

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JULIUS H. SMALL

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

ALEXANDER TOTH

and

SANDRA STEWART HOLYOAK

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

OCTOBER 18, 2006

TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Alexander Toth: This begins an interview with Julius H. Small, also known as Jim Small, on October 18, 2006, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, at Rutgers University. This interview is being conducted by Alexander Toth and ...

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

AT: Thank you for being here with us today. To begin, could you please state when and where you were born?

Julius Small: In Bridgeport, Connecticut, February 20, 1922.

AT: How long did you live in Connecticut before you moved to New Jersey?

JS: Three years.

AT: Can you tell us a little about your father? What was his name?

JS: Samuel H. Small.

AT: When and where was he born?

JS: He was born in Belkatov, Poland. I don't know the exact date, but probably [in the] late 1800s.

AT: What was his occupation?

JS: A florist, wholesale florist, flower grower.

AT: What was your mother's name?

JS: Gussie Mandelbaum.

AT: When and where was she born?

JS: She was born in Warsaw, Poland, and, again, I'm not sure of the date, but [in the] late 1800s.

AT: Did she have an occupation?

JS: Housewife, yes.

AT: Do you have any siblings?

JS: Yes.

AT: Could you discuss them a bit?

JS: My brother, Leon, is a graduate of New York Medical College and graduated in 1940 and immediately went into the Navy and was ... a Navy doctor for five years, onboard a destroyer, a destroyer or a frigate. It was the USS *Reading* [PF-66, a frigate] and [was] active with the fleet as a convoy escort.

AT: What is your family's religious background?

JS: Jewish, Hebrew.

AT: For both of your parents?

JS: Yes, yes.

SH: Can you tell us about your father's immigration to this country? Do you know anything about how he came to this country? Were there family members that came with him?

JS: Well, he came with my grandfather. They came separately. They left Poland and I believe they went to Ireland and they worked in Ireland for two years before they came to the United States. ... I assume that they had enough money to get to Ireland from Poland, and then, saved, and then, came to the United States, and then, later, my grandmother came, with two uncles and an aunt.

SH: How old was your father? He obviously must have been old enough to work in Ireland.

JS: ... Yes, but he was probably fifteen years older than my next uncle and there are probably other children in-between and they probably died from diphtheria or chickenpox or something, and I recall my father having pockmarks on his face.

SH: Smallpox had not been eradicated yet.

JS: Yes, yes. So, that's why there was, like, a fifteen-year difference in the ages of my next uncle [and my father]. ... They were in a small town of Belkatov, in Poland, and my grandfather had a wagon, a horse and wagon, which was a big deal at that time, and most people didn't have it. ... If the priest had to go somewhere, my grandfather would drive him, and I guess the people didn't like that and they beat up my grandfather one day. ... He figured, "It's time to leave," and thank God he did, you know, and he took my father. I guess it was a question of passage, again, you know, and then, I know my grandfather worked in New York, ... until he got fired, ... but I guess he earned enough money to bring my grandmother and the other children to this country.

SH: Had he always worked as a florist?

JS: My father?

SH: I meant your grandfather as well.

JS: No, not my grandfather, no.

SH: You spoke about the horse and wagon; I was not sure.

JS: No, not my grandfather. My grandfather worked for a man named (Sadowski?), who was also from that town, and he had some sort of a tailoring establishment in New York, and I guess he recruited people from the town, you know, from Belkatov. ... My grandfather was trying to organize the workers and he was up on a table and making a speech and Sadowski walked in and he fired him. [laughter] So, then, ... my father went to Storrs Agricultural College, which is now part of [the] University of Connecticut, on a Baron de Hirsch Scholarship.

SH: Can you tell me what the Baron de Hirsch Scholarship was?

JS: Well, Baron de Hirsch was a European Jew, Austrian Jew, and Baron de Hirsch arranged for the financing for the *Orient Express*, the train from Paris to Constantinople, at the time, right. ... Then, he married a Belgian woman, also a Jew, and her father had more money than Baron de Hirsch even, ... but Baron de Hirsch wanted to do good works. In fact, in the State of New Jersey, all the chicken farms; do you recall [that] there were all [these] chicken [farms] and Jewish people you know with chicken farms? and he helped finance those as well.

SH: Thank you. What was your father studying?

JS: Floriculture. ... I have a picture of him, in Poland, studying floriculture, horticulture, yes.

AT: That had always interested him.

JS: ... I guess so.

AT: How did your mother come to the United States?

JS: She came here, with two other young ladies, by ship and she says she was sick the entire time, the entire voyage. [laughter] [Before] she came here, she was supposed to have an arranged marriage and she told me, "I didn't like that guy, no how," right. [laughter] So, her cousin graduated from the same school as my father had and he came home with a picture of the graduating class and he showed it to my mother. ... My mother says, "I like this guy," right, [laughter] and so, John, her cousin, John Mandelbaum, says, "Oh, that's Sam," and she says, "Oh, where's Sam?" He says, "Oh, Sam went to America." A year later, she and her two girlfriends packed up, and my mother was disowned from her family.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes, never communicated with them. ... I had an Uncle Julius who she would write to, ... but never from her parents.

SH: Was it because she was such a young girl?

JS: Because she embarrassed the family by not going through with this arranged marriage, yes.

SH: Were the other girls also in the same circumstance with your mother?

JS: I have no idea. I know that they were friends for life. One lived in Newark and the other lived on Staten Island and they were married here. I don't know; I guess they got married here, I'm not sure, but we used to visit them.

SH: They became like your family, or her family, in the States.

JS: Well, my mother's family, yes.

SH: Were there any other family members from your mother's family in the States then?

JS: No, no.

SH: Oh, how brave, to do that.

JS: Yes, and you wouldn't believe [her]. ... I didn't get along too well with her, because I was always doing stuff and she was always saying, "No. No, no, don't. You're going to get hurt. You're going to do this ..." But she flew until she was ninety, back and forth to Florida, and she says, "Why should I be afraid? My son flies, so, why shouldn't I?" [laughter] ... Let me finish with my mother; [when] she came here, she didn't know where my father was. It took her seven years to find him.

SH: She really was looking for him.

JS: ... Oh, yes. It took her seven years before she found him and wooed him, because the Smalls don't get married so quickly, right. [laughter] So, [we] still don't; I was sixty-one before I got married.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes, but it took her seven years.

SH: Did this classmate of your father's ever come to the States?

JS: Yes, yes, John, yes. Yes, he did. In fact, at one time, he worked for my father, yes.

SH: Did any members of your mother's family ever immigrate to the States?

JS: My Uncle Julius tried to come a couple of times. ... It's not glaucoma, but there was an eye disease that was very contagious at the time, and it seems to be eliminated now, and I can never remember the name of it. Anyway, he would get to Ellis Island, he came to Ellis Island twice, and they sent him back because of this eye disease that he had. ... Then, he was living in Paris. He had left Poland and was living in Paris and my mother used to write to him in Paris, and then, the Nazis got him, you know, during World War II, I'm sure.

SH: She did not hear from him after that.

JS: No, no, and, in fact, she had some information from the French Government that he was eliminated in one of the camps.

AT: I am sorry to hear that.

JS: Yes, along with six million others, yes.

SH: Did you ever try to contact any of her family in Europe, to see what their fate was, if anyone was able to get to Israel?

JS: ... Off the computer, ... from *Google*, oh, I have a stack [of papers] like that from Belkatov, a history of the Jews living in Belkatov for about eight hundred years, and there are people there, but I've never tried to contact anyone there. ... I always thought I would like to visit Poland, but, since reading a book called *Fear: [Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz]* by Jan Gross (2006)], which was published recently and [is] about the *pogroms* after the war, when the Jews ... who survived went back to Poland and were beaten and killed, because the Poles had taken their houses and businesses and they didn't want to give them back, so, they killed people. So, I have no desire to go to Poland anymore.

SH: I do not blame you.

JS: ... I would have liked to. I always wanted to go. I've been in Europe about twenty-five times or more and never to Poland. ...

AT: It sounds like your mother lost contact with most of her family after she came here. Did your father maintain any ties with his family members who remained in Poland?

JS: No, they were here, yes. ... The immediate family was here. I don't know, he might have communicated with some cousins.

AT: Your father was a florist here. Was his business ever affected by the Great Depression?

JS: Yes.

AT: What impact did it have on your family?

JS: Well, ... really, I wouldn't say it impacted us greatly, but, initially, I know that ... he changed the flowers. At one point, he was the largest Easter lily grower in the world, and then, during the '30s, it changed. Lilies ... sort of became passé, because of the gladiolus from Florida. So, then, they switched to pot plants, palm trees and other decorative foliage, and, also, Easter plants, you know, tulips and hyacinths and lilies in pots, and azaleas and hydrangeas, and then, [specialty flowers] for Mother's Day, and then, Memorial Day. ... I would say we were well-off and supported the rest of the family. On Sunday, ... if it was a sunny day, my mother

would cook for twenty people. Everybody came and ate and I think they depended on that meal, you know, ... [to] carry them for the rest of the week.

SH: Where was this farm?

JS: In Bergen County, in Maywood. ...

SH: How many acres was it?

JS: Oh, we had about ten acres there. We had a nice, brick house, a Dutch-colonial house, that my father had built, probably in 1928 or '29, something like that, and the house is still standing there, and so are the greenhouses, but they're in disrepair. They're not [in good shape], but somebody's operating them. ...

AT: Which recreational activities interested you when you were growing up?

JS: Well, what didn't? [laughter] ... In the spring, we played baseball, all summer, and football, and, in winter, we played basketball. We went ice-skating, sleigh riding, tried to ski. There was a railroad embankment where we lived and kept falling down. ... Principally, we had a family cow, and so, one of my chores was to milk the cow twice a day, and we didn't need an alarm clock, because I knew how to get up early, to milk the cow before I went to school and be home on time and milk the cow. ... It was a good racket for me, because, the surplus milk, I could sell to the neighbors, and so, I sold about four quarts of milk a day and that was walking-around money, pretty good. [laughter]

SH: You spoke about one of your brothers. Did you have another brother?

JS: Yes, my brother, Archie, Aaron Small, we called him Archie, and Archie graduated from Rutgers in 1940, graduated from the Ag School, and, also, was in the Navy. He was the first lieutenant on the USS *Cabana* [DE-260], a destroyer escort in the Pacific, and he was in Tokyo Bay when the *Missouri* was there and they signed the peace treaty with Japan, yes. ... The day the war was over, my brother was in charge of maintenance on the ship, you know, and, [in] the Navy, they would paint and, when they would finished, they'd chip it off, and then, paint again. So, the day the war was over, the crew took their paint brushes and threw them overboard. [laughter] [Editor's Note: Archie was combat wounded and awarded the Purple Heart.]

SH: In celebration. You would have been the youngest then.

JS: Yes, yes. I was the youngest. ... I was here at Rutgers, let's see, I was, I guess, a sophomore, yes, ... 1941, December 7th, yes.

SH: Both of your brothers had gone to college. Was it assumed that you would also go to college?

JS: Yes, but my father died about ten days before I graduated from high school, and so, you know, the whole world blew up. ... So, my mother told me I wasn't going to go to college and

my mother told me I have to go to college, because my brothers have [attended] college, but she didn't give me any money.

SH: She told you that you were not going, then, she told you that you had to go.

JS: No, she told me I have to go, but she didn't give me any money to go.

AT: Had your brothers been supported by the family?

JS: ... Oh, yes, yes, yes, and so, what I did was, I had my own program, "Affirmative Action", is that what they call it today? I had my own. This was before Affirmative Action came into existence, right. So, I had no more cow stuff, you know, ... but I went to this man who my father used to buy cows from, because a cow's lactation period would be about a year, you know, and so, we'd buy a fresh cow [after that]. ... So, a man by the name of Barney Rypkama, in Garfield, ... they produced milk and also bottled milk, and so, I went around ... to neighbors and people in the town and I established a milk route, in buying milk from Barney and selling it. ... I made some money that summer and I applied to Rutgers and was accepted. ... Then, I sold the route, when it came time to go, to a fellow by the name of Bernie (Schwinder?) ... for fifty dollars, but Bernie only had twenty-five dollars. So, I said, "Okay, I'll take the twenty-five and you'll pay me later." ... So, I took the twenty-five and put that toward tuition. I think it was fifty dollars a semester, something like that, and then, I had made an arrangement, "Okay, here's twenty-five," and then, I had a hard time getting the other twenty-five from Schwinder, but, finally, he paid me and I was able to pay my tuition. ... Well, he went into the service, but, when he came out, he ... made a living [in dairy delivery], you know, raised two children and bought a house. ... I think he had three or four milk trucks, you know, at the time.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes.

SH: You really got him started.

JS: ... Yes, yes, and he just died recently. And I got a job here, in the greenhouses on the farm, tending furnaces. There were two furnaces in the building that I lived in, had a room, and I got twenty-five a month from the state. I worked for the state, because it was the State Agricultural College, and so, there were two furnaces where I lived, and then, across the street were another set of greenhouses where they had a vegetable, [Agricultural] Extension [Service] program, and so, I took care of the furnaces there. ... I had to get up every two hours and shovel a ton of coal every night, because they had blowers on the furnaces, you know, forced air, and the coal was ... "rice coal." They call it rice coal. It was about this [big], size of your fingernail, and so, it burned rapidly. Plus, in the greenhouses, they had a thermograph. Are you familiar with the thermograph, right?

SH: Please, explain.

JS: ... You know, with a stylus, keeping a record of time and the temperature, you know, so [that] Dr. [O. Wesley] Davidson, in the morning, could look at the temperatures, see if I was doing my job.

SH: Your living quarters were right there in the greenhouse then.

JS: Yes, upstairs ... was a room. It was myself and a roommate. First year, [it] was a fellow by the name of Gerry Rau, and then, after that, a fellow by the name of Dick Widmer. ... I think Dick was in the Class of '33 [1943] and, now, he's Dr. Widmer. ... The last I saw him, he was at the University of Minnesota, in charge of the horticulture department or floriculture department there, yes.

SH: During your high school years, were you also working in your father's floral business, as well as on your own?

JS: Oh, yes, sure.

SH: Had your brothers worked there as well?

JS: ... Yes, in the summertime, and we used to work after school, yes. Yes, we did.

SH: Were you able to get involved in any extracurricular activities in high school?

JS: Football and girls. [laughter] Oh, one girl, I should say, one girl, yes, yes, the brightest and the prettiest girl in the school.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes.

SH: That is nice.

JS: Yes. No, she was a wonderful person, really.

AT: Were there any courses or programs in your high school that were designed for students who planned on going to college?

JS: Yes. You had to take college preparatory courses, because Rutgers, every college, [demanded it]. ... There was [what] they called a college prep course, and then, a commercial course, and most people took the commercial course. In the high school I went to, you had a graduating class of about a hundred and, maybe, ten went to college, if that many.

SH: Which high school did you go to?

JS: Bogota. Yes, we had to travel. Maywood didn't have a high school, had a very good elementary and junior high school, but no high [school]. They still don't have a high school, yes.

They go to Hackensack now. They got smart; they changed from Bogota. [laughter] We used to travel by bus from Maywood to Hackensack, and then, change to trolley car to get from Hackensack to Bogota.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes. That trolley car used to run from Paterson to the 125th Street ferry in Edgewater.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes, and it was a marvelous thing and it should exist today. ...

SH: Having been caught in that traffic, I agree.

JS: Yes. Oh, it was a wonderful thing. I used to take it. When I was in high school, I used to take it on Wednesday afternoons from Bogota to the ferry in Edgewater and [ride the] 125th Street Ferry [to Manhattan], and then, take the subway downtown and go to matinees on Broadway, you know, for twenty-five cents.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes, sit in the balcony and see Broadway shows.

SH: You had a real interest in theater then.

JS: Yes, you know, from my parents, yes.

SH: Had your parents also been interested in the theater?

JS: Yes, and music, yes. They would go on their own, you know, in the evening, but I used to do that when I was a junior and senior, yes.

SH: You mentioned music. Did you play a musical instrument?

JS: Nope.

SH: Did they?

JS: ... No, but I wanted to play the drums and my mother said, "Jewish boys don't play drums," [laughter] so, no. ... I was sort of obstinate and said, "Okay, if I can't play drums, I won't play anything," all right. ... One of my uncles, who lived with us, played the violin and my brother, Leon, played the mandolin and they played in a group in Newark. ... Griffith Piano Company, ... near Military Park, had a big building and had an auditorium, and they used to give concerts there. Yes, it was very nice.

SH: Was your family observant? Did they maintain their Jewish religion?

JS: ... No, no. My mother was brought up in a very strict household, where she couldn't sit at the same table with her father and her brother. ... She and her mother ate separately and, when they walked down the street, her father walked first and they were behind, and she didn't like that. She abhorred that, yes, and my father always told me, ... he says, "If you live by the Ten Commandments, that's the way to live," and I've only broken one, but that takes two to tango.

SH: Can you tell us why Rutgers was the school that you wanted to go to? Had you applied to other schools?

JS: Well, I wanted to go to Columbia, because my girlfriend was going to Barnard, but I couldn't afford Columbia, and I couldn't afford Rutgers College. I could afford the Ag School [Rutgers College of Agriculture] and that's why I came here.

AT: Did you need to take out any loans or was your work here enough to pay your tuition?

JS: No, I never took money from anyone, or asked anyone for money even, and I earned my way. I worked not only with the greenhouses, with the furnaces, [but] I [also] worked at the cafeteria for (B.J. Brace?). ... Dick (Renshaw?) was in charge then and Miss (Addy?) was in charge of student employment in [Old] Queens and I used to go there when I had some free time and I'd go to people's houses and wash windows or pull weeds, for about twenty-five cents an hour. ... Then, in the summertime, after my freshman year, I got a job in Asbury Park, delivering milk for (Tilton?) Dairy and used to have to get up, like, three o'clock in the morning and ride a bicycle ... from Bradley Beach to Asbury. ... I think it became unionized, like, halfway through the summer, and so, from thirty-five bucks a week, all of a sudden, I'm making seventy-five bucks a week, and that was tremendous. So, that summer I made quite a bit of money and I was there with a fellow by the name of Bernie Basch. He's not on your list. Bernie got shot down during the war, in the Pacific, but Bernie Basch was delivering bread for (Duggan's?). I don't [know] if you've heard of Duggan's Bakery. Anyway, [he worked] for Duggan's Bakery and it was house-to-house delivery and Bernie was handsome. He looked like Clark Gable and he was also a football player and Bernie was telling me about these two women that he was entertaining on his bread route, and my tongue is hanging out when he's telling me these stories. [laughter] ... Came the end of the summer, and these women were buying all sorts of stuff; not [that] they were buying it, they were taking it. Came the end of the summer, when they were supposed to pay, no pay, right. [laughter] So, Bernie had to pay the company from what these two women [stole] and I think he came out with a deficit, you know, for the whole summer, but he had a good time.

SH: It gave you food for talk when the school year began again.

JS: Yes, but Bernie was a very nice fellow. I liked Bernie a lot. In fact, he and I joined the Navy together.

SH: After your father passed away, did your mother have to sell the business?

JS: Yes, yes.

SH: Did any of the relatives work the farm?

JS: I have no idea what happened, really. I was “out of the loop,” as they say. I went off to school and that was it. I was on my own.

SH: When you came back for your second year, were you housed in the same building? Did you have the same job?

JS: Oh, yes. I did that for three heating seasons; like, it was sort of a record, you know, at the time.

SH: Was Professor Frank G. Helyar in charge of the Ag School when you were here?

JS: Well, he was there, but I wouldn't say he was in charge. Dean [William H.] Martin was the dean of the Ag School and Professor Helyar was there, yes, very nice man, very helpful, and, yes, Helyar was there. ...

SH: Your major was ag economics.

JS: Yes.

SH: Why?

JS: Well, ... I graduated in ag economics, but, when I started, it was in floriculture.

SH: Was it? Okay.

JS: Yes, yes. It had to be. Otherwise, I wouldn't have gotten the job in the greenhouse.

AT: Why did you decide to switch?

JS: Professor [Henry] Keller, [Jr.]. [laughter] He sort of made me switch.

SH: Was he your favorite professor?

JS: I wouldn't say he was my favorite, but he and I, well, we got along and we didn't get along. ...

SH: Who was your favorite professor?

JS: Well, I think the football coach, Tom Kenneally. He was the 150-pound football coach. ... There were a lot of nice people here at Rutgers.

SH: You played 150-pound football then.

JS: Yes, yes, and I played freshman 150-pound, also, because, at that time, freshmen couldn't play on varsity. It was separate, and we had a coach by the name of (Arnie, Arnold, Ziegfried?) and an assistant, (Len Cook?) for the freshman 150s, and then, later, [it] was Tom Kenneally and Joe Makin and a graduate student, Angelo Triandafilou. ... He got killed during the war, too. He was a pilot, but Angelo really taught me how to be a linebacker, yes.

SH: Where were the 150-pound football games held? Was there a league?

JS: Oh, yes, yes. It was the Eastern Intercollegiate Lightweight Football League. ... About ten years ago, ... what did they call it, with the women, Title IX or whatever, when Title IX come in, they said, "Oh, well, we don't have money for [both]. We need the money for the women and we're going to eliminate 150-pound football." ... Someone contacted me, I guess [as] an ex-player, and I sent [in] a thousand dollars, you know, to try to keep the program going, ... but I guess they didn't collect enough money. ... Then, they said, "Well, you want your money back?" ... I said, "No," you know, "put it in the general fund," but it was a wonderful program, and it still exists.

SH: Does it?

JS: Yes, but ... it's a different name now. It's called sprint football and it's 172 pounds, not 150, because the boys are bigger, ... but still with the same league, with Princeton and University of Pennsylvania and Cornell and Yale and Army and Navy, and I think there might be another couple of others. ... Rutgers was in that league and it was wonderful.

SH: It was not until Title IX came along that it was eliminated.

JS: Yes, right, yes.

SH: I knew that it had existed, but I did not know when or why it ended.

JS: Well, ... and why are they ending tennis now and crew now, right? That's dreadful, and, here, well, I'm not going to call her any names, but Christine Whitman [Governor 1994-2001] had given eighteen million dollars for horse racing, you know, (trotters for purses?), okay. Now, why don't they take that eighteen million away from the horses, because the horse owners aren't poor, right, and give it for crew and for tennis and other sports that they want to eliminate.

AT: Swimming and fencing, I believe, are the others.

JS: ... Also? Swimming? Oh, my gosh; Rutgers had always had a good swim team, terrible, terrible.

SH: Were there other activities that you participated in at Rutgers?

JS: Well, for some reason or other, I was made president of the Hortus Club, and as a sophomore, I think. I guess nobody else wanted the job, [laughter] so, they appointed me, Dick

Widmer and a fellow by the name of Russ Myers and Ed Price and Lefty Stavros, Elefterios Stavros, and a couple of others.

SH: Was your family name changed?

JS: Yes.

SH: What had it been?

JS: Well, it either had a 'witz or 'ski after it, yes, but my parents wanted to be Americans, totally. In fact, they never spoke Polish or Yiddish, always English, to me. Of course, in private, you know, if they wanted to say something private, they would ... speak in Polish. ... My grandfather was just the opposite. He'd always speak Yiddish to me and I'm very happy that he did, because I can understand Yiddish.

SH: Can you?

JS: Yes.

SH: Wonderful.

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

AT: Did you ever join a fraternity while you were here?

JS: No, no.

AT: You had no interest in that.

JS: Well, I didn't have the money and, also, I didn't approve of it, because they were separate. There were Jewish fraternities, and then, Christian fraternities, and I wasn't happy with that. I thought it was discriminatory.

AT: Did you experience freshman hazing when you first arrived?

JS: No. The only thing was, we were supposed to wear a dink for, I don't know, a month or so or something like that. ... We're very happy to throw it away, but the nice thing about it was that if you saw someone, if you were passing someone on the street or on the sidewalk, was to say, "Hello," whether you knew them or not, you know, just to greet them.

SH: Was there a mixer between NJC and Rutgers as freshmen?

JS: Oh, they had a mixer, yes, dance, yes.

SH: Did you attend?

JS: Yes.

SH: Were you a good dancer?

JS: No. [laughter]

SH: What about the convocations, the mandatory convocations, or the chapel? Were you familiar with that?

JS: Well, it was separate. There was convocation, which was wonderful, which was very interesting. I remember Hans von Kaltenborn. I don't know if you ever [heard of him]; you don't remember him, okay. He's the one who came here and he spoke at convocation, but he's the one who predicted that Harry Truman would not win in the election against [Thomas E.] Dewey. ... Then, Truman, the next day, after he had won, imitated Hans von Kaltenborn, [Editor's Note: Mr. Small imitates von Kaltenborn's style of speaking.] right, [laughter] and, you know, sort of brushed him off, because von Kaltenborn was on the radio, as a commentator. ... Then, also, Martin Agronsky was here. You probably don't remember him or heard [of him]. ...

SH: Yes, I do.

JS: Okay. ... He was a graduate of Rutgers, Martin Agronsky, and, also, the cousin of a friend of mine, who I'd met later, a fellow by the name of (Harry Lin?), but Martin Agronsky spoke about the deficiency of the ammunition of the United States Navy and it was, like, a scandal. ... Martin Agronsky was ostracized for many years.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes.

SH: Was this prior to World War II?

JS: No, this was during. This was either just prior or during; with Agronsky, it must have been during, I guess, yes.

SH: The convocations were held at the gym.

JS: Yes, yes. No, they were wonderful and, at chapel, I don't know, I used to go, but I never listened, just sat there until I didn't have to go anymore.

SH: You did not try to get a pass to get out.

JS: No.

SH: When you were here prior to America's entry into World War II, Hitler had already started sweeping across Europe. How did you and your family react to Hitler's invasion of Poland in September of 1939? You would have still been in high school then.

JS: ... Yes. Well, we had a very good radio and my father would wake us up [at] about four o'clock in the morning to listen to Hitler, couldn't understand a word he was saying, but [I recall] hearing the ranting and raving. ... I don't know; they were against the war, really. They were against war, period, you know.

SH: They were listening to Hitler just to show you how bad he was.

JS: Well, just to be aware of what's going on. My father was very aware. We used to get three newspapers every day and [we] got a morning paper, evening paper and a *freiheit*, which is a Jewish paper, and so, [we were] just interested in general.

SH: Were your family's politics Democratic?

JS: Yes.

SH: What did they think of Roosevelt and his programs?

JS: Well, they appreciated it, yes, certainly, yes, and still do. My father's theory was; ... I just told my wife the other day, and [we were] talking about Republicans and my father, my wife was saying, "Well, they steal." I said, "Yes, they steal, okay, but the Republicans want it all for themselves," and my father told me that, he says, "But, the Democrats, they'll share it with you," right, [laughter] and it's still true today, I mean, all the good stuff that we have today, with Social Security and Medicare and anything, student loans and ... aid to farmers, right.

SH: Was your father active in any political activities? Was he on the Democratic Committee, anything like that?

JS: No, no.

SH: Was he a Zionist? Did they discuss Zionism at all?

JS: No, no. ... They weren't in favor of Zionism, no.

SH: Did they think that we should get involved in the war prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, because of what was going on in Europe?

JS: I don't know. I was interested in my own activities and my girlfriend, and what my parents did was their business. [laughter]

SH: Your father passed away before you were even out of high school, so, it would be conjecture.

JS: ... Well, when you're fifteen, sixteen, you know, your father is the War Department. He always has something for me to do so, when I saw him, I'd duck, you know. [laughter]

SH: Had any of your teachers in high school gone to Rutgers?

JS: Yes, my high school football coach, a man by the name of Al Brown, a wonderful, wonderful person, and I loved him and he was in the Class of '26 or '27 and was coached by Paul Robeson. ... So, I knew all about Paul Robeson when I came to Rutgers. In fact, Robeson used to sing at the convocation.

SH: You heard that.

JS: Oh, yes. Oh, it [the gym] used to vibrate, you know, when he was singing, and I went backstage to shake his hand and I mentioned Al Brown's name, but he just looked at me, didn't know who I was talking about. ... Al Brown was a mathematics teacher at Bogota High School, and also the football coach, and, later, when I was in pre-flight school at the University of North Carolina, he was there as a navigation instructor, as well as a man by the name of Jones, who was a history teacher at the high school, was also there, and, also, the basketball coach was there.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes. They were all lieutenants at the time and Al Brown came out of the Navy and wanted to become principal of the high school, but he was passed over. So, he resigned and he went back into the Navy and stayed in the Navy and became a captain in the Navy, and then, retired, and then, he was living in Oklahoma and I used to correspond with him in Oklahoma. ... I can still taste the steak that he and his wife served me at [the] University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. He invited me to his apartment one day, one evening, for dinner and ... I can still taste it, it was so good.

SH: It is unusual to find three teachers from the same high school teaching the same subjects in the Navy.

JS: Oh, yes, yes.

SH: Had they been in aviation prior to World War II?

JS: No. They had nothing to do with aviation, no, no. The Navy took over the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the entire school, as a pre-flight school, and how they got there, I have no idea, because I hadn't seen them in two-and-a-half years, yes.

AT: Where were you when you learned about Pearl Harbor?

JS: ... It was a Sunday and I went home for the weekend and I was with my brother, Lee, and my mother in North Bergen.

AT: Did it have any influence on your decision to enlist in the military?

JS: Well, everybody wanted to enlist. We went back to school on Monday and there was no classes, because the President, Roosevelt, was giving a speech and we all met in Winants Hall, in

the cafeteria in Winants, and he says, basically, “Stay in school.” He says, “We don’t have the facility for everyone to join up, so, the best thing, if you’re in college, [is], stay in school.”

SH: Was that sentiment echoed by President Robert Clothier at the University as well?

JS: I don’t know.

AT: What made you decide to eventually enlist?

JS: ... Well, first, I tried to get into the ROTC, the advanced course.

SH: You were in your second year.

JS: ... Yes, right, yes, and tried to get into the advanced course, and I had been in the Scarlet Rifles. It was a drill team, a crack drill team, and then, I went for an interview and they didn’t accept me. They asked me some very strange questions and questions that I didn’t like.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes, but, anyway, I’m very happy that they didn’t take me, because these guys were all in the infantry and they had a terrible time, and one of my best friends, and probably one of the smartest people I ever met in my life, Norman Zellner, was shot up in Europe and became a paraplegic, and was Phi Beta Kappa as a junior. ... He doesn’t appear on that list, [Class of] ’44, and I resent that intently, that Norman is not included. Norman didn’t graduate from Rutgers; ... this is their basis, my classmates’ basis.

SH: I will explain the list that you just saw; those are the people that the Rutgers Oral History Archives has interviewed. It is not a list of all of your classmates.

JS: Okay. Yes, but he’s not on the [other] list, either, I don’t think; now he is, because of Irv Baker. Irv Baker put him on the list, but, for many years, he was excluded, and the opinion was that he didn’t graduate from Rutgers.

SH: Many of the people on your class list did not officially graduate from Rutgers, so, I am a bit surprised. However, the list that you saw was just of the men interviewed by this program.

JS: I understand what you’re saying, but Norman was excluded for a long time.

SH: Is he still alive?

JS: ... No, he’s not, and Norman was in the hospital in Atlantic City, had about twenty operations, something like that, and, when he got out of the hospital, he was living at the Hotel Wellington in Manhattan and working for, oh, I can’t think of the name of the outfit, but some sort of a fertilizer outfit, and he was an economist. ... The only activity he could participate [in] was swimming, and so, that summer, I used to take him to the Prince George Hotel in Brooklyn and take him swimming and, at that time, it was the largest indoor pool in New York City, ...

saltwater pool, yes, lovely. ... Then, he couldn't stand the winters here, being a paraplegic, and so, he went to California and graduated from the University of California, I think at Davis, and got a PhD there, and then, Norman was a professor there and married and had three children and I think he passed away probably about ten years ago. ...

SH: Thank you for sharing his story. This is the first I have heard of it. Was he on B-17s?

JS: ... No, no. He was in the infantry.

SH: He was in the infantry. I misunderstood; when you said, "Shot up," I thought there was an aircraft involved.

JS: ... No.

SH: Do you know which unit he was assigned to?

JS: No, no idea about that. ...

SH: Thank you. We can do some more research on him. You discussed listening to the President's speech in Winants after Pearl Harbor. What was the mood here at Rutgers like? Were there students who ignored the President's advice and ran out to enlist?

JS: No.

SH: The draft had started in 1940, so, some men were already registered for the draft.

JS: Yes. Everybody was registered for the draft, I know.

SH: You said earlier that your class, the Class of 1944, had the largest freshman class to date.

JS: Right, yes, yes.

SH: Pretty much everybody stayed here, then, and continued going to school.

JS: I think so. ... Some fellows went back to the farm, that I know.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes, yes, and that's where they were for the war, back on the farm.

SH: That was considered an essential position.

JS: Right, yes. ... Well, I'm not going to mention any names, but I know of two fellows who went back to the farm, and one was in Pennsylvania and the other one was not far from where I lived. ... This fellow passed away not so long ago, where I lived.

SH: After you were passed over for the Advanced ROTC, was it at that stage that you then enlisted in the Navy?

JS: Yes. I went with Bernie Basch. ...

SH: Where did you have to go?

JS: We went to 120 Broadway in New York City, yes. ... You had to have a transcript. ... In New York, they wanted two years of college. You had to take a transcript [with you].

SH: Was that in January of 1942?

JS: No. ... It must have been '43. It couldn't have been January of '42, no, no, must have been, like, in January '43. ...

AT: Was there anything that specifically intrigued you about the Navy or that led you to join the Navy, as opposed to another branch?

JS: Well, I think what influenced me was Bernie Basch. [laughter] He said, "Come on." He was a winner, as far as I'm concerned. ...

SH: Did you apply for the naval aviation program?

JS: Yes. No, it's separate. It was V-5. ... They had V-5, they had V-7, they had V-12, and V-5 was aviation, ... yes, just aviation. There were fellows who went in the V-7; I know Bob Trimnel, who was in the Class of '43 and who was a friend of mine, who lived on the farm. ... They had sent him to Columbia and I went to visit him at Columbia a couple of times.

SH: Okay. You knew about the program while it was going on.

JS: Yes, yes. Well, I knew about it because of Bernie. Bernie knew about it. He had never flown, either. ... They had a flying program at Rutgers. There was an airport just beyond the stadium. I can't think of the name of the ...

SH: Was it Hadley?

JS: ... Yes, that's it, Hadley Airport, right, yes. They had a CAP program there.

SH: Right, Civilian Air ...

JS: Yes, Patrol, yes, and I knew two fellows who were there. Norm Siegel, I think, was one of them and Will Wetherill was another fellow, I think, Will was in the Class of '43, but they never went flying. They became deck officers in the Navy and, here, Bernie and I, we'd never been in an airplane. [laughter]

SH: After you went to New York in January to enlist, did you then come back to the University and continue studying?

JS: Yes, yes. They didn't call us right away. Well, Bernie went before me.

SH: Did you have to go through many tests in New York?

JS: ... Oh, yes, yes, and you had to write down your religion and stuff, and I had to go before three shrinks. You know, you write down, "Hebrew," you know, there's a big question mark, right away. So, I went before one shrink and he sent me to another shrink, and then, I went to the third shrink and the third says, "Oh, I see you play football," and I said, "Yes. What position you want me to play?" and he says, "Oh, go ahead. You're okay," just like that, you know. So, he passed me.

SH: This was on the initial day that you went.

JS: Yes, sure, yes.

SH: You then reported back here to school and, basically, you were just waiting. Did they tell you, "In so many months, we will call you?"

JS: ... No. They're going to send you a letter, you know, when to come, because they had [too many] people, you know, and I guess [we were] waiting for places to go in. ... Initially, I didn't go to Chapel Hill. I went to New Paltz, New York. ... It was a teacher's college at that time and there were about, I don't know, four or five hundred girls, and about thirty of us. [laughter]

SH: Hard to take, right, and in the Navy uniform no less.

JS: No, at that time, it wasn't [Navy uniforms]. We were wearing uniforms from, what'd they call that? ... There was a program, during the Depression, for young men working on; oh, CCC, right, Civilian Conservation Corps, right. They had uniforms and those were the uniforms that we had, yes, in New Paltz. ...

SH: What month of the year were you called in?

JS: I think it was, like, February, end of February.

SH: It was really only two months before they called you then.

JS: Yes, right, yes, and then, I left Rutgers, at that time.

AT: Was that your first major trip out of the area? Had you been to North Carolina before?

JS: Oh, no, we made trips with my father. We went to Chicago, to the World's Fair, in 1936.

SH: Did you really?

JS: Yes, the only ones in the whole town of Maywood who did, that I know of.

SH: The whole family went.

JS: No. My brother, Lee, went before, the year before, with this man, (Elmer Jones?), who was the history teacher at Bogota High School. It was my brother, Lee, and two or three other fellows. They went to Chicago, and then, from Chicago, they went to Georgia. They went to where Jones was from, Georgia. ... He still had a Southern accent when [he was] teaching in the high school and my brother went to Georgia with Jones, to [see] his family, and my brother says, "You didn't [could not] believe, you know, that people lived like that," you know. Well, it was the rural South at that time, ... no electrification, you know, and Roosevelt brought that in, because Roosevelt saw that himself. When he was at Warm Springs, Georgia, he went around the countryside and saw the way people were living, you know, without electricity, and that brought in the TVA [Tennessee Valley Authority] system.

SH: Were you on campus when Eleanor Roosevelt visited NJC? Do you remember that?

JS: No. What year was that? ...

SH: I would have to look in the records. I recently interviewed a woman who, as a young woman at NJC, was her host and introduced the First Lady at a luncheon. She talked about how nervous she had been in that role and what a warm, friendly woman Eleanor Roosevelt had been.

JS: Maybe it was a lot later. ...

SH: I think she graduated in 1943. I would guess the visit was in 1942 or 1943. When you went to New Paltz, was your rate seaman?

JS: No, aviation cadet.

SH: What kind of coursework did you have to do? Were you subjected to courses that were heavy in math and navigation?

JS: Oh, we had naval history. I don't recall any navigation, but we had, you know, introduction to an aircraft, you know, ailerons, elevators, you know, things like that, and then, we were flying Piper Cubs, and I soloed in six hours. ...

SH: I guess you took to it right away.

JS: Yes. Well, I taught myself how to drive an automobile, or, actually, it was a truck, when I was nine. ...

SH: A determined young man, I think you were.

AT: You said you played football in high school. Did your involvement in athletics help you during your training?

JS: ... Oh, yes, sure. Anything you did has to help somehow. [laughter]

SH: Were there a lot of conditioning exercises at New Paltz?

JS: Oh, no, not really, yes, not really. We didn't get really conditioned until pre-flight school, and that was at Chapel Hill, and that was three months of hell, really.

SH: At the end of February, you go to New Paltz; for how many months?

JS: We were probably there a couple of months, I guess.

SH: Did anyone not make it through that part of the program?

JS: Well, one fellow got killed.

SH: Really? Was it in learning to fly the small planes?

JS: Yes, it crashed. Yes, [he] got killed, and I came close. On my first solo ...

SH: After six hours. [laughter]

JS: Yes. [On] my first solo, it started to snow, right, and here I am, in the middle of nowhere, right, in the woods of New York State, and it started to snow and, I remember, I had to fly east. You had a compass, you know, and [I] had to come to the river. There was a river, I think it's the Battenkill, ... no, the Wallkill, sorry, and, well, "Do I turn left or do I turn right?" ... It's snowing like crazy and I figured out, "To the right," and flew down the river and there was the airport, right. ... When I got out of the plane, the instructor came and hugged me like I was a newborn. [laughter] He was so happy to see me, because it would have been his neck if something happened to me.

SH: Was your instructor a civilian hired by the Navy?

JS: Yes, they were civilians. Yes, they were civilians, yes.

SH: Was he an older man or was he the same age as you?

JS: No. Well, ... anybody over twenty-five was old, right, so, I would imagine he was probably in his early thirties. I remember his name; his name was Carl (Batcher?), and he was a very nice man.

SH: What had he done to earn a living in flying before World War II?

JS: I have no idea.

SH: I just wondered about what his experience was.

JS: I have no idea.

SH: When you were at New Paltz, I assume you had your own dormitory.

JS: No, we lived in private houses. ... We lived in a room. I had a roommate and I think there were four of us in a private house, and I was there recently, in New Paltz, and I saw the house. The house is still there and the original building is still there, but the campus is tremendous. I think they have about twenty-five thousand now, on that campus, and then, we had meals at another house. A woman cooked for us.

SH: How many cadets were there?

JS: Thirty, about thirty, yes.

SH: Were there also naval officers there?

JS: No. ... There was a, "Beaver" was his name; I forget his entire name, but we called him Beaver. ... He was known as Beaver, you know, through the whole school, and [he was] probably the only male in the whole college. ... He was like a phys ed instructor, so, he would march us, teach us to march and salute, you know, but we had had that at Rutgers, you know, two years.

SH: Had everyone come out of an ROTC program? You said that you needed at least two years of college. Had most of the men in this thirty-man unit at least been in ROTC?

JS: ... No, I don't know; that, I don't know, no.

SH: Was New Paltz College the name of the school that the program was held in?

JS: It was a teacher's college, but it was a state school, New York State. Now, it's a part of SUNY, [the State University of New York system], I guess.

AT: Did you have much down time in your training?

JS: Down time?

AT: Time to relax, free time.

SH: That is a good question, in an all-girls school.

JS: We had some time off, yes.

AT: How did you feel towards your commanding and training officers?

JS: Where?

AT: In your initial training at New Paltz.

JS: Well, ... they were fine, as far as I'm concerned. I didn't have any problems with them.

SH: In the beginning of May, you were sent from New Paltz to Chapel Hill in North Carolina.

JS: Yes, yes, and then, [I was] in Chapel Hill for three months.

SH: That was considered pre-flight training.

JS: Pre-flight, yes, pre-flight, as if you'd never been anywhere, you know. You come in cold, you know, and it was unbelievable, you know. ... In fact, there was one fellow from Rutgers, he got killed; he drowned, I can't think of his name at the moment, in the swimming pool. They had a tremendous, Olympic-size swimming pool. ... To swim; the Navy always has its own way, you know, for doing everything. In fact, they call it, "The right way, the wrong way and the Navy way," right. So, in swimming, they're teaching [you] to swim with your head out of the water, ... which is sensible, because, if you're aboard ship and there's fuel oil on the surface, [that method makes it] so [that] you don't ingest any of the fuel oil, you know. Your head's out, right, swimming like this, and then, they were doing [the] breaststroke and there's maybe a hundred people [in the pool] and he got hit in the throat. Someone caught him in the throat and [he] went down. I don't think he was underwater two minutes, but they couldn't revive him and he was quite a nice young man. He was a wrestler here and a pre-dental student.

SH: This happened when you were there.

JS: No. It happened maybe a week or so before I got there, yes.

SH: You heard about it when you got there.

JS: Yes, yes, and I said, "I know him," you know. Yes, I knew him from school. ...

SH: You went from a thirty-man class to New Paltz, where there were how many men in the pre-flight program?

JS: Oh, I don't know. It was a lot.

SH: It was much larger.

JS: A lot, yes, a lot of people. ... Bush, George Bush, ... what do they call him, "40" or "41" Bush? [Editor's Note: George H. W. Bush, the Forty-First President of the United States, is sometimes referred to as "Bush 41," distinguishing him from his son, George W. Bush, the Forty-Third President ("Bush 43").] He was there. I didn't know him. ... He was with a group

from Yale and they didn't talk to anyone else. They were separate. They, like, had their own platoon.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes, but I know that he was there at that time, because he wrote a book. I didn't read the entire book, but, in the beginning of the book, he mentions Chapel Hill and he mentions Ted Williams and Ted Williams was in my platoon, the baseball player.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes.

SH: Did he get any preferential treatment, as a professional baseball player?

JS: Well, he always got treatment from [the commanding officers]. Whatever base we would go to, the commanding officer would always take a picture with Ted, [laughter] okay, but I was Ted's best friend ... in the Navy, simply because he had difficulty with navigation. ... Navigation was no problem for me, thanks for Al Brown and thanks for Dr. [Fred G.] Fender, here at Rutgers, and a physics professor; I can't think of his name.

SH: What did Professor Fender teach you at Rutgers?

JS: Algebra, yes, and the physics professor, I took a course in spherical trigonometry with him. ...

SH: You were well-prepared then.

JS: Yes, I was, but ... the Navy wanted two years of college in New York; in Boston, where Ted Williams came from, and even Bush, Bush had just graduated prep school, ... you didn't need college in Boston. I could never figure that one out, but someone told me, "Well, they want to get the best that they could," but who knows? I have a different idea, but Ted Williams and I were [there]. I helped him, and so, we were friendly.

SH: Can you talk us through a typical day in pre-flight school?

JS: Well, we'd get up about five o'clock and have a band, all blacks, and [they would] play a march and we'd march to the mess hall, you know. ...

SH: Was this band in Navy uniform?

JS: Yes, yes, wonderful band. ... Did you see the Howard game? Did you, the football game? Did you see that band from Howard? They [the band] won the game. [laughter] [Editor's Note: Mr. Small is referring to the September 23, 2006, football game between Rutgers University and Howard University. Rutgers beat Howard, 56-7.]

AT: Their squad was amazing.

JS: I loved that. I could watch that all afternoon. They were marvelous, but this was the kind of band [we had], and I liked band music, because my family and I, we used to go ... to Central Park in Manhattan, to listen to the Goldman Band, which was just disbanded about a year or so ago, for financial reasons. In fact, the director of the Goldman Band, my wife and I went to see them a couple of years ago, they were playing in the Bronx, at the Botanical Garden, and the man, the director, was living in Netcong.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes, and so, I asked him to play *On the Mall*. This Edwin Franko Goldman had written this march called *On the Mall*, and the audience would participate, you know. They would hum, you know, during a period. So, I went to ask if they would [play it]. It wasn't on the program and I liked *On the Mall*, so, I asked the conductor and he says to me, "Do you know the words?" and I said, "There ain't no words, right, just ...

SH: Hum.

JS: Yes, hum, but they played it as an encore, you know, yes. Anyway, ... we had classes. We had navigation, like I said, with Williams having a problem with it and I would help him, and we had Morse code and semaphore and Aldis lamps, signal lamps. There's more, more than that, semaphore, Morse code, Aldis lamps and signal flags. There are signal flags, you know, like "Baker" and stuff, and then, we had naval history with this Jones, [who] was teaching, and then, in the afternoon, we'd have sports, boxing. ... With boxing, they'd always put you with someone bigger, you know, [laughter] and swimming and climbing. You had a tower, oh, as high as a telephone pole, and you had to climb up on a cargo net and there was a platform on top and you had to climb ... onto the platform and jump off. ... If you hesitated, you're out, right, and you had to jump off with your arms folded and holding your nose, just jump.

SH: Were you landing in water?

JS: Yes, in the pool, and then, we had the swimming, you know. Sachsel, Dick Sachsel, that's the fellow who got killed, you know, in the pool, unfortunately, and then, we had wrestling and we played football and we played softball. ... Ted Williams, even though he was the batting champ ...

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

AT: This continues an interview with Julius H. Small, also known as Jim Small, on October 18, 2006, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, at Rutgers University. This interview is being conducted by Alexander Toth and Sandra Stewart Holyoak. You were talking about your softball games during training and Ted Williams. Could you please continue?

JS: Yes, yes. Ted, even though he was a batting champion and his record still is number one, couldn't hit a softball, [laughter] and, well, the timing was different, and he'd get so mad that he'd want to murder everybody. [laughter]

SH: Did you have a strict curfew?

JS: Oh, no. Curfew? You were so exhausted come nine o'clock, and they would blow *Taps*, that you were happy to hear it and [you would] hate to hear *Reveille* at five o'clock in the morning, yes, and what they were trying to do was to eliminate you, you know. That was the program, also to get you into condition, but, in the beginning, when you first get there, they call it a pack test and [they] put a weight on your back, a knapsack. I think it was your own weight; I don't remember exactly. It was heavy, anyway, [laughter] and they had this step, they called it a step test, and there was a black man, a sailor, with a big drum and he'd beat the drum and you'd have to step up onto this step, up and down, up and down, for I don't know how long. It was an eternity, but, at the end of three months, you took the test again and it was nothing.

SH: Really?

JS: [laughter] Yes. That's the kind of condition that that [training], you know, put us in.

AT: Did a significant portion of your class drop out as a result of how difficult the training was?

JS: I don't remember, but I'm sure there were people who dropped out, yes.

SH: Did they call it a washout in the Navy? I know that they used that term in the Army Air Force. Did they say, "Washed out?"

JS: Yes, in flying, but this wasn't flying yet. We didn't do any flying. After that, we went to "E Base" and "E" stood for "Elimination." [laughter]

SH: Where was that?

JS: In Bunker Hill, Indiana.

SH: They sure got you going.

JS: Yes. In Bunker Hill, Indiana, that base is now called the Virgil Grissom Air Base and [was] named for Virgil Grissom, the astronaut. He was killed in ... one of the [space] flights, yes, yes, faulty oxygen, burned to death, yes. [Editor's Note: Virgil Ivan "Gus" Grissom died on January 27, 1967, when a fire broke out during a training exercise for the *Apollo 1* mission.] ... So, we went to E Base and we were flying "Yellow Perils" [N3N-3s], you know, these bi-planes, the two-wing bi-planes, open-cockpit, with the helmets and goggles, you know, instructor in front and student in the back. ...

SH: I always wondered how that worked. If the instructor was in the front and you were in the back, how were you able to see what you were supposed to do? [Editor's Note: Mr. Small

motions that the student would peer over the instructor's shoulder.] Oh, cock your head to the side; you really spent all your time with your head to the left or the right?

JS: Well, sort of, but you don't spend that much time with the instructor, anyway. ... They teach you, you know, they called them "S" turns to a landing, you know, and a three-point landing. They'd teach you, right away, carrier landings, you know, yes, but, [also], "S" turns to a circle, ... in these bi-planes, and you would land and the instructor would get out and you'd come [in] and he'd watch you. The circle was probably a little larger than this room and you'd come [in] tail-wheel first and land in that circle, the tail-wheel first.

SH: I see. The circle is on the ground.

JS: Yes.

SH: As big as this room, which is about fifteen feet across.

JS: Yes, yes. It's marked like on a football field, you know. They inscribe a circle, and so, the idea is to catch the wire on the carrier, you know. So, it's the first thing they're teaching you, and then, the next thing they're teaching you [is] acrobatics, slow rolls and snap rolls, Immelmann turns, spins, chandelles and a couple of other maneuvers, and then, they say, "Okay, now, we're going to go night flying." ...

SH: In the bi-plane.

JS: In the bi-plane, right, and it's pitch-black. It's night, right, nighttime, and you go up with the instructor and land, and then, you go solo and it's different and you land, hopefully. So, with the group that I was with, one fellow kept landing about one hundred feet in the air, right, and he kept going around and, finally, one of the instructors went in a plane and went up and guided him down. ... The next morning, he wasn't there anymore. They shipped him out, washed out, as they say.

AT: You said that you learned navigation very easily. Did that translate into learning the actually mechanics of flying? Were you able to pick those up quickly?

JS: Well, I think driving, learning to drive, at nine years old, ... I think that helped me a lot. I know a lot of fellows from the city who had never driven and they were having problems. ... When I got to Pensacola, they had the French Navy there and they had never driven cars and they used to kill a Frenchman every day, you know, a crash every day. You'd hear the sirens going off and they had problems. ...

SH: How long were you at E Base?

JS: At E Base? Oh, probably three or four months, I guess.

SH: You only flew the bi-planes.

JS: Yes, at E Base, yes, yes.

SH: Were your instructors naval pilots?

JS: They were Navy. They were officers, naval officers, yes, yes.

SH: They had experience in landing on carriers.

JS: I don't know about that. I don't know what experience they had. You know, I didn't have ... that much contact with the officers.

SH: During your training, did you ever have an instructor who had served in the European or Pacific Theaters and had flown the kind of missions that you were going to fly?

JS: ... At E Base, I don't know. I don't [know, I] didn't have much to do with [the officers]. You know, you'd finish your flight and thank God [that] he'd give you this, [a thumbs up], right, instead of this, [a thumbs down].

SH: Thumbs up means, "Come back tomorrow."

JS: Yes, you're in, or, otherwise, boom, you're out.

SH: Thumbs down, you are out.

JS: Yes, right, yes. ... One time, an instructor, ... in formation flying, wanted to give me this, [thumbs down], because ... there were three of us, and the instructor in the front and this other fellow and myself, and this other guy, I don't know what the heck he was doing, and, naturally, we get a down check. ... The instructor wanted to give me a down check and I says, "I didn't do anything wrong," you know. "What did I do? Whatever signal you gave," you know, "echelon or V, I did," and I said, "This guy was messing up," and he said, "Oh, yes, you're right, okay."

SH: Wow.

JS: Yes, but, anyway, I went through the whole program, no downs, all up check, yes.

SH: If someone got a down check, were they ever given a second chance?

JS: No, no. There are no second chances. Boy, you make one error and that's it. You're out.

SH: Did they tell you what would happen to you if you got a down check?

JS: You'd go to Great Lakes.

SH: You would become a seaman and go through boot camp.

JS: Right.

AT: You came close to having to go through that because of this other pilot's mistakes.

JS: Yes, well, that they were trying to nail me for that, yes.

SH: You usually do not hear about someone at least letting you defend yourself. That was good.

JS: No. This is why they called it E Base. If you make one mistake, you're out.

SH: He did not make you go up and prove that what you said was correct.

JS: No, no. He realized that, you know, ... I wasn't doing anything wrong. I was following his instructions and this other guy was doing crazy stuff.

SH: Are there any incidents that you remember from E Base that you would like to talk about, any other stories about other people?

JS: No. Well, I used to go on liberty with Ted Williams and it was unbelievable. I'd better not talk about that. If you'd turn the mike off, I would tell you.

SH: Please, continue.

JS: Okay.

AT: Did you run into many Rutgers men throughout the course of your training?

JS: No.

AT: Not really?

JS: No, no. There were a lot of guys from Boston College. Yes, most of them ... were from Boston, from Boston College.

AT: Do you think that that had anything to do with the lower requirements you mentioned earlier?

JS: Well, these guys from Boston College, they probably had two years, but Williams didn't. Williams played baseball right out of high school, yes, but there were people from Boston who didn't have college, I know that, yes.

SH: Where were you sent from E Base?

JS: To Pensacola, Florida, Naval Air Training Center, Pensacola.

SH: Which aircraft were you training on then?

JS: We started with the Vultee “Vibrators” [BT-13]. That’s what they called them. It was a two-place [two-seat] aircraft, you know, with the instructor and pilot [in front] and student [in the rear], and low-wing and single-wing. ... Pensacola has satellite fields around [it]. They called it “Main Side,” and then, Saufley, and that’s where I was, at Saufley Field, and that’s where we were flying the single-engine, low-wing [aircraft] and doing similar stuff, you know, carrier landings, simulated carrier landings, and acrobatics, in a much bigger aircraft than the Yellow Perils. ... Then, I went to Whiting Field, another satellite field, and was flying SNJs, which is bigger than the Vibrators, ... but similar configuration, single-engine and single-wing, but a bigger engine, you know, faster, and we started [the] same thing, with carrier landings and acrobatics, but, then, instruments, [we] went into instrument flying. ... Then, I went into a twin-engine squadron. I was going to stay with Ted Williams and go into a fighter squadron, but I had gotten a letter, and Ted wanted to go into the Marine Corps. He wanted to go in the Marine Corps because he wanted to be on land. He didn’t want to go on the carriers, [laughter] ... but I got a letter from my brother, Archie, who was in the Pacific and [had] met some Marine Corps pilots and he had told them that I was at Pensacola and thinking about going into [the] Marine Corps. So, my brother wrote me to tell me that these pilots said, “Tell him, ‘Don’t join the Marine Corps. Stay in the Navy,’” [laughter] because they were complaining about having to sleep in their planes, you know, on the alert. They didn’t like that. So, I left Ted. Ted went into fighters and went into the Marine Corps, and then he got called back for Korea, and a lot of the Marine Corps pilots did. ... When he was in Korea, he was John Glenn’s wingman, yes. You remember John Glenn, the astronaut and senator, and then, I went into a twin-engine training [course] at Whiting Field, flying twin-engine Beechcrafts. ...

SH: When you say that you wanted to go into the Marines, or that Ted Williams wanted to, were you actually given a choice?

JS: Oh, yes, you had a choice, oh, yes, sure, yes. You could chose [your branch], and you could chose if you wanted to go in a fighter squadron or you could choose if you wanted to go in a torpedo-bomber squadron or if you wanted to go into a twin-engine squadron, and I chose a twin-engine squadron.

SH: Why?

JS: I don’t know, [laughter] just that it was a bigger aircraft and more interesting and more training. ... I don’t know why, but I thought it was more interesting.

SH: How often would you fly when you were down in Pensacola at these satellite fields? Did you fly every single day?

JS: ... No, we didn’t fly every single day, because it’s like the worst place in the world to have a training base, because it rains in the wintertime. We were there in the winter and, like, every day, it was raining and raining, but it’s political, you know, why the base is there. It’s, like, political. Why is the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, right? political, but, you know, ... this base should be in Nevada or Arizona or someplace where there’s no rain, right, and you get sunshine, but it rained.

SH: What would they do with you then?

JS: Nothing, yes. [laughter] We'd have ground school, but, then, like, in the afternoon, you know, okay, we'd play basketball indoors, you know, something like that, but ... we'd have ground school, yes.

SH: They continued your physical training by letting you play sports. Is that how they kept you in physical shape?

JS: Yes, but it wasn't like Chapel Hill, no, no, but we had ground [school]. We had navigation, you know, celestial navigation, and tracking and dead reckoning and, also, navigating with the radio. I can't think of the term that they used; the RDF, Radio Direction Finder, yes, and then, LORAN, using LORAN.

SH: Okay. You used that as well.

JS: Yes. You familiar with LORAN? It's an acronym. It's, "Long Range Aid to Navigation," and that operates with a "master" station and a "slave" station and they had it all up and down the coast here, in New Jersey.

SH: How far were you able to fly with the twin-engines that you trained on?

JS: ... I remember, we went to St. Louis, from Pensacola, one time.

SH: How many men were in this twin-engine plane?

JS: When we went to St. Louis, there was an instructor and myself, and I think two others.

SH: What would be a typical crew for this type of plane?

JS: Well, this was ... a training aircraft; it wasn't a fleet aircraft. Later, in a fleet aircraft that I flew, ... there were two pilots and four crew, I think, four crew, yes.

SH: Was your training delayed because of the weather?

JS: Oh, yes. No, sure, you didn't have ...

SH: You did not have as many hours.

JS: Yes. You didn't get the hours in, sure.

AT: How often were you actually able to go up and fly?

JS: ... I'd go for weeks at a time without flying, just, yes, rain, rain, rain.

SH: That really held back your training.

JS: Sure, sure.

SH: What were you hearing about what was going on in the war while you were in training? Did you keep up with what was going on in Europe? Your brother was in the Pacific.

JS: ... Well, you didn't hear much, no newspapers, you know. It's like I'm in another world, Florida, at that time.

SH: You were basically contained within ...

JS: Yes, sure, Pensacola. ... On liberty, we'd go to Pensacola, downtown, the San Carlos Hotel, and, to get a beer, right, ... the bar would be twenty [guys] deep, you know, and somebody would be handing back beers. ... Another fellow and I, we figured, "Oh, the heck with this;" we went to Alabama. [laughter] ...

SH: How did you get to Alabama?

JS: ... By bus. It's right near Alabama; it's on the [Florida] Panhandle, you know. ... In fact, the railroad [terminates] at Dothan, Alabama, that's where we went, and, when we came from Indiana to Pensacola, the railroad stopped in Alabama, and then, we, by bus, went to Pensacola.

SH: At that point in your training, did you run into anyone who had had experience in the war? At this point, you had Navy officers training you.

JS: Yes.

SH: Had they had any experience in the war?

JS: I have no idea. You didn't talk to an officer, you know.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes, no.

SH: What was your rank at this point?

JS: Aviation cadet.

SH: You were still an aviation cadet.

JS: Yes, sure.

SH: How long were you in this training pattern before you finally finished?

JS: Oh, probably eighteen months, I guess, a year-and-a-half, easily, yes.

SH: Were there any accidents in your training?

JS: Oh, yes, sure.

SH: You talked about the French.

JS: ... At E Base, in Indiana, there were people getting killed, yes. ... Even if we were in ground school and you hear that siren go off, you know that somebody crashed, and then, everybody went flying. They'd stop classes and you went flying.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes.

SH: Why?

JS: They didn't want you to be afraid. ... The best thing was not to sit down and mope about somebody being killed. They'd put you in an airplane and you went flying, yes. Yes, that was the [remedy], and we did. That's what they did and I think it was right, because, if you thought about it, you wouldn't go back. [laughter] You wouldn't go back.

AT: That was an effective way to improve morale. There was no lasting effect from all of the accidents.

JS: Yes, sure.

SH: Were the accidents due to pilot error?

JS: Oh, sure, all the time, no, pilot error all the time, sure, just like this, they call it an accident, here in Manhattan, you know, last week, right. [Editor's Note: Mr. Small is referring to the October 11, 2006, crash of a Cirrus SR20 Pterodactyl into a Manhattan apartment building; both occupants, New York Yankees pitcher Cory Lidle and his flight instructor, were killed.] Guy had no business being there, you know, inexperienced. He had seventy-five hours. That's nothing, and, plus, in that air space; there are people, I read in the paper, ... who were flying for thirty years, you know, in this area, never been there and didn't want to be there, you know.

SH: Because of the congestion.

JS: Yes. ... Now, they put a rule in, you can't go in there, right, ... but, yes, pilot error and flying into one another, you know, in the pattern. ...

SH: Was it very difficult to fly in formation?

JS: No.

SH: Which maneuver did you find most difficult in your training at Pensacola?

JS: I didn't find anything difficult.

SH: You are just too good. Where did you go after that training ended?

JS: From Pensacola? Well, I was exempted from final exams in navigation, which made me very happy, and we'd got our wings, you know. ...

SH: You got your wings in Pensacola.

JS: Yes, yes.

SH: Was that a nice ceremony? Was that something that you enjoyed?

JS: Oh, yes, oh, sure. It was a graduation. There were, you know, several hundred people and, yes, it was a nice ceremony, yes. ...

SH: Who pinned your wings on you?

JS: I'm not going to tell you. [laughter] ... From there, I went to an operational training base in Beaufort, South Carolina; ... no, first, we went to Lake City, Florida, yes, Lake City. ...

SH: Pensacola is on the ...

JS: On the Panhandle.

SH: Where is Lake City?

JS: Lake City is between Tallahassee and Jacksonville.

SH: You were on the East Coast.

JS: Well, almost, sort of in the middle, but up [on] the same latitude as Pensacola and Tallahassee, Lake City, Jacksonville. Pensacola's south of there, a little south, but on the Panhandle. Pensacola is on the bay, Escambia Bay, and Lake City is, like, in-between. ... Then, there was a fleet aircraft, ... they called them PV-1s, which were twin-engine and had two Pratt & Whitney engines, R-2800, two-thousand-horsepower, each engine, and they were ... built by Lockheed and the Navy called them Venturas, [later, the PV-2 Harpoon]. They were built in Ventura, California, Lockheed plant, and so, we had an introduction to those planes, ... didn't do any acrobatics in these planes, but just flew around, landing, take-off and land, and then, night landings and take-offs. ... I don't know how many months I was there, probably three months also, and then, from there, I went to Beaufort, South Carolina, for operational training in the same aircraft, and then, we had gunnery practice. ... In these planes, we had six machine guns forward and, you know, the targets on the ground. ...

SH: You were doing this training in the Beaufort area.

JS: Yes, yes. ... Are you familiar with Beaufort? Yes, at that time, you wouldn't want to know Beaufort, [laughter] so different today, that, was it Myrtle Beach?

SH: That is further north.

JS: Yes, but it didn't exist at that time.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes. There was nothing, nothing there, nothing between Beaufort and Charleston. There was nothing.

SH: Beaufort, Charleston, then Myrtle Beach, going north.

JS: Yes, and, also, rockets. You know, we had rockets on the planes, you know, and jetting rockets. ... Then, we're supposed to form a crew and I was supposed to be a second pilot on this crew, ... but, then, they said they needed an instructor in Beaufort [for] the training, and so, they asked me if I wanted to be an instructor. ... I said, "I don't know. My brothers, one's in the Atlantic, the other one's in the Pacific; I'd like to go someplace," and I didn't make up my mind right away. So, the next morning, they told me I'm going to be an instructor, here in Beaufort, right, simply because [of] my marks, or marksmanship, with the machine guns, and they told me [that] I put holes in the holes.

SH: With a plane?

JS: With a plane, right, right.

SH: Had you ever fired any sort of gun before?

JS: Yes. I fired guns here at Rutgers, in the ROTC. We had a pistol and we had the rifle and had to ... disassemble it and assemble it blindfolded.

SH: Here, at Rutgers?

JS: Yes, yes, in the ROTC. We had to do it blindfolded. The reason it was blindfolded was, supposing you had to do it at night, right, ... and then, so, I became an instructor in rockets and teaching pilots, you know, how to shoot the ... rockets. ... They had a range. I don't know if you know what a range is.

AT: Like a firing range?

JS: ... No. That's another type of range. In the Navy, they called it a range. They have it at ports, also, ... where there's, like, a target and one behind the other, but ... they have stripes on them and you line up the stripes. That's when you know your right attitude, and then, [when

you] come into a port, they have them arranged and you line up the lines on the range. Anyway, this is about the pitch, you know. ...

SH: What would that angle be, for the tape?

JS: It seems like straight down, yes, but it's not, but it seems as if it's straight down. ...

SH: How much time do you have to pull up after you have fired your rockets?

JS: Well, that's a good question. [laughter] You want to do it soon, because the plane keeps going, you know, and so, you want to be out in time. I don't remember exactly, but I remember, one of my brothers, my brother, Lee, his ship docked in Jacksonville, Florida, so, ... he flew up with a Navy plane to Beaufort, I don't know how he arranged [it], somehow, and he went flying with me. ... I says, "Well, I have to take these guys flying, you know, because they're going to join the fleet in a couple of weeks, so, they need this training," and so, he's sitting in the back. [laughter] ... Here, he's been onboard ship, you know, ... but this is different, right, and we're coming down ... and he comes up to me and he says, "Jim," he says, "stop it, please." I said, "Jesus, you know, I've got to show these guys. They're going to go to the fleet and they want them to have the experience." I says, "Go in the back and lay down," right.

SH: You had that much room on the plane.

JS: Oh, yes, yes. This is a big aircraft, at the time, similar to a B-25 or a B-26.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes. In fact, ... Delta Airlines was using them. At the time, Delta was just in the South. They were using them as a passenger plane. ...

SH: You sent your brother to the back to lay down. Did he do that?

JS: Yes, he did.

SH: He was a medical officer, correct?

JS: Yes, okay, yes, and, today, he still remembers. He says, "I'll never ... forget that in my whole life," and, here, in the North Atlantic, [on] convoys, ... [if] someone was sick on one of these freighters, ... he'd go across on a breeches buoy, and it was rough. ... Ships went apart, the line parted and, ... well, their block and fall, you know, came down, hit him on the head, knocked him out. [He] hit the water and the water was so cold, it was in January, in the North Atlantic, right, [that it] revived him. ...

SH: They were able to rescue him.

JS: Oh, yes. They always had a boat at the ready, ... to fish this out, but he says he'll never forget this rocket [training mission]. [laughter]

SH: What you are saying is, he had already had his own harrowing experience, but you got him. His little brother did him in.

JS: Right, yes.

SH: Did you have a full crew or were you only training men for their fleet assignments?

JS: No, ... just training the pilots, ... just for rockets, yes, with the range, and then, I was there for a year, I guess, and then, I decided, ... you know, "Enough of this," and I wanted to become a patrol plane commander. ... Here, in Beaufort, I met people who, like you asked me previously, ... had been in the Pacific or wherever. I met people who were at Pearl Harbor, yes, pilots, and there's one fellow, [his] name was Hanson, and there was a scarcity of airplanes at the time, at Pearl Harbor, and he went up in one of these Yellow Perils and they took a sailor with them and, with a handheld machine gun, ... [he] was trying to shoot down a Jap Zero, yes.

SH: What a story.

JS: Yes, and there was another fellow there, English, a fellow by the name of Jim English, he was also at Pearl Harbor at that time, a pilot. They were older than me, of course.

SH: Probably much older, considering that they were there during the December 1941 attack.

JS: Well, maybe ten years older, I guess, yes. ... They were still in their early thirties, yes.

SH: When you were in Beaufort, did you go on liberty anywhere? You said that there was not a lot to do in Beaufort.

JS: Oh, yes. No, we'd go to Savannah, we'd go to Jacksonville, we'd go to Atlanta, go to Miami.

SH: You would fly there, obviously.

JS: Yes. We'd go to New York.

SH: Did you get to see your family? You talked about your one brother coming in to visit.

JS: ... I did. That was the first time in five years I ever saw him.

AT: Did you exchange letters with either of your brothers?

JS: Yes. ... My brother, Archie, in the Pacific, I didn't see him for four years, but my mother, yes, my mother would spend the winter in Miami, and so, I went to see her. Quite a story about my mother; when I was in Pensacola, she came up from Miami to visit me in Pensacola and, at that time, like, not flying, you know, by train and by bus, like, [it was] almost a two-day trip, and so, she came to Pensacola, and then, I guess, at the time, I was at Saufley. ... So, she took the

bus from Pensacola to Saufley and came to the gate and there's a sailor at the gate and she asked for Jim Small. ... The sailor looks in the book and he says, "Don't have a Jim Small; got a Julius Small." "Oh." She got back on the bus and, halfway back to Pensacola, she says, "That's him." [laughter]

SH: What a story; even your mother.

JS: "That's him," yes.

SH: Did she come back?

JS: Yes. She said, "That's him," finally came back. Well, how did I become Jim? When I was in grammar school, when I first started grammar school in Maywood, and Maywood was probably ninety-five percent German, ... when I started school, they called me "Julius Jew," you know, in kindergarten, you know, "Julius Jew." So, I went home and I says, "Mom, they call me 'Julius Jew.' Can I have a different name?" So, she said, "What name do you want?" I says, "Jim." She says, "Okay, Jim," and I went back to school and I says, "My name is Jim;" okay, no more "Julius Jew."

SH: In the military, were you subjected to any anti-Semitism?

JS: ... Yes, but I settled it, one punch, that's all.

SH: Did it happen more than once?

JS: Yes. It happened a couple of times with cadets, you know, other cadets. I remember both names. One name was Jim (Standard?), from Cleveland, and a fellow by the name of (Gail Ben?), from Rochester, New York, and, you know, they'd grab you by the throat, if they're going to [fight]; okay, yes, boom, finished, and then, they become your friend. Yes, then, they become your friend, but, yes, there was a couple of incidents. ... Even in grammar school, there was a fellow by the name of Harry (Hughes?) and a fellow by the name of Scotty (MacTaggart?) and, the same way, ... just one punch, that's all, and that was the end of the fight.

SH: Growing up in the Maywood area, you mentioned the large German population, was there any *Bund* activity that you remember?

JS: No, no. The *Bund* was in Irvington, New Jersey, that Fritz Kuhn, I think his name was, and he was the head of the *Bund*, and they had a camp, do you know the camp on ...

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

AT: We were just discussing the JCC camp, located in Flanders, New Jersey. Please, continue what you were saying.

SH: About the *Bund* having a camp there.

JS: ... Oh, on Emmans Road, yes, which, originally, I don't know for sure, but it's been there a long time, it's been there from the late '20s, early '30s, for sure, yes.

SH: What does JCC stand for?

JS: No, it's SSC, Swim and Sports Club. That's what they call it now.

AT: My parents always referred to it as the JCC.

JS: JCCS? Yes.

SH: However, you were not subjected to any of that when you were in Maywood. You just knew that it existed.

JS: The *Bund*? Yes, everyone knew the *Bund* existed. In fact, he went to jail when the war started. Then, they put him in jail, Fritz Kuhn, because ... they had a radio station. He was broadcasting, you know, similar to Father [Charles] Coughlin, probably even worse than Father Coughlin, yes.

SH: I asked a question about anti-Semitism and you said that you had been subjected to it even in grade school. Was it more prevalent in the South, in Florida and South Carolina?

JS: No. I didn't experience anything in Florida or South Carolina, no.

SH: You were stationed in Beaufort, and then, you asked to be transferred. You wanted to do something different.

JS: Well, I wanted to become a patrol plane commander. So, then, I went back to Lake City again and I was going to ... have the training for patrol plane commander, and then, I had a second pilot, named (Harvey Waters?), and we were flying together, you know, in Lake City, and then, we came back to Beaufort again for more operational training. [laughter] [I was] probably the best trained pilot the Navy ever had, and then, thank God, the war was over. ... I was supposed to get discharged from Beaufort and I had a skipper by the name of Commander Payson and he wouldn't sign my discharge papers. ... He says, "The Navy needs men like you," and, "Stay in," and, you know, "Stay in the Navy, regular Navy," and it was more than a week and, every day, we'd have the same discussion. ... Finally, one night, I was thinking about it and, ... the next morning, I said to him, ... "Would I ever make admiral?" and, the next day, he signed my papers, because he knew what I had meant.

SH: Really?

JS: Yes. Well, there was probably one [Jewish] naval admiral, Admiral Lewis Strauss, who was part of the atomic program, and then, Admiral [Hyman G.] Rickover, who was the father of the nuclear Navy, almost didn't make admiral. He was passed over once, and, if you're passed over twice, you're out, and Eisenhower was President and Eisenhower said to Congress, "You'd

better ... make this guy admiral, because the nuclear program would go down the tubes, you know, without him." ...

SH: That was all because you were not Academy men.

JS: No, no, it wasn't, no. Payson was an Academy man, yes, and he was from this Manufacturer's Hanover Trust family. You know the Mets baseball team? ... There was a Mrs. [Joan] Payson who bought the team, right, started the team, the Mets, and he was in that family and they were Manufacturer's Trust. No, he was a very nice man. Every time he wanted to go someplace, he would ask me to fly him, you know, wherever he wanted, [if he] wanted to go to Washington, for some reason or other, or Jacksonville. ... No, but he knew what I meant. ... There weren't many Jewish admirals, right, yes.

AT: You were in Beaufort when you found out that the war was over.

JS: Yes.

AT: Your primary feeling was pretty much just relief.

JS: Oh, yes, of course.

SH: Were there any celebrations?

JS: Everybody got drunk, I guess. [laughter] There was always happy hour. In the Navy, they always had to have [happy hour]. Every day was a happy hour.

SH: How much time would you take between drinking and when you could fly again?

JS: Oh, I didn't drink that much, but have a beer every day. There was a bar and it was like for nothing, you know, at that time, yes.

SH: Were there Navy regulations regarding drinking and flying?

JS: Not that I know of.

SH: If you could do it, you could do it.

JS: Yes; not that I know of, really.

SH: Was this your base commander, this Admiral Payson?

JS: ... No. He was a squadron commander, yes, Payson, yes. No, the base commander was a Captain (Congden?) and the executive officer, his name was (Price?), a Commander Price.

SH: The men that you were dealing with were also Navy officers.

JS: Yes, sure.

SH: Did you have any interactions with the ground crews that kept your planes flying?

JS: No, no. The only [enlisted men were in the] the mess stewards, they're all black mess stewards, and I got voted the best officer on the base by the mess stewards.

SH: Because of your attitude towards them?

JS: Yes, yes, because I treated them, you know, as a human being, and I learned that from my mother. We had a black woman in our house helping my mother, you know. Her name was Mary, I don't remember her last name, but she was a very nice person and, if you dropped a penny or a dime or whatever, you'd always find it the next morning, you know, on a dresser, very nice woman.

AT: Is it safe to assume that the way you treated them was not the typical way they had been treated by the other instructors?

JS: Yes, yes, sure. Most of them were from the South and were treated as second-hand citizens.

SH: Did you see any integration of the Navy officer corps at that time?

JS: No, no. It wasn't until after the war, yes, no.

SH: What was the reaction when President Roosevelt died?

JS: Well, "who was Harry Truman?" You know, who was this guy? [laughter] Nobody'd ever heard of him, you know, even though he was a senator, but was he senator or congressman? ... I don't think he was senator; I think he was congressman. [Editor's Note: Harry S. Truman was a senator from Missouri before being elected Vice-President in 1944.] Yes, nobody ever heard of Truman. ... I was in Savannah, Georgia, at that time.

SH: Were you?

JS: Yes.

SH: What was the reaction like to losing this man, Roosevelt, who had been President for so long at that point?

JS: Yes. Well, it was a shock, you know, and, like I said, you know, like, who's going to run the country, you know? Roosevelt was like a father figure. I remember, with his speeches, ... the *Fireside Chats* that he had, that my family, every week, it was a religion, you know, to listen to that.

SH: When the war ended in Europe, were there any celebrations stateside? We have talked to people who were in Europe when the war ended there, but, for you, being stateside, did you see or hear anything?

JS: I was in South Carolina, [laughter] different, different. I was arrested in South Carolina.

SH: For what, if I can ask?

JS: Well, Naval Air Station Beaufort is on one side of Beaufort and across the, oh, I forget the name of the river, is Parris Island. ... Another fellow and I, we used to go visit the BAMs, [female Marines], I'm not going to tell you what the BAMs are, ... at Parris Island. So, one night, we were coming back from Parris Island and we got stopped. I don't remember the [other] fellow's name. We had a car and, I remember, he was from Pittsburgh and the three sheriffs, right, the sheriff and two deputies, ... he says, "Driving drunk," and he wasn't driving erratically, might have had a couple of beers or something like that. ... I took the keys from the car and I put them in my pocket and they're looking for the keys and they're frisking him and they can't find the keys on him. So, they figured, "Well, maybe I have them," and they're trying to take the keys from me and I'm wrestling with them, right. There's three guys on me and one was nice enough to say that, "Son, if you don't give us the keys, we'll mess you up for life." I says, "Uh-oh, [laughter] here are the keys." ... So, he was a gentleman, right, but, then, we had to go to court, in a grocery store, in the back of the grocery store in Beaufort, and we're sitting on milk cases, right, milk boxes. ... We went there with a lawyer, with a Navy lawyer, you know, and the lawyer says, "Small, you keep your mouth shut," before we went in. "You don't say a word," and I didn't and he got us off, right, but that was Beaufort.

SH: You talked about going over to Parris Island. Was there a real competition or sense of dislike between the Marines and the Navy personnel?

JS: I don't know. The BAMs were happy to see us, because we had money. [laughter] The Marines didn't have any money. [The trainees in] the boot camp there, they didn't have any money. We had money.

SH: You spoke about the French Navy pilots who trained at one base that you were stationed at.

JS: In Pensacola, yes.

SH: Did you ever interact with men from other service branches or other Allied forces? For example, were there any British pilots training at these bases or anything like that?

JS: No.

SH: In any of the places you were stationed at?

JS: No.

SH: Did you feel that the training you received was good?

JS: Oh, the best in the world, still is, yes.

SH: You talked about being encouraged to stay in the Navy. Did you already have a vision for what you wanted to do when the war was over?

JS: Well, I thought I'd like to go to medical school.

SH: Did you?

JS: Yes, but I didn't have any money, or I wasn't that good a student, either, but I suppose I could have. I wasn't a good student, but I had intelligence. When I came back, we mentioned Professor Keller earlier, and so, I had a class with Keller and he made a remark that, "Small, you don't ... have no kind of brains," something like that, and so, I walked out of his class. ... Then, I had to go to Professor Helyar, and then, they found out that in the placement test that you had to take before you enter that I was third out of six hundred, you know. So, then, Keller said, "Oh, okay, Small," he says, "you get an 'F' now," or a 4, whatever it was at the time, and he says, "You come to class and, if you ... just come to class, you don't have to do anything, just come to class, ... I'll give you a 1, you know, ... for the course." So, I did and it was, like, eight o'clock every morning.

SH: Is this before the war?

JS: No, this is after.

SH: This is when you came back.

JS: Yes, this is after. So, I went to the class, and then, if someone couldn't answer a question, he'd turn to me and he'd say, "Small, tell them," right, and I had the course, so, I told them, and then, I passed the course. I don't know if he gave me a 1 or whatever it was.

AT: Had Rutgers changed significantly in the time that you were away for the war?

JS: Oh, yes, sure. Well, there were less than two thousand when I started, and then, all of a sudden, here are all these guys coming back, you know. ... Even though they had gone to other colleges, they wanted to be near home, you know, and so, I don't know what the population was. ... They didn't have dormitories, even, and they had people at ...

SH: Raritan Arsenal?

JS: Raritan Arsenal, exactly, yes, thank you, yes.

SH: Where were you housed when you came back?

JS: At Pell.

SH: Okay, you lived on campus.

JS: In the Quad, yes, but I wasn't supposed to be there, either. I was supposed to be at Raritan Arsenal, but I was friendly with Abe Wilson and Irv Baker and they were at Pell, and so, I brought a cot. I was going to move in with them on the cot, but there were three in a dorm, three beds in the dorm, and, somehow or another, the third guy never showed up. So, I was there in the dorm and I didn't have to use my cot.

SH: A squatter.

JS: Yes, I was a squatter, exactly, yes. [laughter]

SH: Did you ever encounter incoming students who were eighteen, nineteen years old?

JS: Yes. ... Baker was only here for one semester, and then, we got a freshman, seventeen or eighteen, who was in another world, right, and didn't, you know ...

SH: Hard to relate?

JS: Yes. He was just, you know, different, yes.

SH: Did you change your major when you came back?

JS: Yes. That's when I went into ag economics.

SH: When you came back?

JS: Yes, when I came back, yes, with Keller.

SH: Had Keller said this to you before the war, about you having no brains?

JS: No, he said it when I came back. ... No, when I came back, and so, I met him as a freshman, you know, and here it is, like, seven or eight years later, you know, so, there's a difference.

SH: Right. That is what I am thinking.

JS: ... You know, became more mature, just a boy as a freshman, and, here, I'm a man. ...

SH: Not only a man, but a pilot.

JS: Well, yes, you know, different.

SH: You graduated the next year. You were here for one more year.

JS: Yes. I got a semester's credit for the Navy courses or whatever, yes.

SH: Living on the Rutgers campus, were you more involved in any of the activities here?

JS: No, just football, 150s, that's all. ...

SH: You played ball again.

JS: Yes.

SH: Were you able to use your GI Bill benefits, so that you did not have to work as hard?

JS: Yes, yes, GI Bill, yes, yes. It was probably one of the best things that ever happened in America, was the GI Bill, yes, a wonderful thing.

SH: Did you go on for any advanced degrees?

JS: No.

SH: What did you do after you left Rutgers in 1947?

JS: No, I went into the flower business. You know, it's four o'clock.

SH: Okay. Thank you very much. I understand that you need to go, because of traffic.

JS: Well, thank you, yes. Even now, it's too late.

AT: Thank you very much.

JS: Okay, nice meeting you.

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

Reviewed by Alexander Toth 12/12/06

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 1/9/07

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 1/12/07

Reviewed by Julius Small 4/27/07