not the thought of the supportive, helpful individual. And when you begin to think like that you're nor going to help the patient. So if you're not going to help the patient, get out of it. That's why I got out of it. And I guess … being a veteran affects you as much or more as anything else does. Yeah, come to think of it maybe it did. Because when I first started to go out with my

second wife, which was over twenty years ago, we lived in New York. And we'd be coming home from the theater or something, and there'd be a guy sitting there, and he'd ask for some money. And I'd stop and talk to him. And I'd say, "You look healthy. Why don't you get a job?" My wife would start pulling me away saying, "Don't, don't, don't." And I'd say, "Why? I'm talking to this guy." And she'd pull me away. She'd say, "What is it with you?" I said, "Well, what can he do?" She said, "He might pull a knife." I said, "Well I know how to handle that." So I guess that's [something] that affects you some.

KP: Earlier you said you were some who run as fast as could after high school ended

MS: Yeah.

KP: In school and out.

MS: I wouldn't run now. In fact, that bothers her a lot. I had a-- I was riding with [my] number three son a couple of years ago, many years ago. I was in New York, and I had the Chrysler, and this truck edged over and touched the Chrysler and I slammed on the brakes, got out of the car, opened the door of the truck, grabbed this guy by his arm and pulled him out [and] down. You know he was about this much taller than I was. And I said, "Do you know you hit my car?" And I went on. I gave him really a verbal tongue lashing. And the guy apologized. He looked at me. He said, "It's not so big. Here's 50 bucks. Don't report it to the company." I took the 50 bucks. He went off. The number three son was sitting there. He said, "Were you going to hit him?" And I said, "Gee, I don't know," you know. But then I began to think about it. I thought, "Well, gee I could have." That was not a good thing. Then there was this time my wife and I were in Greenwich Village, and I was getting ready to back into this slot, park, and this pimp mobile drove in. Do you know what a pimp mobile is?

KP: Yes.

MS: And this big tall guy gets out. And I get out of my car, and I say, "Who the hell do you think you are?" And the next thing I know she has my arm, pulling me in the car. She says, "Let's go." I say, "Why? He took my parking space." She says, "It's all right. It's all right. It's all right." So I guess I wouldn't have done that otherwise. But then again who knows. I may end up in a basket somewhere for doing things like that. … Not that I think I'm the most aggressive guy.

KP: Yeah. But I remember you just saying that in high school you lived in terror of being beaten up.

MS: Yeah. You know an interesting thing happened a couple of months ago where-- see I drive a Jeep. And I came to this red light, and this guy pulls up in this Datsun 300 or whatever it is, and he's gunning his engine. He's gunning his engine. He's looking over at me. And I thought to myself, "This is fun." So I gunned my engine. I gunned my engine. I gunned my engine. And he's gunning his engine, and I'm gunning my engine. And the light turns green, and he goes off, and I had my foot on the brake. He (laughs) could have crashed into something, and I sitting

there laughing, and Lizzie says, "Don't you ever do that again." Life is fun. As long as it's not aggressive. That wasn't aggressive, I don't think. Was it? No. No. What?

KP: Is there anything we forgot to ask you about World War II or your career afterwards or before?

MS: Well, oh yeah. In several jobs that I had I had been fired. I had been fired, I think, mainly because of some aggressiveness. In one case, I was fired because I asked for a raise. Another case I was let go because they had a general downsizing, and I was caught in the downsizing, but I knew other people who had less seniority who were kept. But … I guess it's a decision one makes. Whatever that means. All right? And so far it's turned out pretty good. Economically I have no problems. That's why I'm sitting here during the day, right?

KP: No, I know.

MS: I'm finishing up a second edition of one of the books I've written.

KP: What have you written on?

MS: I write on engineering management. I teach engineers how to become human beings, which is an uphill fight, of course. But one of the great things about engineers is they're logical, intelligent, consistent, narrow-minded bigoted who like other engineers. Since I am one, they can listen to me.

KP: Because they are talking your language.

MS: I'm talking their language, and they say to me, "Have you been there?" I say, "Yes." I try to hide the doctorate in psychology, because that will make them nervous. But … and I write engineering management, and do you know what? People buy the books It's great.

KP: Oh, no.

MS: Yeah, it's great.

KP: My first book is coming out, and I hoping that someone buys [it].

MS: Who's your publisher?

KP: Smithsonian.

MS: Oh shit.

KP: That's …

MS: Who's your editor?

KP: Mark Hirsch.

MS: Okay, have you sat down with Mark Hirsch and asked him how he's going to merchandise your book?

KP: … We've been talking about that.

MS: Oh, have you given specific names that you want to get reviewed? Has he done that?

KP: I've got to double check with that.

MS: … You know I have the feeling that most publishers that somehow-- I'm making this up, of course-- there's a rule that says, "You've got to print so many books a year." It doesn't make a difference what you do with them. You've got to print them. And if they're a success, take the credit. If they are a failure, blame the author. So if you write another book, call me because I have a great contract. Yeah, as a matter of fact I had a contract with John Wiley and due to some problems that they had, they had to pay me 40,000 dollars in back royalties, and they didn't want to do it. Does your contract have a clause of arbitration?

KP: No.

MS: … Take them into arbitration. They … hate it because it's cheap and you get an answer. Otherwise you got to go to a lawyer, you know. But if you take them into arbitration-- call me. I'd be delighted to help you out.

KP: Well, actually we might do an anthology of these World War II interviews. So we will probably be in touch.

MS: Call me. Yeah, I'd be delighted. I'll have the contract all set up. What it does is it levels the playing field that includes things like, "The publisher will not change the contact or the sense of the author's words," okay? Edit yes. [But] not change the sense. "In the even of any dispute it will go to binding arbitration either in New Jersey or Washington," depending upon who calls for binding arbitration. "And the cost of arbitration shall be added to the award." Let me see-- oh, "The books of the publisher are open to inspection and audit by the author." They hate that. Let's see if there's anything else. I don't know whether this is relevant. …

KP: Yeah, this probably isn't relevant. …

MS: But you can take it out, right?

KP: Yes or you can delete it.

MS: Yeah, what I'm trying to tell you is that most publishers, in my opinion-- I've dealt with McGraw Hill,-- they've published my stuff-- John Wiley. Prentice Hall-- they're crooks. You can quote me. And now it's Chapman and Hall. You know (Chapman and Hall?). You know John Wiley.

KP: Yes. Wiley I know. Actually I know Prentice Hall. I didn't even realize … their name had changed.

MS: Well, they still have Prentice Hall, but they are now part of engulf and devour, … Gulf Western or something. … That was interesting. But anyhow, be that as it may. … When they want to sign you up-- if they do want to sign you up-- it's sort of like courting you before the marriage so you might as well get the contract laid out.

KP: No, I should have talked to you before my first book.

MS: "In the event that the book goes out of print, the films shall be transferred and ownership to the author."

KP: That I have.

MS: Okay. Because the first book in project management … went out of print because they refused to pay me the royalties. And they said, "We're not going to do a second edition." I said, "Fine, give it to me." I called up the printer. He printed up 4,000 copies. I sold those. I sold another 4,000 copies. Raised the price, of course. So it cost me four bucks a copy. I sold it for 35. Not a bad mark up. They took it back in the second edition, because they saw I could sell it. … Life goes on.

KP: You've had a very successful life.

MS: Only in the last twenty years. Before that it was really hairy.

KP: Really …

MS: Oh yeah. I mean when you work for other people it's a bitch because in management in those days it was a very hierarchical, authoritarian kind of management structure.

KP: It sounds like it was very much like the Army almost.

MS: Yeah. And this gave me a lot of trouble. When I became a consultant, which was much better, in '67 I worked for, what is it? It's now-- … not Ernst and Young. Who is it now? They're big. They were bought out. I used to consult with all the major engineering firms because I talked their language. The accountants used to go crazy because I never behaved like an accountant. And then when I worked for another company. I was a partner in the firm and did very, very well until they lost some of their major clients. But I went into business for myself, which was much better. Much better. There's an insatiable market for this kind of stuff, you know. Give up history. Teach management. [An] insatiable market for it. Chandler did pretty good, though, with history. You know about Chandler.

KP: Yes, oh yeah. Oh no, I know.

MS: Yeah, he did pretty good. He picked out a good topic.

KP: No, and Steve Ambrose actually has also done really well.

MS: How about Bronowski? He did [well], … he was on TV.

KP: Yeah.

MS: But he's not writing anymore, you know. He died.

KP: Yes, I know.

MS: Okay, what else can I tell you?

KP: I guess the only other question I had or two questions was how did you feel about the Cold War? And specifically the Korean and Vietnam wars?

MS: How did I feel about it?

KP: Yes. For example, were you concerned at all that you might be called up for Korea?

MS: No, because I was out of the Army.

KP: Were you glad you were out of the reserves?

MS: I was out-- of course (Bernie?) stayed in the reserves. He was this top sergeant, so he was going to stay in. So he was called up for Korea. Unfortunately he had to serve in Governor's Island in the Bay of New York, so he had a tough, you know he had a …

KP: He had tough duty?

MS: Yeah, right. It was tough, but after that, he dropped out. Yeah, no they wouldn't call me up for Korea. I was an old man by then. I mean I had too … many brains by that time. They wouldn't put me in the infantry. I think the Army is not stupid in general. It just has a bad system. I think they recognize that they better put young people, inexperienced people into combat. Unless it's a gung-ho outfit like the Marines where they try to indoctrinate you that the best thing in the world is to kill other people who wear different uniforms. And it doesn't make any difference who it is.

KP: What about Vietnam? What did you think about Vietnam?

MS: Well it was a mistake.

KP: In '65.

MS: Yeah, I thought it was a mistake. You could nuke them or get the hell out. But you could see it was not a war. It was not a war. It was political. And you could see that the people at the top had not thought through the consequences of what they were doing. They could have used one of my management seminars. Think before you do. I know it's a revolutionary idea. And the Vietnam war … I didn't go out and protest. Lizzie ran around protesting, my second wife. But I didn't protest. But I knew from the beginning that it was not going to work because it was like-- let me give you an analogy. On D-Day and in the Battle of the Bulge the Germans had much better equipment than we did. Their tanks could shoot the shit out of ours every time. Their weapons were much better. They had a (Schmeiser?) machine pistol that was wonderful. All we had were BARs that were left over from World War I, Browning Automatic Rifles. Our M-1s were pretty good, reliable weapons. But the Germans had a lot of automatic weapons. And in infantry, you do not see the opponent unless the war is becoming to come down or else it's small scattered actions, mostly artillery. Infantry does not usually see anybody. So, with superior equipment available and superior forces, even when we concentrated, they would have won. The reason that D-Day succeeded in my great military experience was that the G.I.s decided that the guy next to him was important, and they just kept going. The reason we were thrown out of Vietnam was the same reason, that the opponent has a psychological bond with the guy next to him and just keeps going. In the Battle of the Bulge we killed a couple of tanks. And the way you kill a tank is you got to get up right next to that thing because usually the bazooka would not kill a tank front on. They had beautiful tanks.

KP: So you and your men, you would climb on the tank and …

MS: We wouldn't climb it. We'd get up as close as you could to it-- see … infantry you could run up next to it. They couldn't see you. If the machine gun could see you, they'd get you. But if you get up next to it and you blow a track, it's immobile. The only thing you've got to worry about is when the turret swings around when it's immobile. And if there's no other tank around, you got them, because you can drop a couple of grenades in the engine compartment, and that will kill the tank. Or if they try to surrender, you shoot them. But they had much superior equipment. The only reason we won was there was a lot of us, and we didn't do the smart thing, which is run away.

KP: It sounds like you wonder sometimes why you didn't simply run away at times.

MS: Well I knew why I didn't run away. Because what the hell would-- you know-- what they hell would you do, you know? You'd say, "Geez, (Solomon?) took off." I could've taken off. … Especially when I was lost a couple of times. You can wander around and back for days and you know …

KP: And you would have had the perfect excuse.

MS: Yeah, but you find a tank destroyer and where do you go? "Go in the front." "Oh, okay. I go." And you do. So I-- you know there are battle plans and there are training operations, but when things get really bad, nobody knows what's going on. Nobody. At least in my opinion. And then it depends upon the individual soldier. The Germans did not lose the war until we

started to punch through after the Battle of the Bulge. They were losing, but-- the high command knew they were losing.

KP: The average soldier.

MS: The average soldier did not know in my opinion. And we did not know we were winning, *Stars and Stripes* kept telling us we were winning.

KP: But you didn't fully understand.

MS: … Listen, I've go to go ten yards ahead, you know, and see what happens. And ten yards ahead, and then ten yards ahead. We were moving on to their territory more. But it depends upon the-- at least then it depended. Today I'm not even sure of that because today there's this drive towards, shall we say, a theoretical war where you're going to be pushing buttons and what have you. Unfortunately, the other guys will be pushing buttons too. So there's going to be a lot more people hurt. And then at the bottom line it's going to come down to either the politicos decide they can't take any more hurt or the average GI is going to say, "I've got to slug it out." There's two alternatives. I think that the people, that the GIs in Vietnam knew it was a waste of time. So therefore they were not really interested in, shall we say, going the extra yard and finding out who did what. That's why you can have things like My Lai, you know, because there are a few people who don't recognize … what war is about in general. And that's why you had the stuff that we did, I think. Here's a great war historian doing a psychological analysis of the great war in Vietnam. Who the hell knows? Just my opinion. What else?

KP: Are you glad none of your children have been in the military or do you think they're missing something? Because it sounds like your military experiences had an important role in your life.

MS: I don't know what I would do. I have two sons who are physicians, and when you become a physician, you're a child anyhow because you go to college and you go to medical school right away. Then you're an intern and to some extent, you begin to think of people as machines, which is a child's viewpoint, right? It might have done them some good. I wouldn't like it if they got hurt, of course. But it might have done them some good to stay in situations where they were not, shall we say, the ostensible king of the walk. Does that make sense?

KP: Yes.

MS: Naturally, they are getting a little older now. Maybe they're beginning to think that people are human. The second one doesn't think so yet. He's a researcher. But, you know. The third one is a human being. He's good. The first two are good too, I guess. They're okay. But psychiatrists, by themselves, wow. Do you know any psychiatrists socially?

KP: No.

MS: It's interesting.

KP: No, no I don't know any socially.

MS: Yeah, number one is a psychiatrist. Unfortunately, I've had-- not quite, I haven't had the medical stuff, but the psychological training. And he rarely takes off the psychologist mask. He says, "How do you feel about that?" And I say to him, "What do you mean by that? What are these questions?" "Why are you so aggressive?" "I'm not being aggressive." "Then what are you being?" See the father always has the advantage, always. So there we are.

KP: Travis do you have any questions.

MS: Travis?

TR: No.

MS: Okay? Thank you gentlemen.

KP: Thank you very much.

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

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