

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL C. BARR

FOR THE

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INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Michael Barr on August 1, 2012, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth. Thank you very much for coming in today and for bringing in your materials and sharing some stories before the interview. To begin, could you tell me where and when you were born?

Michael Barr: Yes, sure. I was born in White Plains, New York, on November 2, 1947.

SI: What were your parents' names?

MB: My father's name was Charles Yerger Barr and my mother's name is Joan Biggar Barr. I think, if you want her maiden name, it would have been Joan Tames, T-A-M-E-S, Biggar.

SI: Since we were looking at some of the photographs and postcards from your father's side of the family, let's start there.

MB: Okay.

SI: How far back (that you know of) does the family go in the United States?

MB: His family had a couple of lines, but they were of Scots descent and, also, of German descent and lived in Kentucky. His mother's family was pretty much Germanic and they lived in Ohio, more particularly in the Cincinnati area. Both families probably can trace themselves back to like the 1840s. I actually have an immigration certificate (or whatever) of one of my grandmother's ancestors from the mid-1840s for Hamilton County in Ohio, which is where Cincinnati is.

On my father's side, the history is a little less detailed with respect to his paternal side. Most of the family history that we have is on his mother's side. My mother's family, various branches of it go back quite far.

One of her ancestors had a house--that's actually now a historic home--in Westchester County and had fought in the American Revolution, in particular at the Battle of White Plains. She also--and this, to me, is sort of an interesting aspect of it--had, at least from her maternal grandmother's side, an ancestor who immigrated to the country from Madrid after the American Civil War, in part because of political reasons in Spain.

[Editor's Note: The Battle of White Plains took place on October 28, 1776.]

Spain was undergoing a lot of turmoil then under the reign of Isabella II, who ultimately was evicted from the Spanish throne. He and one of his friends decided it was a good time to get out of Spain at that point. [laughter] They came to New York, where he met the woman who would have been my great-great grandmother, who was from Savannah, Georgia.

[Editor's Note: Isabella II (1830-1904) reigned as Queen of Spain from 1833 until being deposed in the Glorious Revolution of September 1868.]

I've always found that story a little bit interesting because of the fact that, essentially, what a lot of people don't realize is, after the Civil War, especially in the American South, there really was a shortage of men to go around, so that a lot of women either spent their lives unmarried or did what she and her twin sister did, which was come to New York to find husbands, [laughter] which I've always found funny. They got married in 1867.

So, I always thought that was kind of an interesting combination, to show the fluidity of the country. Even in 1867, you had people flowing into New York City, looking for opportunities. In the case of somebody from Madrid and somebody from Savannah, they managed to end up being married. So, that, I think, is probably the most interesting little family anecdote, if you went back in the history, sort of the disparity of backgrounds, whereas, today, I think, this may not be all that unusual.

SI: Let's go back to your grandparent's generation.

MB: Right.

SI: You showed me some postcards from the early twentieth century (or the first decade of the twentieth century) between your grandfather on your father's side and your grandmother on your father's side. She was in the Cincinnati area.

MB: He was, I believe, like in Northern Kentucky, which is really across from Cincinnati. I mean, even now, I know, when I first went there, I was kind of surprised to fly into Cincinnati and realize I'd landed in Kentucky. [laughter] That's sort of what I think [happened] with them. They probably were very close to the Cincinnati area; at least, that is, my grandfather.

Yes, my grandmother went to school there in Cincinnati. She went to the University of Cincinnati. My grandfather went to Purdue and my grandmother's brother went to Ohio State. So, it was all Midwestern education, but, also, an example of the big state universities (or what have become the big state universities) and the impact they were having even as early as the early part of the twentieth century.

SI: It is unusual to find even men who went to college during this time period, but women...

MB: Right.

SI: This was not a time period when everyone went to college.

MB: Right.

SI: Your grandmother became a teacher.

MB: Yes, she was a music teacher, or she majored in music. My sense is that she may have taught music, as well as other things. I don't think they'd reached that stage then where someone could just teach music as a specialty in grade schools, but I think that was her field. She was a grade-school teacher in Cincinnati.

I'm not exactly certain why, but I have a rough idea as to when they moved East, which seems to be counter to the trend. Most people seem to go West, but they came from Cincinnati and moved to an area in Westchester County, a section of Yonkers known as Colonial Heights, which is right along the Bronx River. As it sounds, it's a ridge with a number of older homes in it. My father was born in Bronxville, which is on the other side of the ridge.

My father told me something recently, which I thought was sort of interesting--I should say, actually, late in his life, which was relatively recently, in relative terms--but he'd actually been the paperboy for the Kennedys at one point, when they lived in Bronxville. He pointed out where they'd lived. I'd never known that. I think we were just driving around. He said, "Oh, that's where their estate was," which has since been subdivided. So, I think he had a little entrepreneurial spirit there, even as a kid, as a lot of kids did.

SI: Was your grandfather in engineering?

MB: Yes, my grandfather was an engineer, and his brother-in-law (my grandmother's brother) was also an engineer. His claim to fame was, he actually had a patent on and developed the elevator button, or buttons for elevators. He had it with a company called Cutler-Hammer. So, every time I get in an elevator, I sort of smile. [laughter]

He may not have been the only person to come up with this, but he certainly did have a patent for that, and with a major company at one point. I don't know if Cutler-Hammer is still in existence or if it's been subsumed into another corporation, but I can remember that name--again, I think, a product of the schooling that people could get in the early twentieth century.

I think there is also this big fascination--and it's something that we should know about here in New Jersey, of course--with [Thomas] Edison. I think a lot of people were inspired by Edison's example, of being inventors or developing things along those lines, in engineering and whatever, because there was a lot of engineering that's gone on in this country for quite some time.

I know one of my father's anecdotes was that when they opened the Pulaski Skyway, which I guess we all tend to think of as being this somewhat outmoded bridge, it was considered the most current thing going. He said that they all jumped in cars and drove down from Westchester County just to go across the Pulaski Skyway, to see this marvel of engineering, and it still is.

If you're driving it, it's one thing--I think you're just trying to keep your eyes on the road--but, if you're on the Turnpike, driving by, or, if you're on the railroads going to New York, the Pulaski Skyway, to this day, is a very impressive sight. Of course, it's featured in the opening credits of *The Sopranos*. [laughter] Anyway, I think it was that era--people were into inventions.

SI: What about your mother's parents?

MB: My mother's parents, interesting, my mother was born in White Plains, as I was, same hospital. So, my mother's family pretty much settled in the White Plains area. My mother's

parents were like small-business types. My grandmother had gone to Cooper Union, but had studied fashion. I think, at one point, you could do that at Cooper Union.

Her husband, I'm not certain if he graduated or if he attended the Columbia Journalism School, but he had a journalism background. I know he went to Columbia; I just don't know if he [graduated]. Sometimes, in that era, people would go to college--even a four-year college--they might go for a year or they may go for a semester or something like that. So, I mean, it's not clear to me as to how far he went in terms of pursuing his degree, but I think he did have some training.

SI: What was the small business that they had?

MB: The small business they had was a fish market in White Plains.

SI: Moving forward a little bit, your father was a World War II veteran. Did he come of age and go into the service or was he working before then?

MB: My understanding is that he (as I think a lot of [people] did) enlisted pretty soon after the Pearl Harbor attack and was basically either in high school or about to graduate from high school. I think that he may have even had to have his mother sign the papers. So, he may have actually been a little bit underage. It's not clear to me, but I think so. I don't think he was that severely underage or something, because he was born in 1923. All I do know is that he did.

[Editor's Note: Japanese forces attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, thrusting the United States into the Second World War.]

I guess a lot of them decided they'd sign up with the Marine Corps, because of just the general reputation the Marine Corps had at that time--though, I guess, much of the reputation the Marine Corps has today is really from World War II. I'm sort of puzzled as to what its reputation was in the early 1940s. It seemed to me like, at that point, it hadn't really achieved the aura that it has today, which, I think, really is a World War II event or concept.

SI: What do you know about his time in the service?

MB: Well, he was trained both in Camp Lejeune, and then, Camp Pendleton. The division he was in was the Fourth Marine Division. From speaking with a historian, I found out that, basically, what they did was, with the Marine Corps--it may have been true of the Army as well--but, with the Marine Corps, they would form a division. Then, once they had a division, they'd give it a number--one, two, three, four.

So, he was in the Fourth Division that they raised, basically. He was in the artillery. I think he feels that one of the reasons why he survived was because he was in the artillery, because it's not quite the same. It certainly is a combat situation, but it may not have been quite the same thing as being, if you will, an infantryman.

He was on four island invasions--Saipan, Tinian and Roi-Namur, which are in, I guess, the Kwajalein Atoll, and then, Iwo Jima. He was the second wave. He liked to point out that he was on the second wave going into Iwo Jima, but in the artillery. I guess, during the course of the battle, he was reassigned to what they called the Corps Artillery, which is where they put them basically on the center of the island, where I guess they were just firing salvos from there.

He told my mother he can remember both flag raisings, but I think, at that point, where they'd landed, I guess the Marines were close enough to [Mount] Suribachi to see the flags going up each time they went up. They both went up the same day. I think what happened was, the first flag that was raised was relatively small. They sent another group up to have the second [raised], which is the famous flag raising on Iwo Jima.

[Editor's Note: From February 19 to March 26, 1945, US Marines, supported by naval forces, fought against Japanese defenders on the island of Iwo Jima. On February 23rd, Marines secured Mount Suribachi, the high point, and hoisted an American flag on the summit. Later that day, photographer Joe Rosenthal took an iconic photograph of six American servicemen putting up the replacement flag.]

He was awarded the Bronze Star for having put out a fire in an ammunition dump that, I guess, was nearby. Basically, being the artillery, I guess they had a lot of ammunition around. So, I asked about it--he just said he didn't even think twice about running in to put the fire out. I myself, if I saw an ammo dump on fire, probably would run the other way. [laughter]

I think, when you're in combat, you have a different sense of things. You were fighting for the other guys in your unit, and so forth. After that, they all were sent back to Hawaii to prepare for an invasion of the mainland of Japan, but, then, it never occurred, because of the surrender after the atomic bombings.

[Editor's Note: Hiroshima was the target of the first atomic raid on August 6, 1945. Nagasaki was attacked on August 9, 1945. V-J Day was declared on August 14, 1945, in the United States and August 15, 1945, in the Pacific.]

SI: Your mother was about a year younger than your father.

MB: Yes, he was born in July of 1923 and she was born in September of 1924.

SI: What was she doing during World War II?

MB: She had a number of things she did. She worked in New York. I didn't realize this until recently (my brother told me this), she had worked as a model for a while. She worked as a secretary for a while in New York City. Then, after the war, she was introduced to my father.

Actually, they lived near each other, within a mile or two of each other. I guess I'll show you this photograph of them at the Café Zanzibar, which I did a little research on this. This is a photograph that was taken just before they got married in 1946. Apparently, there were two big, if you will, dance clubs in New York at that time, the Copacabana and the Café Zanzibar.

I work with somebody right now who's a slightly older gentleman who was raised in the Bronx. Then, I showed him this photograph. I find this somewhat surprising--he said he was very familiar with the Café Zanzibar from when he was a kid. He had actually heard of it and knew about it. So, I think it was a well-known place.

There were other clubs in New York at the time that people would know about, like the Stork Club or 21, but those tended to be places where you'd go to be seen, whereas Café Zanzibar and Copacabana were places where you'd go to see--you'd go to see the entertainment. They didn't have bands or whatever at 21 or the Stork Club. Those were just nightclubs, where people went to drink and eat--so, a different nightlife type of thing.

I found the photograph interesting, because of just when you look at them, how everybody's on top of the world then. 1946, the United States was really riding the wave.

SI: Your mother did not go to college.

MB: Yes, my mother went to White Plains High School and my father went to Theodore Roosevelt High School in Yonkers, New York. He told me another anecdote, which I thought was a little bit interesting, which was that, in grade school, they had taken a trip to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, a class trip, where they got to see the [USS] *North Carolina* [(BB-55)]. (The battleships were named after states.) He got to see the *North Carolina* as it was being assembled.

He said the next time he saw the *North Carolina*, he was bobbing in a landing craft off of Iwo Jima and the *North Carolina* was sort of near him. He said they were firing salvos, great salvos, right into Iwo Jima. He said the impact from the artillery fire was such that it was roiling the waters so much for the landing craft that they had to signal the *North Carolina* to stop firing. They're afraid they were going to swamp some of the landing craft. It was really having that much of an impact. So, it must've been really powerful.

It must have been incredible to see that, those battleships in action when they were firing. I guess, I think, they probably all had, depending on how many turrets they had, they could have anywhere from nine to twelve guns, with fourteen to sixteen-inch guns. That's pretty powerful.

SI: You said before your father did not discuss the war often, but it sounds like he told you a little bit about it.

MB: He would talk a little, anecdotes, but not so much anecdotes about combat. He just really would not talk about the combat. I know he told a couple of anecdotes about the landing situation, which I mentioned to you.

Another anecdote, he said when they're on the craft, for some reason, they're on the deck of this craft and the commanding officer wanted some fuses. He directed his lieutenant or second-in-command to go below decks to get the fuses. The guy refused. I asked my father why; he said he doesn't know why the guy refused to do it.

He said maybe he thought it was unsafe to bring fuses up. He said he doesn't know, but he did remember that the commanding officer reached for his sidearm. He thought he was going to shoot the guy on the spot. So, he ran below decks and pulled out some fuses and ran up with the fuses. So, that was one anecdote. The other anecdote was seeing the flags raised on Mount Suribachi and the roiling of the water.

He also found it odd (because he read a lot of books about Iwo Jima after the war) how very few people had mentioned the fact that Iwo Jima was subjected to tidal waters, which, apparently, they didn't fully comprehend when they landed there, which meant that a lot of the guys on the beach thought they were perfectly okay, but the waters rose and a number of the Marines were drowned during the [landing], because they couldn't advance.

There's nowhere to go, basically. If they advance, they get shot, where the only alternative was to go back into the sea, which they couldn't do. It was like one of those minor things that he always found puzzling, but he was on the second wave there with the 155-millimeter howitzers. They still use these guns. The 155-millimeter howitzer is still sort of a workhorse weapon.

SI: Do you think that the war affected your father later in life?

MB: Yes, I definitely feel that way, because I think that, having survived that, I guess he felt almost anything after that, you could survive. I mean, if you could survive being in a really heavy combat situation, most of the other things that happen in your life are not that weighty. So, I think it did affect his attitudes.

SI: He went to Rochester Institute.

MB: Yes, he went to Rochester Institute of Technology to get trained in the printing area. That would have been around 1950-'51, something around that era.

SI: Was that a night school experience?

MB: No, no. It's still in existence, RIT.

SI: Did he go to the school at night?

MB: Oh, no, he went as a full-time student, but I think it was a two-year program. My brother was born in Rochester.

SI: What was he doing around the time you were born?

MB: He was actually working for his father. My father was working as a salesman along with my grandfather. My grandfather, again, was trained as an engineer, but he worked selling engineering items to various companies. They sold a lot of things to a company that used to be-- I used to see, even up until relatively recently, the old factory with the name painted on the side-- Worthington Pump, which was in Newark, used to see that.



There was an area, an industrial area, of Newark, where there's not many of them left, but you can still see there's some old factories standing there. One of them was a company called Worthington Pump. My father said that they used to buy a lot of machinery, lathes, that type of thing. I guess my grandfather represented a variety of companies that were manufacturers of engineering tools. He did that for, I guess, basically, five years following discharge from the Marine Corps, through around 1950.

He did have a couple of anecdotes after the war, again, which I thought was interesting. He said he had an opportunity--I think, he said, a lot of Marines did after the war--in California. The State Police basically offered them, if they wanted to be a State Policeman, they'd just sign them right up--but I think his phrase was, "Even then, the state was crazy."

He took a pass, but I've often thought it would've been interesting if he had taken them up and become a State Police officer in California, Southern California, because, in that era, I mean the '40s and '50s, California was really booming. It wasn't so overpopulated, but was probably as close to paradise as you can imagine. At least that's what I've heard from people who knew that part of the country at that time.

He also had an anecdote, coming back by train to the East, he was sitting in one of these train cars across from some businessman who asked him about his service. He told him he'd been on Iwo Jima and the guy got up from his chair and gave him his coat. I always sort of thought, "Well, that was that era."

The people who went through the Depression and World War II, I think there's a little more of a communal--if you want to use that phrase--spirit or something, that they looked out for each other a little bit differently than we might today. I know people respect the military today, but I think, in a certain way, there was a little bit more of a "We're all in it together" type of mindset that went on then.

SI: Did he get involved in veterans' associations?

MB: That's a good question. He actually, for a while, was active with--the Fourth Marine Division would have certain reunion type activities--but that came to an end, I think.

He was never really involved with the American Legion or the Veterans of Foreign Wars, which, obviously, he could have been. He used to say they wanted him in because, I guess, sometimes, at that point, they would parade around in their uniforms. You know these Marine dress uniforms. I guess people liked the way that uniform looks--but he never had an interest in that.

I guess he was interested in the people he actually served with. As long as they were getting together, he would get together with them. They would have dinners. I remember him going to dinners and things when I was a kid, but I think that was basically it for that type of activity.

SI: Did your mother continue to work outside the home after they started their family?

MB: No, she didn't. She was basically a housewife. I mean, I think on occasion, she might take the occasional job, but she didn't really have a career, if that's what you mean. I think, in that era, as I recall, it seemed like not that many women did work out of the house. I mean, all the places I lived, growing up--and my parents did move to a number of different places--I think virtually every community I was in, my friends' mothers always seemed to be home.

SI: Your father went in the printing industry.

MB: In the printing industry. He had a number of different positions, ultimately was in the financial printing industry, which was pretty much centered in Lower Manhattan, companies like Sorg [Inc.], Charles P. Young. There was a number of these firms that specialized in printing offering statements, SEC statements, Security Exchange Commission statements or documents, that type of thing.

That's pretty much where he worked. It was probably the most lucrative of the different type of printing jobs that are available, because it was tied to the financial services industry. He never worked in the newspaper industry.

SI: You grew up in White Plains.

MB: Well, actually, I lived in White Plains for a while, but, in reality, I lived at Yonkers for a while. I lived in Rochester when my parents were there. I remember, we lived in Kingston, New York for a while, lived in Yorktown Heights, which is in the northern part of Westchester County, for a while.

Then, my parents moved down to outside of Flemington around 1957. I lived there for a number of years. Then, we moved outside of Califon, to an area, which I've always been amused by the name, and you can talk to people outside of Califon, they'll know what you're talking about, it's called Teetertown. It's almost like a little valley by itself on the other side of Califon. I used to tell people I lived "in the suburbs of Califon," [laughter] which I think itself only has about eight hundred or a thousand people.

The interesting thing about Teetertown was this--when I was in high school and I lived out there, Merv Griffin, the Hollywood personality, was putting on a TV show in New York at that time, *The Merv Griffin Show*. His country home was in Teetertown. He would come out there. We used to see him a lot.

He would come out with his sidekick, a guy by the name of Arthur Treacher, who was this stage actor, English stage and screen actor, used to play butlers. So, I think he was the perfect foil for Griffin, because Griffin had this kind of very breezy, light personality and Arthur Treacher was a guy who had much more of an almost sarcastic personality.

So, you'd have the contrast between the banter of Griffin, very light, fluffy stuff, then, you had, like every now and then, everybody would be brought back down to Earth because Arthur Treacher would shoot his shot across the bow and bring everybody back to reality. It sort of worked, was a good routine the two of them had.

So, that was in the 1960s. I went to high school out there at North Hunterdon.

SI: I am not quite sure how the Merv Griffin story relates to Teetertown.

MB: Oh, that's where he lived. He had a home in Manhattan, but he had a country home in Teetertown. He had horses he'd ride around. I mean, we used to see him riding his horse and I remember talking to him sometimes.

I was actually surprised to find that the TV personality--I don't know why I was surprised, maybe because I was relatively young at the time--but the TV personality was totally different from what he was really like. He'd had this kind of hail-fellow-well-met personality, but, in real life, he's a very serious guy.

Ultimately in life, he was a very successful businessman. If you just saw him from his TV appearances, you would have thought this guy was a lightweight, but you would have been really fooled. I think one person who was fooled was Donald Trump, because Griffin, at one point, had bought some of the Atlantic City properties. Trump later bought these from Griffin and Trump, being as modest as he is, went on TV and was telling how he'd taken Merv Griffin for a ride or something like that.

I started to think, "I'm not so certain about that," because I remember what Griffin was really like. It turns out that Trump's properties have gone through bankruptcy any number of times. These are the former Merv Griffin [properties]. I think Griffin realized, early on, this was a losing proposition. Then, he sold them, at some price that Trump thought was ridiculously low.

Well, yes, they were worthless, so, I mean, whatever he paid for it was probably [plenty]. Griffin probably was laughing all the way to the bank. I don't think he cared that Trump went on TV talking about how he'd taken advantage of Griffin. I think Griffin knew who'd really come out on top.

Again, this is from having some conversations with the guy when he was riding around in the neighborhood on his horse. I just realized this guy was not, as I said earlier, the lightweight that his TV personality projected.

[Editor's Note: Merv Griffin, Jr. (1925-2007) hosted *The Merv Griffin Show* from 1962 to 1986 and created popular game shows such as *Jeopardy!* and *Wheel of Fortune*. In the late 1980s, he owned the Resorts International Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City, which led him to several public dealings with businessman Donald Trump.]

SI: Do you have any memories of these areas in New York that you grew up in?

MB: Yes, I have some recollections of them, in part because we would still go up there, if you will, to my grandparents, even when we lived in New Jersey. I can remember the White Plains area and the Yonkers area, the Bronxville area. I'd lived in Bronxville for a while also, because, at one point, my parents lived in Bronxville. So, I would visit them there.

I can also remember, which I probably didn't mention to you, in the '50s, one of my father's sisters had married a man who lived in East Moriches, which is on, if you want to call it, the South Shore of Long Island. It's before the East End, where people vacation, begins, but we used to go out there in the '50s. We'd go out there every year for a week or something.

I can always remember what the East End used to be like before it became what it's like today. Basically, it was like duck farms and potato farms. Now, there's still some of that going on, but not like what it used to be. It's always funny to go out there and drive through some of these towns that were farm towns that have now become very chichi towns.

I talked to my cousins, who some of them still live out there. Whenever I talk to them about what's happened to that part of Long Island, invariably, they start rolling their eyes, like they just can't believe how it's been transformed--and transformed in a way that's not that recognizable. You used to be able to get out there relatively quickly. Now, because of the popularity of people going out there, it's like a complete trudge.

So, I mean, that's my little recollection of things, but, if you're ever at White Plains, it's the county seat of Westchester County. It used to be a much smaller town in a lot of ways, had a lot of single-family houses. It's become much more of a corporate center type of town now. It used to be a sleepy town.

The Yonkers area, Yonkers has always been heavily developed as an old industrial town, especially if you go down towards the Hudson River. In general, Yonkers is not in great shape, because it's like, in some ways, kind of a rustbelt city. Then, there were sort of the residential sections. There are certain residential sections of Yonkers, I guess, that are still okay. The Colonial Heights section where my grandparents lived is very nice.

A lot of the people who have Bronxville post office boxes are actually living in Yonkers. The Sarah Lawrence College, if you ever wrote to them or went to them, you'd find that they would say they're in Bronxville, New York, but, well, not really--they're in Yonkers, [laughter] because Bronxville is only like one square mile. Because it's so small, a lot of the area around it has these Bronxville post office boxes or addresses, which is the case with Sarah Lawrence.

I'm trying to think if there's anything else I can tell you about New York State.

SI: When you were growing up, were there families in these communities like your own, World War II veterans for a father, or maybe both parents?

MB: Well, I think, at that time, yes, virtually everybody had been a veteran of one sort or another. I don't know how many of them had been in combat, but, I mean, I'm certain virtually everybody [served].

I mean, I can remember this even way into grade school, because I can remember--for some reason, it sticks in my head--when we lived outside of Flemington, for one year, I went to grade school in Whitehouse. I was in fifth grade there.

For some reason, kids brought in, like, their father's war suit, or some kid had a gigantic Nazi flag. I guess, because you can see photographs of it, but, if you actually see one, it really registered, because it's red, I mean, a red flag, the white dot and the black swastika, I mean, a very striking-looking flag.

It just really registered. I'm certain if you've spoken to veterans who were on the European Front, they might have had a similar reaction. So, at least to a ten-year-old, it was kind of really a jolt to see this flag.

Also, in going to school in Whitehouse, one of the girls in my class--I tell people this story, I always thought, to me, this shows you the mindset of a ten-year-old--I still remember her name was Kay Davies. Her father owned something called the Polar Cub, which is still in existence. If you drive out on Route 22 and you're going through Whitehouse, you can go to Polar Cub for ice cream. I used to think Kay Davies was the luckiest girl in the world because her father owned an ice cream stand. [laughter]

Anyway, rural Hunterdon County, it was very rural at that time. Hunterdon County, it was a big dairy county. It may actually have had more cattle than people at one time. Now, I think there's like just a few dairy farms left. You still get a rural feeling when you get out there, but Hunterdon County, when my parents moved there, was one of the cheapest places you could live in New Jersey. It was a real rural area.

I was talking to someone the other day; I was trying to think if the county even had a traffic light. I was trying to think, "Was there a single traffic light in all of Hunterdon County?" I said, "Oh, yes, I can remember one in Flemington," but it was that rural.

SI: Was that a shock to you? You were about ten then.

MB: I was ten, yes, when they moved. It was much different, because, although they lived in the suburbs of Westchester County, they're suburbs of New York City, to go down to this rural area. If I wanted to visit friends or play with friends, I'd just walk out the door, and then, two houses over, they're my friends. You had to take a bus to grade school; I never took a bus to grade school until then.

In the summers, my friends were all like--I mean, today, they may not seem like much of a distance--but, when you're like ten, if someone lives three miles away, I mean, that's like they might as well live on the Moon or something. In fact, I remember, when I was in high school and I was dating--I used to tell people about this later, when I was here, about some of the dates I'd go on--I would tell them, "I'd go twenty miles to pick somebody up." They'd go "What?" [laughter] That was just one way--it's like it's nothing.

I remember dating somebody and we'd go down to Lambertville. There was an arthouse movie theater. You'd drive down to Lambertville, which is almost like driving to Trenton from the northern part of Hunterdon County, to see a movie. I didn't think twice about doing that.

SI: Was your father still working in Southern Manhattan?

MB: Yes, he was. He also had some positions out here as well. He did work for a while--I think I may have slightly misspoke before, because it just suddenly came back to me--he did work at one time for a newspaper company, which was in Washington, New Jersey, in Warren County. There was a paper there, which I think is long gone. I believe it was called *The Washington Star*. I'm not exactly certain.

[Editor's Note: *The Washington Star* (Washington, NJ) was published from 1937 to 1950.]

I remember that for a couple of years, but he also worked in Morristown for a while, at a printing company. He also worked for a while, when they first moved out here, for a guy who was a specialty printer in Princeton called Lenhart Printing (or maybe it was Hopewell). It was the Hopewell-Princeton area, because, I remember, that's when I first started going down [there], was when he worked in that area.

Again, people didn't think twice about what I would think today would be a horrific commute, because of the narrow roads today and the heavy traffic. I was talking to one of my friends from college and I found out that he (he was from the Trenton area) had a summer job in Hightstown. It turned out it was at an Acme grocery store.

It turned out the manager of that Acme was my neighbor back when I lived outside of Flemington, a guy by the name of Cliff Newman. I would exchange anecdotes with him and it was kind of funny. We only realized this recently.

I said to him, "I can't believe that somebody would try to drive from like five miles north of Flemington to Hightstown for a job." To me, I think it would've taken like hours or something, because of just the traffic patterns. Back then, I guess the traffic was so light, people would do something like that.

SI: Was that usually why you moved around, because your father had different jobs?

MB: Yes, that's correct. Also, my father liked rural areas. He did mention that, if World War II had not come along, there was a chance he might have gone to Rutgers for the Ag School, because he had his uncle, who was his mother's brother, who was living in Mahwah at the time or something. So, I think they thought it might help him get into Rutgers, because they had like a family connection in the state.

So, he was going to rely on his uncle's connection to the state via living in Mahwah to go to Rutgers, but World War II came along and that just never happened. He always liked rural areas and, for a while--this is after I was no longer living with him--he actually managed to move to Vermont for a few years, which he really liked. I mean, I can understand, there is a certain charm to Vermont, but the snow is incredible. [laughter] They lived north of Montpelier, which is the state capital, if you're familiar with Vermont.

They lived in a town, which I've always found it a little bit funny, in this sense that if I (or you) looked at the map and saw it, you might call it "East Calais," which is what I would call it, but the locals wouldn't know what you're talking about. They call it "East Callas"--so much for the French influence. [laughter] They'll take the French names, but they won't take the French pronunciation--but a lot of French influence or French-Canadian influence in Northern Vermont.

It is a fascinating area and I can see visiting there, living there is not exactly my idea [of fun], but my father liked the rural areas. Hunterdon County was truly rural then. I mean, we lived near dairy farms. I can remember, as a kid, running around in the fields [with] the cows and that sort of thing.

I remember the electrified fences that they'd have. Have you ever touched an electrified fence? I don't know if you have or not, but they won't throw you back on the ground or something. It's a slight buzz. It's just enough to sort of like [annoy you]. It won't even give you anything close to a shock, but, for a cow or something, I think they must be really sensitive to touching it. I remember all these electric fences, how we mastered the art of jumping over them or something.

SI: Tell me more about what kind of things you would do for fun when you first moved out to Flemington. How long were you in the Flemington area?

MB: They lived in Flemington from around 1957. I would say it would've been like the Summer of 1957 to the Summer of 1961, because I went to Whitehouse for fifth grade, and then, sixth to eighth grades, I went to Three Bridges for grade school. I still drive by the school. It's kind of funny to look at it--then, '61 to '65 at North Hunterdon, then, here for college.

I mean, the things I can remember most is, like, we'd play baseball, that type of thing, in the summer, or we'd go around, hiking around through the farmers' fields, and so forth. I remember, we would go on these long walks. One time, with one of my friends from grade school, we decided we'd bicycle into Round Valley.

There'd been some big droughts, I think, in the state in the '50s. So, the state bought up all the homes in Round Valley to convert into a reservoir. They wanted to have water for, I guess, the urban areas or something like that. I'm not exactly certain if they ever even built the aqueducts from Round Valley, but they did dam it up.

My friend and I thought it'd be fun to ride into it. So, we rode our bicycles into Round Valley. What I thought was interesting was, no one was living there, but they didn't knock any of the houses down. The houses were all standing. Then, they just dammed up the ends and it just filled up with water--but that's the type of thing we'd do.

You'd get together with some of your friends, you ride bicycles, you go here, there--you'd play. That's my sort of recollection of what it was like. Then, the big thing, and I find this funny today, but the big thing was, in August, it'd be the Flemington Fair, which, at that time, really was a big thing. I think it went for like a week. I think, now, it's been reduced to just a few days.

Now, they don't call it the Flemington Fair. Now, they call it like the Agricultural or the 4-H Fair. It's the Hunterdon County--they may call it Agricultural, they may just call it the 4-H Fair--because, at this point, there really isn't real farming done in Hunterdon County.

When I was in high school, the biggest afterschool activity was the Future Farmers of America. I still remember those guys with their blue corduroy jackets, with the yellow emblem on the back of the jacket, "FFA." It was not at all unusual for people in the high school to be given days off, and it was considered perfectly legitimate, not to come to school for harvesting. I mean, I knew kids who they didn't show up for a week and they weren't penalized. It was understood.

The Grange was still big. There were a lot of Granges. There may still be some Granges left, but they're not like what they were, and they were even political. They had political influence. My father ran for office when we moved up to the northern part of the county. He was opposed by the Grange.

I used to tell people this story; they'd go, "What?" [If] people think of the Grange, they think of William Jennings Bryan, like, the 1890s--they don't think of the 1960s. The Grange was still around and actually had political power. It's like another world, but that's what it's like. The most amazing thing about it is, it was all within fifty miles of New York City. If you tell people these stories, it's like [unbelievable].

SI: Did your high school have a vo-ag program?

MB: Yes, I still remember all of the kids. I will say this, at the time, a lot of times, you do not appreciate something until, years later, you look back and, all of a sudden, realize what a great thing it was.

Most of the people I know, especially growing up in the suburbs, you never run into these type of people. I mean, [as] I grew up, a lot of my friends were like farmers, I mean real farmers. At the same time, other friends of mine had dads who were executives in New York. They were driving to New York City every day. It was like a complete contrast. One of my grade school friend's dad was a senior chemist at Merck; same time, another kid's father raised lambs or sheep. So, in rural areas, it's like a real mix, or at least it was at that point in Hunterdon County.

Now, I think, basically, I mean, in fact, when I drive through Hunterdon County now, I can tell almost the eras for the housing--the Cape Cod to the ranch to the raised ranch, and then, the McMansion, the McMansion era. I mean, I drive around out there and I go like, "Where did these houses come from?" but there's no tiny houses going up in Hunterdon County anymore.

One of my friend's families was one of the big real estate families out there, by the name of Lance. To this day, they still own sizable parts of Oldwick. They had one of these old stone buildings in Oldwick they used as a real estate office. I remember, I used to go and visit him. People would always come out--it's a whole thing--they'd be totally charmed by going into a real estate office that was a stone farmhouse, that atmosphere.



It's since exploded, where people now are building mini farms, mini gentlemen's farms and whatever. Back then, people, they were farmers, they were car mechanics, things like that. In fact, my high school class has had reunions and one of the people (I've sat on the committee one time), one of the girls--women, I should say women--lives across from her father's farm. He still has a farm, though I think they're finally going to sell it.

She had to interrupt one of our meetings to take her pigs to get slaughtered. I think that was the last time I heard somebody [say that]. Actually, this was not unusual at one point, but, I mean, I was like, "Oh, okay." I knew exactly what she meant.

When I looked, there was little piglets, she put them in her truck. She had to go out into Pennsylvania, to some butcher where they're going to get the pigs slaughtered. That was a common thing like in the '50s, the cows and the animals. You lived off your animals.

Now, in Hunterdon County, when I say it's a 4-H fair, it's because kids show up with their pet rabbits. There are still dairy cows, but I was talking to somebody and it turns out that, what I find very interesting about the 4-H, a lot of it's girls. A lot of it's girls raising these animals.

It turns out they don't really own the cows--or some of them, a lot of them don't--that, basically, the few farms that are left, they allow these girls to go in and work with the animals, right. When I was there, they would've shown their cow that they owned. Anyway, it was a truly rural lifestyle.

SI: Did you ever work on these farms growing up?

MB: I never did that. When we moved to the northern part, Califon, my neighbor--actually, the neighbor built the house we lived in--he used to build spec housing throughout Hunterdon County. He took this one little road and built about ten houses. We ended up living there, but his kids were around the same age as my brother and me, so, we were very friendly.

I used to do stuff with them. I used to get involved with roofing. I was a roofer. [laughter] I used to go out there. So, there's a number of spec ranch houses in Hunterdon County [I helped build], though, at this point, I'm certain they've got new roofs.

I actually got pretty good at driving the nails in. I could get a nail in in like two shots. "Bang, bang," I'd get the nail in. The guys that're really good--this is before they used guns--the guys who were really good, just like one slam, with a nail like this, get it right in.

I used to tell people this story, sort of a little bit of a reflection, if you will, on the difference in salaries for teachers then and now (or the teaching industry). I remember, I was up on the roof, on one of these houses, knocking these nails in. I look over at the guy next to me, realize he's one of my teachers from high school. I mean, the teachers were so underpaid that they had to take part-time jobs. I don't think you'll see too many teachers as roofers, but I don't think it was all that unusual back then for them to have [second jobs].

So, that was one thing I did. Also, my neighbor had a business building pallets. I don't know if you know what a pallet is.

SI: Oh, yes, the wooden pallets.

MB: Yes, yes. I used to make those, used to make those all the time. So, I mean, he had a number of these part-time [jobs]. I think, if you go to these rural areas, you'll find that people have multi-jobs or multi-careers they're doing at the same time. So, he had a pallet business and he also was building houses. I did each, because why not? It's a way to earn some money.

My summers, I had summer jobs in college at a company called Presco or Preservaline, which was a spice factory. It's no longer in business, but the building is still there. They've turned it into offices. It's on Church Street in Flemington. I think they call it the Spice Building or the Spice Factory Building. So, I think it's kind of funny that the building has found a new use. They didn't have to tear it down.

I used to grind up pepper in there. White pepper was like tiny, little balls, like the size of blueberries, and it was very dangerous. It could explode, so that, when you'd grind it, you'd pump liquid nitrogen through the thing at the same time. It was incredible, this big vat, bubbling. You wouldn't want to stick your hand in it, not because it was hot, because it was so subfreezing cold, but this thing, "Poof," the stuff would be popping. You really had to be very careful with that.

To me, those are the type of jobs you might get in rural areas, maybe not exclusively, but they seemed like something like somebody in a farm area might have [done]--but I never really worked as a farmhand. I never went out and worked with animals or something like that.

It's interesting you mention that, because I haven't thought, "Well, I don't know why I didn't." Maybe because, to the extent I was able to get jobs, they were through the neighbor who had this construction/pallet business and, in the summer, the spice business, where I used to grind up coriander, all kinds of spices.

It was amazing, because they'd make these big drums and they'd sell it. They'd provide spices to companies like Boar's Head, where you'd get these trucks coming in the afternoon. Tractor-trailers would come in and pick up all our production for the day. So, it was various peppers, black pepper, white pepper, coriander, I remember--was it fennel?--just tiny spices, too. A lot of these things would take tiny doses. You might have ninety percent coriander in a barrel and the rest would be other items. [laughter]

So, I don't think that's all that interesting, but it was interesting because one of the guys that worked there (again, part-time job) was the movie projectionist at a lot of the theaters in Hunterdon County. This guy, I don't know if his job was unionized or not.

At this point, Hunterdon County does not have a single movie theater, today, but, back then, different towns, Flemington had a movie theater, Clinton had a movie theater, Lambertville had an art house movie theater, Frenchtown had a theater. The Frenchtown is "The Barn" and it was

called "The Barn." I think it's still around. I spoke to someone who I worked with who moved out there and I think she said theatrical groups use it.

What I'm building to is, he used to be the projectionist. He'd invite me to come in. So, I'd go to the movies. A lot of times, I'd go to the movies and I'd sit in the projection booth, watching movies. That was kind of an interesting experience, watching that.

Do you know, have you ever seen--what they do is, they go along and they have a bell. When the thing gets to a certain point, the bell starts ringing, because the film is [ready to be switched]. I guess what happens is, [as] the film goes to a certain position on the reel, it creates so much weight that it knocks the bell off. So, the projectionist knows he's got to start the next reel. So, that's how, because I never realized [it], at the point.

I don't know if they still have that system in place, but there was a movie, a number of years ago, an Italian movie, that was about somebody who loved the movies and was a projectionist. A part of the movie was all about the bell going off. If I hadn't sat in a projection booth, I wouldn't know, "What is that?" wouldn't know what it is. It's like a tiny bell, "Ring, ring."

SI: Are there any other aspects of life in a rural area that kind of jump out at you, that you look back and compare how it is different?

MB: Yes, I mean, it's funny, I've had conversations with friends of mine, because, surprisingly, a lot of people I went to high school with still live in the area. I mean, there may have been like 350, 300 to 350, kids in the class. Well, Helen, my wife, is from Ridgewood--I think virtually nobody from her class lives in Ridgewood, or very few people live in Ridgewood that she went to high school with--but I'm surprised how many people I know that still live in Hunterdon County. There may be fifty to sixty kids (or people).

We still get together. Maybe about once every two or three months, I get together with people at the former Sunset Inn in Clinton. What I'm building to is, we've all been talking about this, "Is it better now or was it better then, better now or better then?" because it's definitely different.

One of the guys actually has a car like what people had back then. I look at him, I go, "What? I can't believe you drive around in this thing." He has like a coupe from the 1930s that he had some big engine put in. It's like one of these things out of, like, if you saw an old Beach Boys album or something, with them at the beach with some coupe with this giant engine, with the flames painted on the side. He drives around in a car like that. [laughter] It's like a throwback to the 1960s.

So, occasionally, I'll drive out there and I'll go, "Oh, yes, it's the old Hunterdon County." So, yes, you become really aware. You can drive through it, it looks the same in a lot of ways, because, even though the population has probably doubled, it's still not densely populated. I doubt if there's more than 150,000 people in the whole county. There may have been fifty to sixty thousand when I was living out there.

So, it still has that rustic feel. You just don't see any animals. You don't see the fields being plowed. So, I suppose the contrast makes you realize it's different, but I guess it's really when I run into other people that I start realizing [it].

I remember going one time--this, to me, is like a classic example--one of the women I worked with in this Spice Factory in Flemington drove over from Bucks County to work there. I asked her to go to a Rutgers-Princeton football game one year. My guess is, this would've been the game in 1968.

So, I drove to pick her [up]. So, I was living outside of Califon. So, I drove from Califon, down to Lambertville, crossed over into New Hope, then, drove into God-knows-where in Bucks County to pick her up. Then, when I got to her father's place--I knew she lived sort of in a rural area, but she lived on a farm--her father had a [Republican Alabama Governor] George Wallace billboard on the side of the barn. I mean the whole barn, it was a big barn--this is when Wallace ran for President in '68.

I thought, "Wow, I didn't realize she came from this kind of a really conservative background;" drove from there over to Princeton, went to the game. Then, we drove back up to Morristown to have dinner. Then, I drove her back down to Bucks County to take her home. I can't even imagine how many miles that was. I would never do that today. Who would?

SI: Probably 150 miles. [laughter]

MB: Yes, exactly. I could've gone to Washington, DC, as well as go on this date. This is just one day's date with that girl. Yes, that type of thing, I realize, doesn't happen anymore. I don't think it does, anyway, or, if it does, the logistics would just overwhelm you.

So, I think that's what I think of--I think a lot of the stuff we did was that we roamed around the whole county, all of us. I mean, I was not unique in the fact that we were roaming around twenty miles to go to a date. I used to date this girl in Bloomsbury, from Califon driving over to Bloomsbury, but, then, once you get to Bloomsbury, you've got to go somewhere from there. It's just like [unbelievable].

SI: Did you make most of your friends in school or in your local area?

MB: Yes, it was all just school. Yes, it's just really school, in grade school and high school. In fact, what happened was, this I thought was kind of interesting, I guess it was a couple years ago, I got an email--no, I got the phone call first. I got a phone call from a girl who I recognized her name right away. I remember her from eighth grade. This is when I was going to Three Bridges.

She called me up and she asked if I was Michael Barr who'd gone to whatever, and I said yes. She said, "Well, we're having a reunion, a Hunterdon Central reunion. I know you didn't graduate from Hunterdon Central, but I know that you went to grade school with us. Someone from the class asked if you'd show up for one of our pre-reunion activities."

So, I said, "Okay, fine." So, I went to this thing and I met her. It turned out that one of my friends from grade school had remembered me and wanted to see me again. His name was Tom Dilts. Then, I realized, Tom Dilts--I'd been very close to him--he later became a judge in Somerville. He was one of the state Superior Court judges.

So, it seems like people, they sort of remember. After forty-five or whatever number of years, you're still finding you're circulating with some of the same people you did. Like the guy who had the 1930s coupe, I saw him maybe two years ago and I had not seen him since 1965. We started talking as if we'd just [left each other]. I used to say, "It was one week ago, only it was a lifetime ago," or something like that, "It was one week and a lifetime ago."

It was kind of shocking, but I think some of the friends I had, I think there was something about it that seemed a little special. I'm certain you hear that from everybody, but there was something, I think, unique about growing up in Hunterdon County at the time. I didn't have the slightest idea [then]. It's only later in life, when I talk to people, I tell them these stories, a lot of times, people just find it something very unusual. They just can't [believe it].

SI: You mentioned that there were organized things, like Grange and FFA, but were there any that you or your friends were involved with, maybe Scouting, maybe some sort of club?

MB: I was in Scouting for a while, but I didn't care for that that much. In high school, I was active in activities. Because I came across some of this stuff the other day, I remember being in the stamp club, of all things. Califon had its own post office. So, I used to go down there and buy commemorative stamps when they came out.

I was the editor of the high school newspaper for a couple of years, so, that took up a lot of time. I was in the high school band. Oh, the Key Club, I forgot about that. So, there's a lot of activities. I mean, I kept busy.

SI: What were the schools like, starting with your elementary schools?

MB: Yes, it was funny, what I was going to build on, the Tom Dilts anecdote--the girl's name was Ida Miller. This is like the "six degrees of separation" type of thing--turned out that a grade school teacher who I'd liked a lot was still alive. I didn't even know he was, because I thought he'd be pretty old.

They said, "Oh, Mr. Barnes is still alive. Why don't you give him a call?" They gave me his phone number. I've been taking my eighth grade history teacher out to lunch on a regular basis now, like every six months. That, I also think, is sort of a reflection of what it was like back then.

The other thing I was going to mention about this Ida Miller was, it turns out she's one of the--I don't know, I've never been in a fan club, so, I don't know how to describe these people--but, apparently, she's very prominent in a fan club related to The Doors, the pop group. This is where we come to the six degrees of separation.

I have a friend of mine who I know in New York who's French, whose family has a plot in the same cemetery as where Jim Morrison is buried. So, I talked to the two of them about this cemetery plot and they're each just a little fascinated about the other. I mean, one girl's raised in Paris, this other girl's from Three Bridges, New Jersey. They both sort of find this kind of fascinating that they have this commonality, the common link.

The girl in Paris--the girl? the woman who's from Paris--said the people, the families who are buried in these things--like, I forget, it's Paris something or other, the cemetery. It's a pretty famous cemetery there. It's almost like a circus when you go to this cemetery, because of all the Jim Morrison nonsense going on there.

My other friend thinks it's great. She loves going over to Paris to look at this burial thing. I'm sorry, that was a diversion, but it's like a "one world" type of story. I never thought I'd meet people who had these connections to this, what to me is obscure, but I guess is actually a world-famous cemetery.

SI: What about the quality of the schools?

MB: The quality of schools, it's very hard for me to tell. In retrospect, I thought I got a good education. In fact, talking about the French woman that I know, I had French in high school for three years and I can still read French, somewhat. Well, the woman who taught me French, though, was Romanian. So, her accent wasn't great. I was never really great at speaking French.

So, I've tried speaking French around this friend of mine, who, maybe because she's from Paris, just looks at me like it's chalk on the board. I've said things to her, that she's got to understand what I'm saying, and she goes, "What?" That's her phrase, it's always, "What?" I'm always laughing away, because her pronunciations of English words are like ridiculous.

I don't say to her, "You speak ridiculous English," but she seems to have no qualms about [the reverse]--but I think this is like a Parisian attitude. I've been told the Parisians are this way about anybody else in France, too. She's actually made snickering comments to me when she hears various people speaking French in New York. One time, she said to me, "Hmm, that's a Paris suburban accent, yeesh." [laughter]

The fact that I can still read French after like fifty years says to me that somebody was doing a good job of teaching. I think the grade school was good. I mean, the reason why I still take Mr. Barnes out to lunch is, I enjoy his company and I thought he was a great history teacher. So, for the things I had an interest in, I think the schools must've been good.

I don't know, I mean, these are schools that were in a rural part of the state. They weren't like these competitive suburban high schools, like Millburn High. I don't know, if you put North Hunterdon up against Millburn High, where [we would land].

SI: I was just asking for your impressions of the quality and your thoughts on it.

MB: I mean, I thought that. Yes, I didn't have any reason to think they weren't good. I mean, I learned something in each one. It wasn't like you're wasting your time. It didn't seem like people were deliberately killing time in the schools.

It seemed like everybody was keeping busy, the students. I mean, I think people dropped out. I think, again, because of [being] more of a rural community, I think, a lot of times, people just went and just got a job right away. I think the schools were perfectly good, because I think they had good school boards out there.

SI: What were your favorite subjects?

MB: In school, history, which is what I majored in in college, but, ironically, my major in college, I have to admit, I took the bare minimum number of courses for a major. I don't think, at that time, unless it was maybe like something in engineering or whatever, that they had double majors or majors and minors. I don't think that existed back in the '60s.

What I did was, when I was in college, what I found fascinating was taking the introductory courses. I took as many introductory courses as I could. I think the last year, I think your senior year, you could not take an introductory course. I guess it sort of made sense. You wouldn't take an introductory course when you're a senior, but, right until your junior year, you could take what were then known as, I guess, the 101s, the introductory courses.

So, I took art, music, whatever--it's just tons of introductory courses--political science, economics. I think I enjoyed them more than the major, but, just as a general topic, history has always been my favorite. I mean, see, I collect all this stuff. In fact, right now, I collect old documents. I have a lot of [them]. Some of them are semi-valuable, but I do have a charter from one of the Magna Carta barons. It's like a 1220.

If you look at it, you'll understand why they call the Magna Carta "Magna Carta." Until I had this document, I thought it was because of what was in the document, but it turns out that isn't why it was called that, because I've read up on it. "Magna Carta" means large documents, "Big charter." Back then, a vellum, which is what they wrote things on, was very valuable and rare.

So, most of the documents are tiny, like this. So, Magna Carta would've been [huge]. Everybody goes, "Oh, the Magna Carta; oh, the big document." So, that's how they distinguished it, because the charter (the document) I have is like this. It's smaller than a check, but, actually, it's a land grant, that the writing is real tiny.

What's interesting is, the guy who issued this was made a baron by Richard the Lionheart. As a kid, to me, Richard the Lionheart was like one of these mythical figures. So, to have something from somebody associated with Richard the Lionheart was like, "Wow."

[Editor's Note: Richard I (1157-1199), known as Richard the Lionheart, reigned as King of England from 1189 to 1199.]

This guy actually helped--if you know this, coming back from the Crusades, Richard was kidnapped and held for ransom. This guy was the guy who helped pay off the ransom for Richard. I think this guy's like an interesting figure from history and I've got a little thing he issued.

I also have some coins from the era of Alexander the Great. Another one of these things, as a kid, I would've thought would've been impossible to ever own, but you can buy this stuff. There's a lot of stuff floating around. If you know where to go, you can buy things out of history that really make it come alive.

Some of this stuff that is from the ancient era, still, today, I mean, if you look at these coins that we have today, if you look at a quarter, for example (let's see if I have one here), on one side, you have George Washington, the other side, you have the eagle. If you look at a coin, one of Alexander's generals was Ptolemy, who basically took over Egypt, his coins, all the Ptolemaic coins, have Ptolemy on one side--so, "George Washington"--and the other side has an eagle.

It's the same coin, only it's a big, thick, silver thing. So, it's sort of like our coinage is based on what was issued by the Egyptian Pharaohs two thousand years ago. So, that, to me, is what's fascinating, how certain things...

SI: Continuity.

MB: Yes, continuities in history, "Where did that come from?" Then, you find out it's been around for centuries, for one reason or another.

SI: As you were growing up, did you keep up on current events? Did you follow what was happening in the news?

MB: Yes. It's funny you mention that, because I remember getting the *Sunday Times* and always reading "The Week in Review," which they've since changed. I think they just call it "The Review" now, or something like that, because I guess they felt that the way the news cycle is developed that "The Week in Review" was too stale.

So, it's now just a series of essays. It deals with sort of current topics, but it's not like what "The Week in Review" used to be. I can remember it always being there. I think, for a while, they had special student subscriptions to *The New York Times*. I think I may have had one of those. So, I was very fascinated by that.

I had a very active interest in current events, in part because it seemed like--even now, when I look back on it--a really interesting era. A lot of things were going on, because you had the shift from the Eisenhower era to Kennedy. The difference was so [stark], the contrast.

Kennedy was a very inspiring figure. I remember one of my high school English teachers--actually, at the time, you think these guys are ancient; he may have been like twenty-five or so [laughter]--he went down to the inauguration of Kennedy, which was a really nasty winter, but it



was amazing how many people [went], the impact he had on people who were young. It was really [remarkable].

So, what I'm building to is, I was constantly [interested]. I watched Kennedy's news conferences all the time. To this day, I remember, he's the last President who I consistently watched. He was very witty, very witty. Even now and then, they'll show the news conferences, you'll see little clips, but the guy was very charming and very witty.

Eisenhower, before that, was always sort of stumble-bummed--not because Eisenhower wasn't a very capable man. He was. It was just that he was very careful to be articulate in a setting that he thought was crucial for him to be articulate. He didn't think these news conferences was one of them. I think Eisenhower tried to keep people a little bit in the dark and the way he did it was by sort of seemingly inarticulate conferences. So, he wasn't as interesting to watch.

I mean, Kennedy was a young guy, very dynamic, and he had that wit. Then, he was followed by Johnson, who, for all his positive traits, was not the most inspiring guy to listen to. We, at this school, had somebody, I think he was a class behind me, a guy by the name of Michael Freeman, whose dad was the Secretary of Agriculture under Jack Kennedy and he was kept on by Lyndon Johnson.

[Editor's Note: Orville L. Freeman served as Governor of Minnesota from 1955 to 1961 and as US Secretary of Agriculture from 1961 to 1969.]

So, I remember talking to him. He was a Chi Psi. I remember talking to him about Johnson. He said, "Johnson, one-on-one, is the most convincing person you'll ever meet in your life. He's fabulous, but, on TV," he said, "he didn't know what it was." Johnson just came across terribly. He just couldn't communicate or his accent got in the way.

He said, "But, if you sat in a room with him, you'd do anything." He was really that type of guy, but that wasn't the Johnson I saw. He saw it because his dad knew Johnson, because he worked for him. Then, after that, you had Nixon--not inspiring. So, I think I just sort of came of age in an era when you had a guy who just happened to be very inspiring as President and that helped with the interest in current affairs.

After that, if you think about it, Nixon, he had the Vietnam Conflict, the whole country was in turmoil--wasn't inspiring. He gave a straight speech, but it wasn't inspiring to listen to, and then, Ford, a decent guy, but, again, and then, Carter--as I tick them off in my mind, I think, "Ugh." Reagan, a master politician--you could listen to him, but, at that point, I just didn't have the interest. [laughter]

SI: When we look back at the late 1950s and early 1960s, we think of it as an era where the Cold War was at its peak and there was a lot of fear of the Soviet threat. Do you remember that actually affecting you?

MB: Yes, it's funny you mention that, because whenever people start talking about this or that or the other thing, I think the scariest moment I've ever lived through would've been 1962, the

Cuban Missile Crisis. Really, during that era, whatever, I think that was like in the Fall of '62, that seemed like there could've been a war, I mean a real serious war and a nuclear war. That, to me, for in my lifespan of something I can remember, that was really the only time I really was like, "Ugh, this is really something."

[Editor's Note: In October 1962, the United States demanded that the Soviet Union remove its nuclear missiles from Cuba. The United States placed a naval blockade around the island nation, creating a tense standoff between the superpowers that many feared would lead to nuclear war. The crisis was averted when the Soviet Union agreed to remove their nuclear missiles from Cuba in exchange for the United States removing its nuclear missiles from Turkey.]

The '50s, I remember as this *Sputnik* era, and I had an interest in space. I can sort of remember asking my father about this, because the Russians actually sent a dog into space, one of the first things they did. As a kid, this is what a kid would think--I'm always thinking with a child's mindset--I asked my father, "Well, is the dog coming back?" I was thinking like, "Will the dog survive?" I think the dog just went up and that was it, but I was worried about, "Well, are they bringing the dog back? Will he come back?"

[Editor's Note: The world's first artificial satellite, *Sputnik I*, was launched by the Soviet Union on October 4, 1957.]

The initial space thing with the Russians, I think that had a big impression, too, in that the Russians seemed to be on top of the whole thing with space. I remember having this big interest because Disney put out a whole series on exploration in space. They had a German scientist on their payroll, a guy by the name of Willy Ley, L-E-Y. He did some stuff where Disney came up with the idea of space stations. They did shows on this.

Ley actually came out to the school, the grade school, in Whitehouse to talk. I remember pestering my dad to take me to this. I had a book--I still have this book--autographed by Willy Ley. I went up to him afterwards. So, I do know the space thing, in general, as a concept, excited a lot of people. I was one of those little kids, like age ten or eleven, who was interested in space and that sort of thing, but I don't think I thought of the Soviets as necessarily a big something to fear until the '62 crisis.

[Editor's Note: Willy Ley (1906-1969), a German scientist and rocketry expert, fled Nazi Germany in January 1935 for the United Kingdom and ultimately settled in the United States where he became a noted writer of futurist nonfiction and science fiction. He helped popularize space flight with appearances on *Howdy Doody*, *Disneyland* and other popular TV shows.]

The irony is, today, I work in a firm that, to some extent, we specialize in securities out of Russia and, also, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. I've been to Ukraine, I've been to Kiev. So, it's kind of funny, because these are places, during the Soviet era, nobody went to. You couldn't go to--they just didn't let you into. Now, people come back and forth.

I have someone else I have a slight business relationship with, a Russian woman, and I speak to her fairly regularly. In fact, I just spoke to her a couple of days ago. It's just like a matter of

course, and I'm thinking, like fifty years ago, to even know a Russian would've been really, really exotic, but to be doing business with them was like almost unheard of.

The firm I work at, a number of years ago, we had somebody in it whose grandfather was on the Politburo [the Communist Party's policymaking committee]. His grandfather was like with [Nikita] Khrushchev on the Politburo, not that significant, but he's one of the guys running the Soviet Union. His point of pride was--I usually don't mention this to anybody I know who's Hungarian. In fact, I don't mention it to anybody that was Hungarian, because they would go berserk.

His point of pride was, his grandfather had crushed the Hungarian Revolution. He said, "A lot of people think [the USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav] Molotov did it," I can remember him saying this, "Molotov didn't do it--my grandfather did it." He was really proud of the fact that his grandfather sent the tanks into Hungary in 1956. There's a certain Russian nationalism that still exists.

[Editor's Note: Hungarian freedom fighters revolted against Communist rule in Hungary in 1956. The Soviets crushed the revolution and Hungary remained part of the Eastern Bloc of Communist countries under Soviet domination until 1989.]

I'm thinking, when I was growing up, in grade school, [I was] taken aback by the Russian space effort, then, the '62 missile crisis, and then, the fact that nobody knew any Russians, because, occasionally, there'd be like a big trip. They'd send Benny Goodman or Louis Armstrong over to [Russia]--those are the people who got to go to Russia. Nobody else did.

Now, I'm working with a kid whose grandfather was calling like the shots, or this Russian woman who I am doing some business with, who you don't think twice about it. In 1960, if you'd told me, "You'll be doing business with a Russian," "What?" but, in that era, I think especially '62, very scary, very scary. I remember speaking to my friends and, even afterwards, a lot of people thought, "This is it." This was going to be it.

I mean, when you look back on it, Kennedy was holding back the military. I mean, these guys like [the Chief of Staff of the Air Force General] Curtis LeMay wanted to go down there and start bombing Cuba or something. He had to rein these guys in. If they started bombing Cuba, it would've been [war]. The Russians, they would've been killing a lot of Russians. The Russians would've been firing missiles at the United States. To me, that was the scariest thing that happened.

I didn't think--and I was in Manhattan when this occurred--I didn't think 9/11 [the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks] was that scary. I thought it was like, basically, some people had taken advantage of some weaknesses in our system and used it against us. That's all I saw.

It wasn't like somebody'd actually come up with a system that could attack you. It wasn't like the Japanese putting a fleet together and bombing Pearl Harbor or the Germans having submarines patrolling the Atlantic Coast. It was just some guys who took some lessons in flying airplanes and got lucky. They were able to grab a hold of some airplanes. It wasn't that scary to me.

The Russians having nuclear-tipped missiles in Cuba, that's scary, that they might actually have fired. They would've demolished cities and whatever. That, to me, was like [the worst]. So, yes, I can remember that. The other reason I mentioned these Russian anecdotes was thinking about how, at one point, being sort of petrified of the Russians, and then, finding later, I'm doing business with them. It's sort of like whatever. It's sort of like the total difference on cycles.

I mean, even today, like I look at this picture you have on the wall here with these planes, some of which are from World War II, I'm thinking, "Well, the Japanese, we basically carpet-bombed their country, and Germany, and these countries are some of our best allies. From a point like sixty years ago, people would've never believed that."

In fact, I told my parents, one day--I used to work in Lower Manhattan--I was taking the ferry. There was a ferry service from Jersey City to Lower Manhattan. I guess this was like fifteen years ago or something. I'm on the ferry and, all of a sudden, I look out and I see a submarine surface in the Hudson. It was a German submarine. I thought, "In 1942, if somebody saw a German submarine in the Hudson, they would've really [been scared]," nothing. They're there for Fleet Week. It's just part of the [festivities].

SI: You said your father ran for office at one point.

MB: He ran for township committeeman in Lebanon Township, which is the township that Califon is in. It's sort of like between High Bridge and Califon. That area is Lebanon Township. It borders on the Musconetcong River, also, up there in the Warren County/Hunterdon County area.

SI: Was your father very involved in the local political scene?

MB: He had an interest in Democratic Party politics. So, I think, at one point, he ran for it. He got to know some people in the county. It's funny, because this resurfaced recently, I found out he arranged for me to go to something that was a fundraiser for Lyndon Johnson.

When Johnson ran for President in '64, he played at some of his Texas roots. He used to wear those like ten-gallon hats and stuff. He may have actually had cattle and stuff like that, but I don't think Johnson was really like a rancher, but the Texas imagery. So, throughout the country, they had what were known as "LBJ barbecues" and they were fundraisers.

What I'm building to is, he [his father] knew one of the Democratic county committeemen. Charlie Engelhard of Engelhard Minerals had an estate out in Far Hills and he threw one of these LBJ barbecues. My dad got me a ticket for that, and I remember that. I still have it.

It has autographs and I was looking at it. I was figuring, "Who signed this thing?" and it took me the longest time to figure out. One of the guys, I think, just died recently; it was [Big Band singer] Vic Damone signed. I have Vic Damone, [actor and director] Ben Gazzara and Betty Hughes. Betty Hughes would've been the wife of the Governor, Richard Hughes, had signed this

ticket. It had on it, it's like, "Mr. and Mrs. Charles Engelhard invite you to Cragwood," which was the name of their estate.

[Editor's Note: Governor Richard J. Hughes served as Governor of New Jersey from 1962 to 1970.]

I mean, he stayed active in the Democratic Party politics for a while. This fellow I mentioned earlier, Tom Dilts, who was the judge in Somerville who I went to grade school with, he was in Democratic Party politics. I mentioned to somebody I knew, a member of the Bateman Family, which is fairly prominent in Republican Party politics in Somerset County, I said that Tom Dilts was a friend of mine. He said, "Oh, yes, Dilts, yes."

He said, "He was lucky he got that judgeship, because he's a big Democrat." In a Republican county, for a Democrat to get a judgeship was pretty good. So, it attested to his skills, but, anyway, I had an interest in politics. My dad did. I actually still have stuff--I handed material out for Kennedy in '60 (as a kid, of course)--I still have buttons and mimeographed sheets with Kennedy's platform, his proposals and brochures that they handed out.

It's interesting to still have. I mentioned it when I saw Tom Dilts a couple of years ago at this reunion. This one woman said, "Well, how will I recognize you?" I said, "Well, I'll wear my Kennedy button," because they all knew, in grade school, I was a Kennedy fan. She said, "Okay, I'll look for the Kennedy button."

I got there, I saw Tom Dilts, I had the Kennedy button on. He said, "Yes, the Kennedy button." I said, "Yes, I still have it," and he said, "Yes, I thought I'd retire on that." He said, "I looked these up on eBay. They're worth about five bucks. [laughter] Yes, I can retire on that." [laughter] I thought, "The Kennedy name, it would be worth like thousands of dollars or something," not really.

SI: Was that a pretty heavily Republican area?

MB: Hunterdon County was very Republican. It still is. In that era, it would've been Republican because of farmers. It was farmer-type Republicans. Whereas today, it'd be like businessmen-type Republicans. The Republican Party and farmers have got some kind of affinity. I'm not exactly certain what it is, but even Upstate New York, the same thing.

New York City, Democratic, the state goes Democrat, really, because of New York (and some of the big cities), but, once you get out of the cities, the rural parts of the state are virtually all Republican-leaning. That's why I guess the State Senate in New York is Republican-controlled or has been Republican-controlled for a long time. There's a big Republican presence still there.

Yes, in fact, this brings back another thought I had, because, when I graduated from high school, I dated a girl who I met through some theater group in Clinton (of all things), whose father owned some banks in Hunterdon County. I think, talking about the Republicans of that era and today, and then, bankers of today and back then, I mean, in that era, there actually were family-owned banks. Now, they're just big chains.

The only thing that I noticed about them--they didn't have a particularly well-to-do lifestyle that you associated with bankers; I mean, they lived well--he sent his daughter to a private school in Pennsylvania. It's not like [they were ostentatious], and he drove a Pontiac Catalina, so, it wasn't like he was driving around in some exotic car.

He owned like three of the banks, Bank of Lebanon, Clinton and Califon. Obviously, they've been bought out by someone, but I just thought that's also what the era was like. I mean, you had small [bankers]. The girl I dated used to refer to her father as "Farmer John," because he's a real rustic type and he owns banks. I think that's what it was like. It was basically farmers.

For all I know (and I think she's only half kidding), I think, in reality, he probably came out of a farming family, where, basically, somebody had to set up a bank. Maybe it was his grandfather or somebody, said they needed a bank and they incorporated it. Well-to-do farmers and local merchants would set up banks.

That's why, a lot of times, these banks were known as "farmers and merchants" banks. If you go into the West or Midwest, it's "farmers and merchants this," "farmers and merchants that." It's not a chain--it's just sort of a common phrase used for banks--but it really was a different era.

I think it's still a Republican county, I mean, when push comes to shove, because, mostly, a lot of the people who live out there, when I drive by and I see these executives, I just realize that they're either working like at Merck or they're working in a lot of the industry and stuff that's moved out here.

SI: I was just curious if it was difficult for your father or your family being Democrats.

MB: No. Well, it wasn't that much. I mean, it would be kidded about, but most of the people, most of my friends, I think, probably were Republicans when I think about it. It wasn't that partisan an era. It wasn't like the way it is today, I mean, where it seems like people want to almost kill somebody who doesn't agree with them. You almost get this feeling, that the language is very extreme, but, back then, I think it was just sort of one party this, one party that. Both parties had more of a range of political views.

They were like parliamentary parties today--it's like the Conservative Party or the Labor Party in England. Somebody who's fairly conservative is not going to end up in the Labor Party, whereas, back then, you could have guys in the Republican Party like [Vice President and New York Governor] Nelson Rockefeller or [US Senator from New York] Jake Javits, very liberal guys who were Republicans. They'd never be Republicans today.

You could have conservative guys in the Democratic Party. You had all those Southern Senators, [US Senator from Georgia] Richard Russell and people like that--they were Democrats. They would never be Democrats today.

SI: Your family was Catholic--is that correct?

MB: No, [laughter] actually, this is my little joke. I was raised as an Episcopalian. My father was raised in that faith. The church I went to was called St. John's, which is a very old church. It's like a colonial church.

It's weird to see this little old church in Yonkers, like this industrial town, but I think that's one of the reasons why they called that section of the town he lived in Colonial Heights, because I think it was [colonial], although the houses there were mostly late Victorian, early Edwardian, late nineteenth, early twentieth century houses. There must've been some colonial stuff there at one time, because the church was that.

My little joke was, my mother's raised as a Catholic, her mother had some Irish ancestry. My father's name, although it is a Scottish name, they were like Scots Irish in the sense that, when they actually immigrated to this country, they came from Northern Ireland.

So, my joke to people would be that, "My father was an Irish Protestant, my mother was an Irish Catholic." I told this to a woman at a conference one time who was from Ireland. She's making presentations. I went over. So, I figured, "Let's see what someone who's Irish thinks of this," and I said, "Hey, my father's an Irish Protestant, my mother's an Irish Catholic." She said, "Oh, a mixed marriage."

So, I just had a thought, and the way she said it was kind of that Irish type of thing. So, I always thought that it's a good little joke, with certain people. They find it funny. Others, I don't know, [laughter] because still, to this day, in Northern Ireland, it's just really [tense].

SI: Was religion important to your family growing up?

MB: No, I don't think it was that, but, for some reason, I think for my father--I know I never really spoke to him about it--but, somehow or another, I had the sense maybe the World War II experience, that may be another way in which he was impacted. I mean, I've seen photographs of some of these [battles].

You can see these pictures of World War II Europe and you can see the devastation there, but these island invasions, what's interesting, when you see the photographs, you expect to see buildings demolished, but, when you see trees smashed, you look at the whole horizon and every tree is half, just a stump. You just realize the amount of firepower, because it wasn't like they're dropping bombs. They were just firing shells, artillery shells, whatever.

In other words, they had so much heavy fighting, they were leveling forests from the gunfire. I think going through that, my sense is, maybe let's just say he was a little bit on the skeptical side. [laughter] That's my read on it.

SI: Let's talk a little bit about high school, and then, go on to Rutgers. Was North Hunterdon Regional one of these new schools that they were building as the population was expanding?

MB: Yes, North Hunterdon, of course, at the time I got there, I probably didn't quite view it this way, but I think the school was relatively new. When you're fourteen or whatever, it may seem

ancient, even if it's like seven or eight years old, but the school originally, the core of it, was built like in 1954. Then, they had an addition, I think before I got there, and they've had other additions since.

Their point of pride, I still remember the little green booklet they gave us (the school colors were green and gold, which was kind of an odd color combination to me) talked about it having "the largest sending district east of the Mississippi," and I think that's true. I think, area-wise, it was the largest, because it was half of Hunterdon County, basically, or the northern half of Hunterdon County was using that school, and so, yes, it was big.

That's why when I tell people I'd go twenty miles for a date or something--the girls I knew were all in the high school I went to. So, I mean, sometimes, you'd have to drive twenty miles to see somebody who, during the school day, you'd see them like six or seven hours a day during school. If you want to see them after that, you'd have to drive twenty miles to see them.

Yes, it was, and the irony is, if you drive out there--I don't know if you've ever driven out on Route 31, if you go Flemington to Clinton--the school is sitting there and it's still sitting in the middle of a field, basically. I mean, I can't believe it, like fifty years later, I drive by the school.

In fact, there's less buildings now. There used to be an old Victorian house across then, but I think some company bought the land. They built a facility inland (or inland from Route 31), so, they knocked down the old house.

Basically, if you're sitting in North Hunterdon, looking out, you're looking at a farm field. It's hard to believe, in a state that's as urbanized as New Jersey, that you could be in a school that's sitting in the middle of a farm field--again, as I mentioned earlier, very mixed school.

We had shop, they had woodshop, metal shop. They had kids going through on the agricultural side. My understanding is, by the way, a lot of this stuff is gone, because I've spoken to people, one of the kids I went to high school with, who later went back as a high school teacher there. Some of the stuff that we used to have there, it's been gone for years.

Then, you have the kids, especially the ones who lived out in Tewksbury, the Oldwick area, whose dads were executives in New York. They'd be shuttling back and forth to New York City, driving in, because you could go in on Route 22. [Route] 78 really wasn't completed at that point, but they would. There was train services, actually. There actually used to even be train service, at one time, from Flemington.

Anyway, it was kind of an interesting mix. You'd have kids who basically would take time off to harvest food, and then, there are other kids whose parents were going into New York on a regular basis to socialize. It was just like a complete salad bowl that had been mixed together of everybody.

SI: Would you say it was diverse in terms of population, ethnic and racial backgrounds?



MB: Well, possibly ethnically, not racially. I mean, there weren't that many black kids in the school. The fact that there were any probably might've been unique at that time for a suburban school (or whatever you want to call it), but, ethnically, I thought there was.

There was definitely sort of like "the old families." There'd be some family names there you'd see; you drive around and you realize that they're like roads or things that had family names, certain families like the Burds. I can remember the Burds, B-U-R-D, Burds, the Beams.

Even now, when I drive out there, Helen and I were out there the other day and we drove by the Van Doren Oil. I remember the Van Doren Family, and I think they seemed to be out there forever. It amazes me now that there's still businesses now, whether or not the families still run them. There's certainly a value in keeping a name going (even if you're not a member of the family), because of the name recognition, but I'm surprised as to how many names I recognize as still being out there.

One of my best friends from high school has since told me his mother had been one of the owners of the Flemington Fairgrounds, which meant that her family had to have been really ancient in terms of Hunterdon County. They weren't the primary [owners]. He said they weren't the primary, I think maybe one or two percent. Another family, by the name of Kuhl, K-U-H-L, a big farming family out there, were the primary owners of the Flemington Fairgrounds.

Yes, so, you'd have that mixture, old farming families, families that'd been there for a long time, the family names like Burd, Beam. There were a couple of other Dutch names that you'd find out there, and then, you'd find people who came in more recently, like my dad, who, for a while, commuted into New York. Then, other people, as I said, Tewksbury Township, so, you'd have a lot of people whose dads were executives in New York, and then, just the regular run of everybody.

SI: You wouldn't say there was, say, a distinct Italian community or Irish community?

MB: There seemed to be a number of Polish people in certain areas, but there was definitely a mixture. As I remember the names, there was definitely, I remember, Polish names and Italian names, but maybe not like what you'd associate with in the urban areas, where there might be a "Little Italy" or something like that. It wasn't like that.

There were some Jewish families. Some of the Jewish families were entrepreneurial, in the sense that they ran egg farms or had chicken farms. Apparently--I didn't know this at the time--there were a lot of chicken farms out there, that, actually, chicken farms aren't that expensive to get going. There's low capital [required], compared to some other things.

So, they're all gone now, but, in part, if you've ever been around a chicken farm, you can see why. Once an area gets upscale, you're not going to tolerate a chicken farm. The stench is unbelievable, especially in the summer. You just can't believe; I can't describe it. You've got to go near one.

Then, it blankets the area. It is not like, "Oh, it's just on their farm." No, it's like everywhere around it. So, you've got thousands of chickens with their droppings in a confined area. So, you can imagine it's odoriferous.

SI: Were you involved in any sports at the high school?

MB: Yes, only for a little bit. For a while, I took up fencing, but I did so many different things. Also, [in] that era--in fact, even now, I'm still this way--I can never settle down on any one thing. I'm always moving on. I do something for six months, I get bored, then, I move on to the next thing. So, I did that for maybe six months, and then, moved on, but it was none otherwise.

I was in the band. The band used to go to the football games. We'd play at the football games, but I was never really [on a team for long].

SI: What did you play?

MB: I played the saxophone, every teenage boy's delight--that's the joke about Bill Clinton--the tenor saxophone. It seems like, sooner or later, half the boys going through high school play tenor sax, at some point or another.

That's an exaggeration, but, when I heard someone make that joke about Clinton, I knew exactly what they meant. There's just something about it, something about it. It's not that hard to play. There's something slightly sleazy about the tenor saxophone, or at least the way you can play it.

Also, in that era, which influenced Springsteen, by the way, a lot of the pop music always had the tenor sax break. In the middle of the song, there'd be a tenor sax solo. Well, Clarence Clemens, I mean, this is why Springsteen had a tenor sax or featured a tenor sax player, is because of the music of that era, which he liked, had the tenor sax.

I'd sort of forgot that, because, today, I don't think the tenor sax shows up in anything, but there was that era where, and I still remember--in fact, Springsteen was influenced by a guy, and I think he actually let him open for him a couple of times, he liked him--a guy by the name of Gary US Bonds, who was a singer, but was known for having [it].

His band was the Daddy G and the "Whatever" Street Five [the Church Street Five], sort of like the E Street Band, only this is like the "Something Street" Five. Daddy G was a tenor sax player, so, every Gary US Bonds song [featured] the tenor sax.

So, I think that's probably where I had my interest in it, where Bill Clinton, who's around my age, same thing, tenor sax, Bruce Springsteen, the tenor sax. He's younger, but he certainly knows--he knew that music.

SI: At this time in high school, were people encouraging you to think about college?

MB: Yes, always, really even from my grandparents on.

SI: Were they encouraging you about specific places to go or did you have any ideas about that?

MB: No, not really. I mean, the idea was just to [get there]. The only thing I remember (and I'm almost hesitant to tell you this anecdote, because, if I had gone to a different school, it might not have the same ring to it), but I remember my grandmother telling me, when I was relatively young (and I didn't understand what she was talking about), she said, "Definitely go to college, but the one college you don't want to go to is Princeton."

I said, "What?" I thought, "Okay," because it's such an unusual remark. She must've told me that when I was like eight or ten years old. It just stuck in my brain, because I couldn't figure out what it was about Princeton. Only later did I come to realize what she was talking about, because, when she went to school, let's say around 1910, Princeton was at its most socially exclusive, whatever. It was that era where you had to just be a certain type or forget it.

So, I think that's what she was alluding to, but I didn't know, "What?" I mean, you're eight or ten, I didn't know, "What's she talking about?" but, again, [it stuck] because it's such an unusual comment. So, I thought that was kind of ironic, later in life.

The way things were done, I definitely didn't go there, but I did have a Henry Rutgers [Thesis] when I was here. At that time, and I've since asked Doug Greenberg, who was in my class--I didn't know him, though we're both history majors, I find that kind of weird--I asked him about this and he said it was still true, that the Henry Rutgers students had borrowing privileges at the Firestone Library.

[Editor's Note: Distinguished Professor *Emeritus* of History Douglas Greenberg, a Rutgers College Class of 1969 alumnus, served as Executive Dean of Rutgers-New Brunswick's School of Arts and Sciences at the time.]

So, I actually went down there. I was down at Princeton using the Firestone Library. So, in a way, I did use Princeton. It's kind of funny, but what I also found out was, ultimately, they didn't have anything more. The Alexander [Library at Rutgers] collection was the same. So, I just figured, "I could keep coming down here, I could just waste my time (or, if I want to walk around the Princeton Campus, that's great), but I don't need to do that. I'll just use Alexander."

I guess, somehow along the line, they must've had some kind of interaction on the senior level, because, in some ways, I think Princeton was encouraging certain things to develop here, because I think they realized that it was in their interest to have a strong state university, just for education as a general concept in New Jersey. So, I think there were certain levels of cooperation between the two universities, but this is one of them.

I guess they don't call it the Henry Rutgers Program; I think they have a different name for it now.

SI: Yes, since SAS merged.

MB: Exactly.

SI: It is something else. It might be called the SAS Thesis Program.

MB: Yes, in fact, I think I have one of these little loose shirts they had at one of their things. When I spoke to him, which was a few years ago, he said, yes, that still was in existence, that you could still go down there and use the Firestone (or whatever library you needed to use at Princeton). I guess it's because it wasn't that big a number. I guess they weren't going to open their doors to the Rutgers student body. At Princeton, they wouldn't do it. Even in town, they don't do that.

In fact, years ago, I used to go down, if I was in the area, I used to go into the Firestone Library, because it was open to the public. I used to go and read magazines, if I was down in that area, just killing time. I'd go to the Firestone Library.

You can't even get into the Firestone Library now; unless you've got some kind of identification, forget it. I think what happened was, once the Princeton area really developed, too many people were coming in and just doing what I was doing, reading their magazines. So, now, you've got to have an ID to even get in the front door there, anyway.

SI: How did Rutgers get on your radar screen?

MB: Well, from living in the area, and so forth. One of the things, you're talking about the Scouts, I'd forgotten about this, I don't think I was a Boy Scout, but my brother was in the Cub Scouts. Somehow or another, my mother got involved with this--we're talking about the late '50s now, so, I can't remember the exact details. What I do remember is, they used to have special things, and they still do, I think, to some extent here, even in the era of big-time football.

The old stadium was like a horseshoe and the "U" part of it, if you will, was really not the best seats, as you can imagine--you were basically in the end zone. They used to have promotions or they used to encourage student groups [to come there]. They'd give tickets away or whatever.

I remember the Boy Scouts, I was like a Boy Scout at that time, but my mother was running some kind of Cub Scout den or something. They got all the Cub Scouts together to go to a football game at Rutgers. So, that was my first contact, was back around 1958 or '59, sitting in that stadium.

I mean, I still remember, I think it was Delaware. I think, if you can believe it, Delaware actually beat Rutgers. It was in an era in which schools that they wouldn't even play today were beating them. It's kind of like that, the Jack Bateman era.

[Editor's Note: John F. Bateman served as head football coach at Rutgers from 1960 to 1972.]

I knew the football players when I was here. I knew some of them and they definitely were athletic, but they weren't like semipro. The players they have today are like semipro or pro-equivalent type guys. Back then, it was just guys who were good high school players. So, other teams could beat them.

I mean, they could lose to a team like Columbia back then, or Lafayette or something, whereas, today, I think those schools would be afraid to play Rutgers. I think Rutgers would be afraid to play them, I mean, because the injuries, the potential for injuries, would be like [risky]. It'd be the end of the Lafayette football team for the rest of the season, [laughter] or it would be like if Rutgers went out and played the Giants or something. So, I don't know, they might do well against the Giants, who knows?

I alluded to the fair, the annual fair--they used to always have a tent set up or, [in] one of the tents, they always had materials. Plus, I liked being in the New York area.

SI: Did you look at any other schools or just Rutgers?

MB: I pretty much just looked at Rutgers.

SI: Tell me about coming down here, your first few days and weeks on campus. What was that like? It was the Fall of 1965.

MB: Yes, it would've been the fall, and I don't remember it as well as some people do, I think. So, I do, I remember having a number of friends, but the interesting thing is, maybe because it's a big campus, in some ways, you don't have as many friends as you think you might. You tend to be like [in] certain groups.

Some of the guys were talking about the yearbook, and that friend of mine who lived in Ford Hall and the whole Ford Hall thing. A lot of people sort of knew people, like their sections in the dormitories, that sort of thing. So, I guess it's a new experience, that type of thing.

SI: Had many of your classmates at North Hunterdon come here?

MB: A few of them did, a few of them, yes, a few did, but, interestingly, I wasn't that friendly with them. It wasn't that I didn't like them or wasn't friends with them, I just didn't run into them here. It's kind of odd, because I knew them pretty well in high school and I just didn't run into them here.

I think one went to the Ag School. He may have played on the football team here. He was like the center on the football team at North Hunterdon. I just don't remember if he was or he tried out for it and didn't make, because it's a big difference between being big-time in the local high school, and then, once you get to college.

One thing I do remember is, I ran into a girl. I was really embarrassed, and I thought I was being witty, but it turned out that I was being a half-wit, instead of a wit--ran into a girl, I think her name was Mary Thompson, but it doesn't really matter. She was like number one in our class in high school. I said, "Oh, yes, I remember you--you were number one in our class," and she sort of, "Ugh." She didn't want to be remembered as being like [number one]--or Linda Thompson, that was her name, Linda Thompson.

Then, there was another girl who went to Douglass. For some reason, the girls, I knew the girls, I ran into them, but the guys, I didn't--maybe it was because I was looking for dates. [laughter] I don't know. So, I followed up with them. The other girl I knew, the thing that happened in her family, it's very difficult to get it out of my mind.

Her brother was a guy by the name of--her name was Jane Holjes, H-O-L-J-E-S--and her brother's name was Fred. They were sort of a prominent family from Lebanon. Her brother was like the mascot at North Hunterdon, which was a lion. So, he dressed up in a lion costume, but he had an interest in the military.

In that era, when I was in high school, it was the centennial of the Civil War--so, he joined one of these reenactment groups, for [of] all things, like a Confederate group. So, he came in one day to class or school--he was a couple years older than us--he came into school with a rifle, the whole memorabilia. Then, he went to the Citadel. So, he really took this stuff seriously.

So, he went to Vietnam. He was wounded, came back, went back and was killed in Vietnam. So, whenever I think of her now, I can't get that out of my mind, about the fact that this kid, who I knew pretty well, [was killed] and just the impact on her family. So, whenever I see her, I always think, "This is somebody who's really had just an absolutely devastating thing happen."

The thing was, you could almost see the natural progression. He was like playing soldier, the reenactment stuff, went to the Citadel, a military school, then. So, I'll always remember her. So, even though I knew her from high school and I see her at the reunions, always very friendly with her, but I always feel like there's something I just can't say to her. I always feel like held back in some way.

He may be the only person I know who was killed in Vietnam, at least that I'm aware of. There may have been other people, but, basically, I don't know anybody from my class, for example. There were certainly people who went into the military, but he's the guy that just sticks in my mind, because the whole thing seemed really so awful on so many levels.

Anyway, that relates, I mean, when you asked me [about] people I knew from high school, and maybe because of that, I just think of Jane Holjes if you mention someone I knew from high school and here.

SI: I was curious, I may be off on the dates, but I think that fall was the gubernatorial race where Rutgers was featured because of Genovese's comments.

MB: Oh, the Genovese thing, yes.

[Editor's Note: On April 23, 1965, at a teach-in at Rutgers University's Scott Hall, professor of history Eugene D. Genovese declared, "...I do not fear or regret the impending Viet Cong victory in Vietnam. I welcome it." A firestorm of controversy ensued and became a focal point in the 1965 New Jersey gubernatorial race, but Rutgers University President Mason W. Gross, with the support of the faculty, resisted public pressure to dismiss Genovese, on the principle of academic freedom.]

SI: Were you aware of that at that time, coming in here?

MB: Yes, vaguely. Yes, it was all part of the "Rid Rutgers of Reds" thing. You had Charlie Sandman, who was one of the [State] Senators from the southern part of the state, who I think ran against [Governor Hughes], right? A lot of politicians were running against Rutgers and, unfortunately, some of this stuff blurs as to the exact year. I mean, I do remember that.

I also remember that the school had--and, again, I don't know which year this was--but they had Barry Goldwater come to speak. This was the start there when people felt (the students felt) that they could just interrupt anything, they could yell out or whatever. So, Goldwater's giving a speech in this gym. There's the backdrop. They had the big, gigantic Rutgers flag, which they always used to put up for when there's a speaker.

[Editor's Note: Senator Barry Goldwater, an Arizona Republican, had been the Republican nominee during the 1964 Presidential race.]

This guy sitting like next to me or behind me or something--he's within two or three people--I mean, he's yelling out at Goldwater, "Fascist!" He keeps yelling out, "Fascist, fascist!" So, Goldwater goes [on]--finally, you see, every now and then, he looks up. So, finally, he can't take it anymore.

So, Goldwater says to the guy--and, of course, I'm sitting next to this guy, so, all the eyes in the auditorium are [on us], he sat in the back, everybody's looking up at us--Goldwater yells out to the guy, "You call me that one more time and I'll meet you behind the gym after the speech." [laughter] That was it.

So, I'll always remember, I gave Goldwater credit, because Goldwater, I mean, he was in good shape, but I think he was serious. I mean, I think if the kid called him that one more time, he would've called him out, but I was just sort of impressed that Goldwater is willing to take on some eighteen-year-old in the parking lot. [laughter]

Well, anyway, I remember some of the events; they sort of like blend in. I do remember there's threats against the school, in terms of funding, that it was in the news a lot and, as I mentioned earlier, this problem with like Mason Gross. I guess those of us who were students at the time, and Gross was very popular with not only the faculty, but with the students, people really liked this guy, that the state didn't.

I think the problem with Gross was, he would go down and he wouldn't be diplomatic with them. I guess he felt the state had an obligation to educate people, and so forth, and he didn't pull his punches. Of course, he had sort of that Oxbridge accent. I don't know if you know what that means, kind of like when people start making fun of the Queen, that type [of thing]. He spoke like that, so, the famous "Long Island lockjaw."

So, right away, he's going to rub certain people the wrong way. He was a highly educated man, so, his use of the language was such, and then, the photographs, very distinguished-looking guy.

So, you could just see he could grate, just looking at him would grate, his appearance would grate on somebody.

A lot of the people who disliked him were from South Jersey. There's always been that South Jersey/North Jersey thing. So, Gross really--but I don't want to just pick on South Jersey--I think, throughout the state, there's certain politicians [who resented him]. He didn't suffer fools gladly, I think, whereas he was president of a state university, so, he had [to use diplomacy].

I think Bloustein, who followed him, was much more solicitous of the state, the political situation. I think Bloustein did a lot better because of the differences, but, also, Bloustein was from the Bronx. He had a little bit of a Bronx accent, although I think he'd gone to NYU, but he'd also done graduate work at Oxford, which he was very proud of.

[Editor's Note: Dr. Edward J. Bloustein served as Rutgers University President from 1971 until his death in 1989.]

So, he had the credentials, but he didn't seem like he was from [the elite]. Gross lived in Rumson, one of the fancy shore towns. So, in so many ways, Gross just rubbed people wrong. Then, you had the Genovese thing.

I never had Genovese. I don't really remember that much about him. What I have found out is, though, apparently, he's done a complete 180. So, now, he teaches in the South and he's written books, not quite apologetic for the South, but he has more of a Southern orientation. It's kind of funny how some guy can go from almost being like a Marxist to think that way.

SI: He was definitely a Marxist.

MB: Yes, so, I think you go from that. I think we were talking earlier about Lloyd Gardner; I think he definitely had like a leftist background. I think he was out of the University of Wisconsin, as was [Warren] Susman. So, some of the prominent historians here [leaned left]--but Genovese really seemed to be the lightning rod.

There was always the debate--no one's ever really answered this to my satisfaction, because Genovese left the school around that time--whether he was pushed out or whether he went on his own or whatever. It's always been kind of vague, because, at the time, they seemed to be very proud. They defended him, but, at the same time, he was gone. So, maybe you know, but I don't know what happened. So, yes, you're bringing it back to me, now that I start thinking about it.

SI: Do you mind if we take a quick break?

MB: Yes, that's okay.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

SI: During the break, we were talking a little bit and you remembered an anecdote about your parents meeting Jackie Gleason. I would like you to tell that again.



MB: Yes, sure, sure. Basically, in the mid '50s, my father was working for a gentleman who was a personal friend of Jackie Gleason. He had obtained tickets for the Gleason show, for my parents to go to it. They went there, but, in part because my father's employer was a personal friend of Gleason's, they got to go backstage following *The Honeymooners* episode that was being filmed and sit down and meet with both Gleason and Jane Meadows.

At that time, Jane Meadows gave my mother a dress similar to the one she'd worn that evening. Apparently, there was a dress manufacturer at the time called Pat Perkins that produced these dresses. We still have the dress and it still has the original tags on it, one of which says, "As worn by Jane Meadows on *The Honeymooners*." So, it was kind of an interesting anecdote from the '50s, in the sense that Gleason was such a massive star back then and a dynamo in terms of his entertainment and the impact he had on everybody as an entertainer.

SI: Getting back to Rutgers, when you first came on campus, where were you living?

MB: When I was at Rutgers, overall, my experience was the Demarest Hall. I commuted for a while. I lived on Plum Street for a while, which is in New Brunswick. I also lived in the Ford Hall dormitory over the course of my years here.

I mean, the dorm I liked the most was, of course, Ford, because, at that time, actually, I was a beneficiary of them renovating the dormitory the year after, which meant that they'd thinned out the population of the dorm. That's one way to phrase it.

So, the dorm was originally structured to have each room, if you want to call it that, was actually a suite. They would have a living room with two bedrooms and each of the living rooms had fireplaces. So, it was really quite an unusual dorm. So, I got to live in a dormitory.

Whenever I tell people the fact that I lived in a dorm with a fireplace and in my own bedroom, they're kind of shocked. They don't think it was at college, but I said, "No, it was really quite nice." The people who lived in Ford were really very loyal to it. It was hard to get into that dorm, I think for that reason.

SI: Demarest was in your freshman year.

MB: Yes.

SI: Okay. What was it like being there initially and being away from home for the first time?

MB: Well, it's an interesting question. I think part of the problem in answering it is, although I was living there, I would go home, like a lot of the students here, on the weekends. So, you weren't like totally, totally detached from going home, and I don't live that far from here. It was one of the reasons why I could commute.

Your point, I guess it's just the idea of being out on your own and what-have-you. I mean, I pretty much enjoyed it. I look back fondly at college. I think what may have happened is, I sort

of focused towards the end of college, because I enjoyed Ford Hall so much. So, the rest of it, I haven't been able to completely sort out in my mind as to how I feel about it, because, basically, if I think about it, I think about [the end].

I guess, the thing is, it's sort of coordinating how your everyday life is living with other people. That may have been the real [challenge]; that part, I would say, is what would've been different, or managing that. I think what I used to do a lot of was use the library, because, that way, you would have space to yourself, in effect, and some privacy, admittedly a big library, but, basically, it wasn't like you had roommates right on top of you.

SI: Was there any kind of freshman initiation or anything like that?

MB: Yes, some, and I think they've done away with a lot, but I'm not an expert. They had things you would wear, certain clothing items and that sort of thing.

I think what happened was, I mean, my sense is that a lot of that type of thing was still going on, but it's really pretty much gone down to like almost a form at that point. It wasn't quite as much as [earlier], and I'm basing this on some of the reunions I've gone to, where it almost seemed like some of the earlier classes, because I used to see this a number of years ago at reunion, where people almost had class songs, that type of thing, which just did not exist [in my era]. They seemed to have little chants or what-have-you.

So, I think, by that time, my impression is, a lot of people were here really to get an education and pull themselves up, get on the next level. So, I don't think there was a focus necessarily on, if you want to call it the sentimental aspects of college. I don't think that was quite as big a thing as when, let's say, the school had classes that just had a few hundred in them or something. That's my impression.

In fact, I'd mentioned to you a little earlier how I'd been here in 2011 for the reunion, ran into somebody I'd gone to business school with, who brought his dad down here for his dad's seventieth reunion, the Class of 1941. He told me his dad really wanted to come to this reunion. I met his dad and he was seeing some of his friends.

His dad was clearly having a great time, but in a different kind of way, which, to me, meant that, in that era, people really were going to school in, again, what I would call the more sentimental type of era for college, as opposed to a practical era. I think I went to school in more of a practical era, where people were looking to get that degree, and then, move on. So, it wasn't like they weren't having fun or a good time, but I don't know if they're getting as sentimental about school.

SI: At that time, when you came in, were fraternities important?

MB: Yes, I think the fraternities were important. I don't think they were perhaps as important as they had been earlier. Again, from a lot of my sense of this--maybe it's unfair of me to just start talking about what I've since picked up from going to reunions and meeting people from other

classes--but, per se, yes, they were important. A lot of the social life of the school did center around the fraternities.

Even today, one of my friends from college--in fact, he was an usher at my wedding--who I've run into since, who sort of lives near me, was telling me a story about [it]. This story is probably no more than ten years old, but his daughter (he lived in Bridgewater), and he didn't know this, apparently, on occasion, she'd be claiming to [be] going out with friends. In reality, she was coming down to the Rutgers Campus to go to fraternity parties, in high school.

The way he found out about this is, one time, I guess she got drunk and some of the kids, some fraternity brothers, called him up to tell him to come down and pick her up. My sense is that the social life of the school still today is, in a lot of ways, fraternity driven or a significant aspect of it is, but, certainly back then, it was very much fraternity driven.

So, like, you didn't have to be in a fraternity to enjoy this. A lot of people, if you were friendly with people, they'd invite you over to the fraternity when they were having parties. So, I think they were important then. I think they probably still have a certain importance now.

The school had other activities going on as well, because I can remember seeing on the campus--and I'm certain there were other groups besides these people--but I can remember seeing Woody Allen, for example, doing a standup routine in the old College Avenue Gym, as well as seeing Louis Armstrong perform in the College Avenue Gym. So, they had a real range.

I mean, if you think about it, the difference between Woody Allen in his early career and Louis Armstrong, who was near the end of his career, I mean, that's the full gamut of entertainment in the twentieth century in the United States.

Armstrong was a great entertainer. He obviously had been on the road a lot, and he played to the audience very well. I was very impressed with him and enjoyed his concert. Though not surprisingly, most of the people in the audience were fairly old, but I thought not that many students went to it. I think they were really missing out on one of the great and really seminal figures in American entertainment, but they were here, they came. So, the school provided a lot of entertainment, as well as the fraternities.

SI: You talked about the gym, but the Ledge was also used for entertainment.

MB: Yes, the Ledge. I think the Ledge was originally built to be a social entertainment place. I think they used to show movies there. I don't know why this was so with me--I hardly ever went to the Ledge. I mean, it's funny when you mention it, I didn't even think of the Ledge. When you say the Ledge, I know exactly the building you're talking about. I think if I was in that building a half dozen times, I'd be surprised. There was something about it, just never did anything for me.

I think the other thing that [mattered], keep in mind, at least for me, was the school was near New York. I was constantly going to New York. Even now, I'm constantly going into New York. To me, a lot of the entertainment was [there].

One of the great things about the school is, you had a school in this kind of, at that time, I don't want to say it was rustic, but it wasn't necessarily that urban a feel here, because the area had not [been] built up. It was basically just New Brunswick. There was not all these great developments outside of New Brunswick. So, you had the school and you had the big city to go to, so, that's where I spent a lot of my time, or at home on the weekends, because it wasn't that difficult to [go home].

There were still some friends from the high school era who, if there may be people I knew from high school who were younger than me, still in high school. So, there was a whole range of people I was seeing or things. The great advantage of the school is the sheer variety of things, diversity of things.

SI: When you would go into New York, what would you do?

MB: I used to go to the Metropolitan Museum a lot and the Frick Collection, and then, I also would go into places like in the Village. What I discovered, it's hard to believe, but the museums in New York were free at that time.

The Metropolitan Museum had something; they had a special membership. I think it was five dollars for students, which you didn't have to pay to get in, since you paid nothing, but what it did give you was previews. They would have previews of their shows.

I basically would buy these five-dollar subscriptions every year and I would get dates from Douglass and go into the city. It always seemed to work. The women students liked the idea of going to these art openings. So, I used it as a social locus of a lot of activities.

The other thing was, I can remember, what I'd do is, my usual date in the city would be the Metropolitan Museum. Then, we'd go down to the Plaza Hotel and go for a drink at the Oak Bar. The irony is, I'm still doing that today. I'm sitting with friends, not to the Oak Bar, but, basically, I still meet people in New York and do a variance of that. So, I've been doing the same thing for fifty years and I'm still enjoying it. [laughter]

SI: When you were on campus that first year, 1965-'66, we look back and we think of that era as this huge burst in political awareness, huge social changes, the counterculture coming on campus. What was it like in that first year for you?

MB: The first year wasn't that way. I mean, it really wasn't. I've tried to think back on that as to when. I suppose if you went to the yearbooks, they might refresh you or your recollection or something. Somehow or another, I really don't think that really started in real force until, like, it would've been my junior year. It would've been like '67-'68, I think is probably when this really occurred to any great extent.

I think really, basically, through '67, there may have been little pockets of things, but, really, it didn't really become like a campuswide type thing until '67 and '68. '68 was the year of the

convention in Chicago. It was the year of the student riots over the gym at Columbia University. So, I think that was really sort of the turning point year, was '67-'68.

I think '65-'66 was still the era of the early Beatles, if you will. Again, it really wasn't probably until like '67 where things really started changing.

I think people who graduated in that era, let's say '65, '66, maybe even '67, might even be closer in a lot of ways to people who graduated, let's say, in the late '50s than they were [the 1960s]. I think it was like this massive break in a lot of ways.

Music and a lot of other things just really, really changed. It's almost like it was a different country after a while. Sometimes, you watch the old television shows, you can see it, or the old film clips. You suddenly realize it isn't like a gradual evolution--it's just like a big, massive change on the campus.

SI: When you first came here, for example, what were the hairstyles like? Did people dress up as we might think today?

MB: Yes, it's funny you mention that, because I think, at football games, you might see people dressing up. I mean, people might've actually worn coats and ties at one point to football games, I think.

SI: When you were here, or are you talking about earlier?

MB: No, I think even in the early era. It was a much more button-down-shirt era, and then, things really started changing. I think once it changed, it changed fairly quickly. I mean, there's always like a cutting-edge group somewhere. A lot of times, the cutting-edge group seems sort of bizarre and out of step. Then, everybody is like them, but that's vaguely my recollection, that it really was more a late '60s thing.

A lot of times, when people talk about the '60s, I think they're not really talking about the '60s so much as they are the late '60s. I mean, when Kennedy was assassinated, the Beatles hadn't even arrived in the United States yet. The Beatles were sort of a break, in certain ways, but, even there, a lot of the original early Beatles stuff was pretty conventional stuff, really. It was only later that they became much more experimental. So, I really think around '67; though, I'm not a total expert

SI: At this time, were you interested in music?

MB: Yes, I was interested in music and, yes, I followed (I listened to) a lot of the different stuff that was out there. I think I knew some of this stuff pretty well. Even now, if I hear like the first chord of some songs, the first couple of notes, I know what it is. I suppose everybody does with certain songs, because the first chord is so famous or whatever, but, for a lot of songs, I could tell within the first two or three notes what's going to follow.

SI: When you first came, were groups like SDS already on campus, or was that all later?

MB: No, that was later. I mean, I do remember--and this is really much later--it may have been the Fall of '68, because I was president of the dorm (that is Ford Hall), and we had a tiny budget for sponsoring events. I actually sponsored one event (or had the Ford Hall sponsor one event) that was a film, which I can explain a little later, but I remember I wanted to set up a debate.

There was a guy in the Ford Hall who was very, very conservative, in fact, outrageously so. I guess the mischief-maker in me wanted to put him in a debate with somebody from SDS. There's a fellow in my class by the name of [Richard] Najarian, who I think was like the campus leader of the SDS movement on the campus.

I got this guy, I think his name was Bob McLeod, though I'm not exactly certain. My memory may be playing a slight trick on me, but I think his name was Bob McLeod. I think he was so out of it that even the ROTC wouldn't take him. In the sense, I think he used to walk around campus with field boots or something, or horse-riding boots or something. Anyway, he was just a little too right wing for anybody.

I'm not trying to knock ROTC here, but I think the military tries to avoid getting people who are extremists in the ranks. Even though they may be caricatured, I don't think that's really what they want. Anyway, I thought it'd be kind of funny to have him debate the SDS, in my mischief mode as a college senior, which you find funny, maybe, as an adult, you don't think is that funny, but McLeod was willing to debate the SDS.

I went to this guy, Najarian, and I said, "I'm President of Ford Hall. We've got the permission to put on a debate in one of the auditoriums in the school between you and Bob McLeod," who was a well-known figure on the campus because he was so extreme. The guy, the SDS guy, said, "There's nothing to debate," which I think was sort of like the classic Marxist approach. "We know history, we know the answer to history--there's nothing to debate."

At that point, I was like taken aback, because I saw the way, "Najarian, you should give some thought to this. I mean, this guy is willing to debate you and you could put your views out there." No, there was nothing to debate.

So, by that time, let's say by my senior year, '68-'69, I think things had pretty well crystallized, whereas you couldn't have gotten anybody to show up for a debate like that in '65-'66 or '66-'67. I think '67 to '68, things were really starting to move. I think that's more of the dividing line, in terms of music and everything else.

SI: Before we get more into that later period, when did you decide to become a history major?

MB: Always, I always wanted to be a history major. That was it.

SI: You were immediately into the major.

MB: Yes, yes. As I may have mentioned earlier, just for some reason, I was fascinated by these 101, the introductory courses, so, I took as many of them [as I could]. Then, I later realized, two

things I realized--one, I had the bare minimum for a major, though I did have the Henry Rutgers. So, that meant I had a few more courses, but, in addition to the Henry Rutgers, which was the equivalent of two courses per semester, you still had to take the minimum for your major. The Henry Rutgers really didn't count towards your major.

I think I had two history courses my junior year and one two-semester course my junior and one my senior year. So, I think I basically had the bare minimum of courses. I was loading up on political science, economics, art, music, whatever. In retrospect, I think those are the ones I'm fondest of, to this day, because they were like the broad-based liberal arts thing that you got.

In fact, I think, one time, I decided to take a look at my grade average and I actually think my average in history was lower. If I took out all my history grades, I think they actually were lower than the rest of my courses, because I guess I found the other stuff a little more fascinating.

Also, I was competing against people who were just history majors. It's one thing against--if you're in a big enough sampling, you might do better against people who are so-so interest in poli-sci or art or whatever--whereas if you're just in your own major, you're up against everybody who was just living and dying history. So, it might've been a little harder. I don't know--that's my explanation in my mind.

SI: Tell me about some of your favorite professors, looking through the years.

MB: Yes. Well, first of all, I can remember some of the names of some of the professors. Professor [Martin] Sherman was the music teacher. I liked him quite a bit. Actually, all of them were quite good. [Alexander] Balinky for economics, I really liked Balinky a lot, because I did well in economics. I saw that, geez, I didn't think I had a natural bent for it, but I really believe it was because of Balinky. I thought he was a great teacher.

The funny thing is, I was up at my parents', one time (this is decades later) and I was in a used bookstore. I found a copy of one of Balinky's books in it. So, I bought the book and I sent it to him to autograph and I got it [back]. He sent it back to me. I think he was kind of thrilled that one of his former students had dug out this book from the early '60s. So, he wrote a very nice inscription in the book, but, Balinky, I can never say enough about him, because he really was wonderful.

Of course, [Richard P.] McCormick was unique and he had his famous Rutgers lecture, which, in American history, one day, he devoted entirely to the history of Rutgers. I always remember him going over, I guess it was the Class of 1836, "the famed Class of 1836," because it produced a number of distinguished people. It was a small class. I mean, think about it, I think it had a US Senator and a Supreme Court Justice in one class. Then, Lloyd Gardner in History was also a wonderful professor.

[Editor's Note: The Rutgers Class of 1836 included US Supreme Court Justice Joseph P. Bradley, US Secretary of State Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, and New Jersey Governor William A. Newell.]

I had my Henry Rutgers with Professor [Traian] Stoianovich, who was certainly a leading Balkans historian. [He was] sort of interesting because he actually had studied history under a man by the name of, I think, Fernand Braudel, who had sort of a unique approach to studying history, which was not to necessarily look at the "Great Man Theory" so much, but to look at demographics, geography, agriculture, things like that, the culture of a society, and had done that for the Balkans.

He applied that approach as well in class. So, it was different from a lot of history, but it was great to have that kind of exposure to someone who had a well-known historian in a distinct school of history. Then, my senior year, I had a professor who actually, I think, was a visiting professor by the name of Daniel Matuszewski, who taught Russian history. He was actually wonderful.

All the professors I had were really quite first-rate. I cannot remember the names of the art history professors I had, but that Art History Department has always been very strong here. I know, at that time, one of the art history professors, a guy by the name of [James H.] Stubblebine, Time-Life had put out a series of books on various artists, which you can still get them. I guess they're [out of print], but he, Stubblebine, was the consultant for the book they put out on Giotto, the Italian Renaissance painter.

So, that, to me, says a lot about the school, that the professors are [of] the quality, that they're so well-recognized, that a publisher that's putting out what they consider to be a classic, populist history, nevertheless, went to Rutgers for the historian.

SI: What was your Henry Rutgers thesis about?

MB: It was on Russia. It's on Russia in the sixteenth century. The one thing I should say is, I don't speak Russian. So, I had to wrestle with how to do something on Russia. I think Professor Stoianovich came up with the idea of doing something on the trading companies in the sixteenth century that were visiting Russia.

The mid-sixteenth century, a lot of English trading companies got going to trade--the East India, that sort of thing. So, they actually set one up to trade with Russia. So, a lot of Englishmen went into Russia to set up fur trading operations, things of that nature, but, in the course of that, they were writing these lengthy reports on what they thought of the Russian court. At that time, the Russian court was Ivan the Terrible, one of these phenomenal figures from Russian history.

[Editor's Note: Ivan the Terrible reigned as Grand Prince of Moscow and all Russia from 1533 to 1547, when he became the first Tsar and Grand Prince of all Russia, ruling until his death in 1584.]

So, it was kind of an interesting thing. So, I was basically writing about English traders in Russia. Really, Russia, at that time, wasn't really the Russia we know today. It was a small [state]. It was like, basically, Muscovy, the old state around Moscow. So, that was my project. I enjoyed that.



SI: Do any other experiences from your classroom work in history stand out?

MB: I'm trying to think on that one. I don't, really. It's hard. I think part of the problem is, when you're that young, you're getting bits and pieces of things--you don't really know how to synthesize them.

So, if I look back on it, I view some of these things differently than I did at the time. So, I think, in a lot of ways, when I look back on it now, [it] is maybe the fact of being exposed to people who'd been trained by different historians, so, getting different historic schools, which you normally don't get that just by reading a history book. As I said, like Lloyd Gardner, I think, coming out of Wisconsin, you got like "the Wisconsin approach" or whatever, and then, with Stoianovich having studied under Braudel, that was very [valuable]. Even today, I think Braudel, he's well-recognized, but I just don't know if that many people take that approach.

Oh, I'll tell you, there was one other thing. I took Spanish as a language here. The thing was--it's hard to believe that [Fidel] Castro is still in power--but this is early on in Castro's [era], within the first ten years of his regime. The Spanish Department had a number of Cuban refugees, were teaching Spanish.

Unlike your typical academic (or your view of what academics would be like), these people were [different]. One of them was like the former Ambassador to West Germany from Cuba and the other woman was like this really, incredibly stylish woman. So, your typical academic doesn't look like she's walking in out of the pages of *Vogue* Magazine, but this woman did.

So, my image of Spanish culture was always like lifted by these people. I started thinking, "Well, how many times do you get to take a class taught by the highest level of a society?" It's sort of like if you're studying Russian and had the Czar teaching you Russian history or something. So, I always remember that very favorably, because it just [was unique].

Although I don't remember Spanish as well as I do French, I definitely remember the people. So, it was a great introduction to at least a certain slice of a certain aspect of Spanish culture, because I'm certain Cuban culture is not the same as mainland Spain, but it still is, again, a great opportunity. Where else would you get it but like in a college setting, where you can really immerse yourself in something [like] that?

As I said, until this day, I still remember. It's always stayed with me, and I think that's the great thing about college. You have time (which you'll never have again in your life) to focus on things or spend a lot of time focused on something and just really get into it. So, again, although my recollection of Spanish isn't the greatest, my recollection of the Spanish Department is still with me.

SI: Did you work while you were at school?

MB: Only in the summers. I tried--it's funny that you mentioned that, because I wouldn't have volunteered this, simply because I had forgotten it [laughter]--but I did take a job on campus for a while. I think I worked in the cafeteria for like a week. I just figured, "This isn't going to

work," because I just figured I couldn't do both. I couldn't study and I just figured, "Okay, I'm going to have to [quit]. I have to study. I can't work in the cafeteria and study." Just, for me, it wasn't [feasible]. I couldn't do it. So, that was it.

No, I really didn't have a job. I mean, I know a lot of people do, but my employment really was working in the Spice Factory in the summers. Each summer, I got this job. I think what happened was, once I got it, they hired me each summer after that. So, basically, each summer, I was down there in Flemington, grinding up the coriander.

SI: Were these activities that you were involved in later on in your career, or did you get involved with them early on at Rutgers?

MB: Which activities?

SI: Like *The Scarlet Letter* [the Rutgers College yearbook], the Student Council?

MB: Yes, *The Scarlet Letter*. It's funny, a lot of the stuff I did there (at the school) turned out to be my senior year and it just sort of like happened. I was not on the yearbook my junior year. Now, that you mentioned it, I cannot remember at all how I got involved with it. My guess is that they must've had signs up on the campus saying, "We're going to have a meeting if you have an interest for the yearbook." I guess I signed up for it. I don't know exactly why I did.

I did work for a while, now that I think about it, besides *The Targum*, there was another newspaper that somebody started up on campus. I don't even know if it lasted more than a semester and it was almost like a weekly paper. I know, I remember, I wrote some articles for that, but it's so vague in my mind, I cannot even remember the name of the paper. I think if I went [home], I have some mementos boxed away, I suppose I could dig them out and I'd find it. I think that was the only thing I'd done that was in the way of an extracurricular activity.

Then, my senior year, for some reason, I just got lively. I ran for president of the dorm, Ford Hall, which I won. I'm laughing, because there's only five people who voted, so, I won with five votes. Then, I got on to the Residence Hall Association because all the dorm presidents were part of that. So, for five votes, I got on the Residence Hall Association. Then, I was elected Vice President of that. Then, I ended up on the Student Council because I was involved with the Residence Hall Association. So, it's like everything sort of ballooned in a way.

It was my senior year. I mean, it all started with five votes in Ford Hall and, the next thing, I was on the Student Council. It was just kind of like a series of [events]. I mean, some people, they plan everything in their lives. This was totally unplanned.

In fact, they were looking for someone to run for president. I remember, the dorm counselors were coming through and saying, "We need a president of the dorm," or something like that. I said, "I'll do it." When I look back at it, I'm not so certain that the five votes were anybody other than the dorm counselors. [laughter] I'm certain maybe somebody else voted for me, but I just remember I got five votes.

With the yearbook, I'm certain they had some [advertisements]. They used to plaster [signs]. Even now, they'll plaster the place with signs like, "Sign up for this," or, "Sign up for that." Then, Randy Schaeffer had the idea, which I think I've spoken to you about, that--who was the editor of the paper?

SI: I would like you to say that again for the record.

MB: Oh, about Randy Schaeffer?

SI: Yes.

MB: Yes. Randy Schaeffer was the editor. He was obviously in the class, and he was a very talented guy in a lot of ways. He's a great photographer. Many of the photographs in the yearbook for that year were taken by Randy Schaeffer. In fact, I think he has a snapshot of himself with a camera somewhere in the yearbook.

He had this idea (which occurred both in the 1969 Yearbook and, also, the 1970 Yearbook) of chronicling the year, which meant that there's a section in the yearbook that goes over every day, every academic day, of the 1968 through 1969 academic year.

I guess, if you want to call it that, I was the section editor who prepared that. I prepared that section of the yearbook and I did that by going through the various newspapers, which I think I mentioned it was *The Targum*, then, I think there was this other newspaper that was around then.

Basically, *The Targum*, as a daily paper, I would go through it. I still remember what my approach was--I would go through and I'd look for an article on the main event of that day. So, I summarized it and wrote it. It took some time to do, but, in retrospect, it's a great way to recall what was going on.

I remember, at this time, because this was like [when] Paul Robeson was still alive at this time and he was sort of known, but he was a fairly controversial figure through much of his life and the school had not paid that much attention to Robeson over the years. Since then, they've paid a lot of attention to him, after he died, I think, or close to that time.

[Editor's Note: Paul Robeson (1898-1976) was an African American singer, actor and Civil Rights activist. He was valedictorian of his class at Rutgers University in 1919. Due to his support for Stalin, the USSR and the Communist Party during the McCarthy era, Robeson was blacklisted and had his passport revoked from 1950 to 1958, which prevented him from traveling to perform during those years. The campus center on the Rutgers-Newark Campus is now named for Robeson.]

I just vaguely heard of him. I remember reading this stuff. I think it's still in here, in the yearbook, because I remember describing him as a "Renaissance man," because I was just shocked at all the stuff he had done on the campus.

Not only was he an All-American in football, he'd been a Phi Beta Kappa and he was like his class valedictorian. He's got to be one of the few valedictorians in American college history to have also been an All-American in football. Anyway, so, I remember writing that paragraph about him. That's the one paragraph I remember reading, because I was like so taken aback, because although people knew of him or knew he was a graduate, there had not been much of a focus on him.

Now, I think, a lot of people know his story, but [not] back then, because this yearbook also came out in '69, obviously, but he was a graduate of 1919, so, it was like the fiftieth anniversary of his graduation from the school. So, that's sort of the one thing I still remember, to this day, having written, because I just was like taken aback by this.

In general, I think Randy had a great idea in terms of approaching the yearbook that way. His idea was, "If it's a yearbook, let's go through the whole year. Let's review the year, and this is the way to do it." Randy also was--I guess we were talking earlier about the politics and how it infected or infused, I shouldn't say "infected" so much as "infused," everything on the campus. Randy was very much into the more left-leaning side of the political spectrum.

You can see some of the commentary he had in the yearbook, some of the phraseology used, clearly does that. Then, some of the photographs, like these photographs, the first photograph, you open it, you see a bunch of kids by a wire fence. This is the housing project that used to be on Route 18, this sort of thing. This is not what people are used to seeing in their college yearbook.

So, as soon as it came out, it was a controversial book. I think if you just looked at those, the couple of things that were particularly political, it'd be one thing, but, if you went through it, you'd see he was very thorough, in that he was out there taking photographs of all the events. In that section that dealt with the year's events, he has all these photographs that illustrate it. It's actually one of the better college yearbooks I've ever seen--but, then, again, I worked on it. [laughter] So, I'm going to say that.

SI: Did you have an advisor or was it all student-run?

MB: Let me just take a look here, because maybe we didn't. I don't remember an advisor. It wouldn't surprise me if there was an advisor, but the unfortunate thing is, although it has our photographs here, he doesn't identify us. It's just kind of [uncaptioned].

I'm looking at some of these pictures and I recognize a few of these guys. This guy right here, believe it or not, this guy was the president of the Chi Phi Fraternity. His name was [Gudmund] Brynjolfsson. He was from Iceland, of all places. This guy, I think, was very involved with *Targum*. Oh, that's Bruce Hubbard, who was a big politico on the campus; Stuart Berman, who was like an SDS type.

SI: Wasn't he the head of SDS?

MB: He may have been. Maybe I'm confusing [people]--Najarian was in it, but, yes, that's Stuart Berman there. So, I mean, I'm just flipping open the book, I mean, these general photographs of certain people. Sometimes, people have changed a little bit.

SI: You can clearly tell by the photos in the 1969 Yearbook that a lot more people are wearing longer hair.

MB: Oh, yes. Really, it had changed quite bit. I remember, there was something on campus where people burned their draft cards. That may have occurred in '68-'69, but it definitely occurred. I think he may have some photographs of it, but I think I saw that. I was there for when that occurred.

Campus was really like everything was coming apart at the seams, in a lot of ways. Even Dr. Gross, if you look at his picture in this, I mean, you'll see he's got like curls in his hair or something like that. When the guy started out, if you see pictures of him earlier, he's like a very straightforward-looking guy, but, by the time this was taken, if you saw the back of his head, he had his hair that was curling up sort of thing. So, yes, definitely, it impacted everybody.

[Editor's Note: Dr. Mason W. Gross served as Rutgers University President from 1959 to 1971.]

I think he got in the spirit of things, I think especially when, like, some students took over Old Queens. He was afraid of like police activity. I think he immediately decided that he had "invited" them in, so, as to prevent any police activity at the Queens Building.

SI: Were you ever involved in any kind of protest?

MB: No, not really. To be frank, I don't think that many students were, in part because I think a lot of the people here were working to get their degrees and move on. I think, for a lot of people, that was more of, I don't quite want to say it was a sideshow, but it was not their main focus. They wanted their degrees and they wanted to move on.

I mean, a lot of people here at the school, they're working to move [up], get ahead in life. It's true then (I think it's true now), they really weren't focused on politics. It's not that they were totally unaware of it or avoiding it or something like that. I just don't think that [it was a key focus]. You had a vocal group of people and you could stir up people, but, when you consider the size of the student body, it probably was not that large a percentage of people involved.

Also, there was a ROTC segment here. You had both Army and Air Force ROTC. I mean, I'm not saying like the whole college was that way, but, I mean, you had a number of people who were relatively, fairly conservative, I mean politically conservative, just out in absolute terms conservative. They weren't going to take to the barricades or anything like that.

So, anyway, I was not that involved with that stuff. I think I was more shocked that the Vietnam Conflict had continued as long as it has. That's why I felt very lucky that the professor in the Economics Department, Sidney Simon, who was advisor to the law students (or pre-legal group, whatever it was called, club, maybe it was a club, it may've been a law club, law society, pre-

law), had told us about a program the Navy had called the "Ensign 1955 Program" that would give you a direct commission in the Navy. Once you had a direct commission, you were immune from the draft, because you were in, but you were put in in the Inactive Reserve.

So, I was lucky enough to get into that program. In the Summer of 1969, I was inducted, I believe in Newark, into the Navy. I went in as an ensign. Then, even though I was inactive, the Navy promoted me, so that by the time I graduated from law school, I was actually a lieutenant in the Navy and went on active duty as a lieutenant.

So, it was a good deal--and it also meant I didn't get to go to Vietnam, [laughter] which I think a lot of people didn't want to do, for a lot of reasons. At this point, also, there's a lot of demoralization about the war. Then, when I got in the Navy, I saw the horror stories I was hearing from people who were [in then], just about how demoralized the whole military was at that point.

They had to get out. It was destroying the military from within. It's not that they weren't capable of doing certain things, but the demoralization went through the ranks. They're getting what was known as fragging instances. I knew, one guy told me, somebody I knew actually told me he'd been fragged, in the sense that somebody rolled a grenade into his tent. This was going on. People were like trying to kill their officers. It was bad.

The military wanted out themselves. They realized that if they stayed there much longer, even if they won, they would've lost, because of the destruction from within the military. So, I mean, the society, even in '68-'69, as bad as things were, it got worse. It got worse as things were going along.

SI: When you were still on the Rutgers Campus, did you discuss the war with your friends, whether it was a good thing to be involved with or not?

MB: I don't remember discussing it that much, I think, other than the fact that, at least I realized that I had to get this deferment. Luckily, I got the deferment relatively early in my senior year. So, I think I would've been discussing it a lot more as things went along. I don't think I was that politically activated at that point.

I know there were definitely people who were, because I definitely can remember some of these demonstrations and some of this activity, but the stuff that I remember, for me, it was not that overwhelming an issue, other than the fact that I want to avoid being in a combat situation.

I think part of the reason I was in, I was influenced to some extent by what I had mentioned to you earlier, about that friend of mine getting killed over there. Then, I realized the odds were not great. If you're like a low-ranking officer, you're in the field, something was going to happen. It was not a cause that you could relate to that much and it seemed to be grinding on forever. The nightly news, it was just you couldn't avoid it. I mean, maybe that's why I didn't discuss it--it was hard not to be aware of it. It was like, every night, it'd be on the TV set.

SI: At this time, did you and your father ever discuss the war? Did he ever express any opinions on it?

MB: No. He never really expressed any opinions on anything that was military related. My sense is, I guess, well, after his World War II service, that was pretty much it.

SI: This was also a time when African American students were speaking out at Rutgers and making their concerns known. Tell me about that, what you observed.

MB: You were aware of it because there were certain [events]. I missed out on some of it, because some of it [happened elsewhere]. One of the events, which I'm reluctant to say too much about it--not because I don't want to, but just because I'm not certain I have the facts right--but I think there was some event dealing with the cafeteria. I don't know if it's in this book--it had something to do with their food trays or something. There was something like that.

I know that they shut the school down for a little bit, I think for big, wide-ranging discussions. I know one of the guys who was very much involved with this was someone I alluded to earlier when we were flipping through the yearbook (and his photograph's right here), Bruce Hubbard, who was actually a member of the Chi Psi fraternity.

In fact, this photograph of Bruce in the back of the yearbook, if you look at this photograph, you realize this is the Chi Psi Fraternity that he's standing by. He was like very senior, Student Council--he may have been the most senior black politician on the campus. So, he was involved with this stuff.

I knew some of the black students who were involved with this because--well, this was an activity I was involved with, I didn't really think of it--I was involved with the Episcopal Church here. They had their own church and they had an activity room. A number of the black students were Episcopalian, so, I knew a number of these kids from church. So, the only thing I remember, sometime, they basically organized themselves. I guess they felt they had to organize themselves.

[Editor's Note: Mr. Barr begins commenting on a different photo in the yearbook.]

This is a classic photograph in, this would've been Records Hall, where people would take these exams like this. It must've been some general class, where everybody's like sitting here, taking an exam.

SI: We are looking at a picture from the yearbook.

MB: Yes, I'm looking at a picture in the yearbook where--it must be hundreds--it looks like there's probably hundreds of people right here taking an exam.

[Editor's Note: Mr. Barr turns back to the discussion regarding African American students.]

I know that they organized themselves, and the yearbook does discuss some of this. I was looking back at some of these pictures and I realized what had gone on. I don't know if they did it over a weekend or whatever. It was divisive on the campus, but it was at a lot of schools, not just Rutgers.

Randy Schaeffer had made some comments here about some of this stuff that was going on. He focused a lot of his photography on it. I don't think, as much as you might think it was disruptive, it was that disruptive, because a lot of people just went home. So, it wasn't like the school completely shut down, but it clearly [happened].

By the way, this picture here of these kids, that's Bruce Hubbard there, at this podium, and there he is--so, he's like the all-American prepster in these pictures. I'm not trying to be critical of the guy, but he's like wearing a crewneck sweater, type of guy you'd think would be walking around, "the big man on campus" in the '50s, leading these other kids almost like in a dashiki, and there's Bruce in his crewneck.

I definitely remember these events. The Newark Campus may have been affected more.

SI: They had the Conklin Hall take over.

[Editor's Note: On February 24, 1969, nearly two dozen members of the Black Organization of Students took over Conklin Hall, the main classroom building on the Rutgers-Newark Campus, declaring it "Liberation Hall." The protest would last for over seventy-two hours until, on the morning of February 27th, Rutgers President Mason Gross agreed to the protestors' demands.]

MB: Yes, than the main campus, the New Brunswick Campus, but the school paid serious attention to it, because, I mean, you see Susman here in this one photograph, Susman's sitting with these kids.

Then, I saw Dean [Arnold] Grobman, who was the Dean of the College, in one of these pictures that I flipped through here. So, I mean, you could see the faculty, McCormick, the faculty was very sympathetic to this stuff. I mean, Gross was very sympathetic to it.

I think this may have also been part of the reason why Gross became unpopular with the State Legislature. He really had his strong belief. I remember Gross also was telling students that they get as good an education here as you could anywhere. He was really a big [booster].

This is Bill Burns, who later worked for a while at the school, in the administrative area. He was like a student politico, I'm not exactly certain where, but I just remember him. That's Dean Grobman there.

See, part of the problem is that (one reason I came here is), a lot of times, I was either going to New York or going home for the weekends, because of where my parents lived. So, I mean, I had an ideal world, since I could be here on this campus, go to New York, was a very urban area, or go home where my parents lived out in Califon, New Jersey, which was like semi farmland. It was like I had the sheer variety of life experiences. I'm sorry, I interrupted you.



SI: As tensions flared on the campus, did it affect your relationship with these African American students you knew through church?

MB: Some of them, I think what it is was, like, you're friendly with them sometimes, and then, they said, "Oh, I've got to go to my group," or something like that. There was some of that stuff that was going on, because I also think one of the guys I knew was a football player. Then, some of the guys I knew, who'd been over to my apartment, it wasn't like they distanced themselves that much, but, all of a sudden, they felt like they had--it was like a group solidarity thing--so, like, "We've got to do this," and then, they'd revert to [that], then, "I'm dealing with you." It's kind of like going back and forth between different worlds, if you will.

The interesting thing, at that point, was, a number of the black students, and I always thought this was kind of like a little twist, were actually from outside of the state. There were obviously [many] from within the state, but a number of them were like out-of-state students. So, a lot of them actually tended to come from (and this is where the irony is) better socioeconomic backgrounds than the typical Rutgers student.

A lot of them were like kids whose parents had gone to college or parents were like businesspeople or well-placed in whatever black community they came out of. So, I always thought it kind of ironic that some of these kids were really much better off, and some of these guys, some of them may not have been.

I mean, I'm certain some of them weren't, but it always struck me as kind of funny in a way, that you had a group that was actually very "haute bourgeoisie to the barricades." Then, again, a lot of times, the leadership of groups suddenly [feel], "Change in society doesn't come from below, it comes from the upper groups," because they either have the time to think about what a society should be or they're more outraged.

It's like what's going on in Russia now. Who's upset--the guys out in the fields in Russia? No, it's the people living in Moscow who are upset; the well-to-do people in Russia are upset about what's going on. The guy in the street or the guys plowing the fields of Russia, they're not angry at Putin. It's the guys who are making good livings that are angry at Putin.

So, that, to me, was sort of the underlying irony of [the movement]. That's why I pointed out Bruce there and his crewneck sweater, like the all-American Chi Psi, which was, at that time, the leading fraternity on the campus. The guy was like top of the world, and then, he's leading like, if you want to call it, a revolutionary movement.

It just struck me as sort of [ironic]. I'm not being critical, it's just an observation. I just thought there was a little irony there, to me. I suppose, as I said to you, if I thought about it, it makes sense that'd be people in that position [who would] be more interested in moving things than others.

SI: Was there any reaction when Martin Luther King was assassinated?

MB: Yes, a big reaction. I remember that, because, I remember, I know I went to some rally somewhere, someplace. It may have even been down at the train station. Unfortunately, I can't remember details, but I do remember people singing *We Shall Overcome*. I do remember that and, yes, there was a big reaction to the King assassination.

I also remember when Robert Kennedy was assassinated, because the train that took his body to be buried, I guess it went through New Brunswick. I didn't go down to see it, but I could see it was on television, I guess, because they could position cameras in New Brunswick. I remember the funeral, whatever you want to call it, the funeral train or something, going through New Brunswick. I think they slowed down with his train. So, I think both of those did [make an impact], though the Kennedy assassination was during the summer.

[Editor's Note: On April 4, 1968, civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated by James Earl Ray as he stood on a hotel balcony in Memphis, Tennessee. On June 5, 1968, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, campaigning for the Democratic nomination for President and having just won the California primary, was assassinated by Sirhan Sirhan in a hotel kitchen in Los Angeles, California.]

The other thing I remember, which is kind of ironic, was--it's kind of macabre--there was a song during the English/British Invasion era of songs, a song called *Wild Thing*, done by a group called the Troggs. Somebody came up with an idea of doing--he imitated Bobby Kennedy's voice--they called it *Wild Thing (As Done by Senator Bobby)*." It was a popular hit around the same time.

[Editor's Note: The Troggs released *Wild Thing* in April 1966. "Senator Bobby" (stage name of comedian Bill Minkin) released his version in 1967.]

As soon as the assassination [happened], they yanked that song right off the radio, but it was sort of a funny thing, because somebody had gotten his [voice]. He had that kind of stutter and that accent. So, the guy, whoever he was, did an excellent imitation, as if Bobby Kennedy was singing like an English pop song. I thought, "What a terrible irony, that somebody did this."

Like with his brother, years before, there'd been this comedian by the name of Vaughn Meader who'd put out a whole album on Jack Kennedy, the same thing, very popular album, where somebody did imitations of Jack Kennedy's voice--and then, same thing, they yanked that. So, they both were sort of immortalized in pop music. It's just an odd twist of history.

[Editor's Note: Vaughn Meader released the album, *The First Family*, in November 1962. President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on Friday, November 22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas.]

SI: I did not know about that.

MB: Yes, well, the Senator Bobby thing, I'd forgotten about that, but, every now and then, if you watch these PBS shows, to get contributions, they'll run rock shows from different eras, to get people to write out a check, "Oh, I like hearing this again." The Troggs will still come out. They'll still bring the Troggs out to do *Wild Thing*.

It was really a big hit when it first came out, and then, the so-called "Senator Bobby version" was also a big hit, not because it was so great musically, but because it was so funny to listen to, because the guy had Kennedy's mannerisms down so perfectly. Again, as I said, unfortunately, it came out at the same time, around the same time, as the assassination.

SI: You said earlier you had been interested in art, that sort of thing. I know there was a big art movement here at Rutgers, the Happenings Movement [a performance art movement].

MB: Yes, I remember that vaguely.

SI: Were you interested in following that?

MB: Yes, I was really more interested in other things. In fact, it's funny you mentioned that, because, where I work now, I work at a small firm in Pennington which specializes in Russian, Kazakh and Ukraine securities, but we also have a sideline that we're working on, which is in art. The guy who runs the firm was an art dealer years ago and he's getting back into doing arts.

So, it's like coming full circle, some of this stuff I did, the stuff I studied, again, studied Russia in college and studied art history. In both these things, it's like I never left them. It's one reason why I think I can remember some of this stuff, is because I'm still doing it decades later.

So, I don't think I was that involved with it on campus. I think what I was doing is like going into New York a lot. The great thing about here was, though, you take art history and they go over all this stuff. Then, the next thing, you just get on the train and look at the original.

Most places, they'd put a slideshow on the wall, you watch; here, they put the slideshow on the wall, then, you get on the train and, like an hour later, you're looking at it for real. Anyway, it was another plus of being in the Greater New York area.

SI: As you were getting towards the end of your college career, you said you were part of some group that was for pre-law students.

MB: Yes.

SI: Were you always thinking of becoming a lawyer or studying law?

MB: I had two options, or I went back and forth on these in my mind. One was--and even in high school, I thought about this--either becoming like an academic in the area of history or becoming a lawyer. I guess I finally decided on the law, but I don't know exactly why.

They did suggest, because I had the Henry Rutgers, that I apply for some type of fellowships or something like that--but I think, inside, I knew I really didn't have what it took. It's one thing to have a real interest in it or even have a big interest in something, but to really devote a career to it was something else.

I realized that I didn't have the intensity of interest or the ability to really crank out books or something. I think, to be successful at it, there's some things you have to do which I knew I couldn't do. So, I just didn't pursue it, and I don't think it was even close.

I mean, I think up until my senior year, I gave it some thought, but I think, ultimately, when it came to decision time, I didn't really [pursue it], because I didn't even apply for any of these academic fellowships or for any PhD programs or something, because the senior year was the year to do it. It wasn't like, "Well, maybe I'll apply to that and I'll apply to this, and then, settle it out." I just completely dropped the idea.

SI: The law, you were just...

MB: Yes, I went to the law, but I only did that for a few years. It turns out I was right. [laughter] I didn't really care that much for the law, either. Though, I will say this--having a legal background is great in the sense that so much of the law permeates everything, but just sort of having a general sense of how the law works is a plus. I think, law school, it's a unique experience and I'm sort of glad I had it.

SI: At Rutgers, did you have much interaction with the administration, any of these deans we discussed?

MB: Yes, that's a good question. It was not on the academic side or, I'm sorry, on the senior administration's side. On the academic side, I don't think I had that much interaction, either.

The deans that I had the most interest or dealings with, and maybe it was because I was involved in a residence hall or whatever, were the residence deans, in particular, the one dean I mentioned to you earlier, Owen Isaacs. That later turned out to be helpful to me, but I guess we can talk about that later, because I relied on Owen Isaacs post-graduation, but not that much [at Rutgers].

I guess the other thing was, really, [that] I can remember, because I was involved with the Residence Hall Association, I had to deal with the residence deans. Aside from just my own interest in maybe knowing something about my needs as someone in the residence area, it was also [that] they were relying on us to make certain things were done in the dorms. So, it was like general policies at the school, we sometimes helped them promulgate things or get the word out, that type of thing, but I wasn't that close to those people.

When it came to going to law school, I relied on, for letters of recommendation, my academics. Some people actually used Dr. Gross. I mean, some people knew him well enough that he would write a letter for them. I wasn't on that level, but one of the professors--I'd applied to Harvard Law School--and it's one professor I'd mentioned to you earlier, Matuszewski, I asked him.

He said something which I thought was sort of funny. He said, "I'd be more than happy to write a letter for you, but do you think it would do any good?" and I said, "What?" He said, "Well, look, let's be realistic here. I'm a visiting professor here and I have no real pull at Harvard. So, it's not like I'm the leading professor at Rutgers in something and it's not like I can write a letter to someone I know personally as a dean and say, 'Take this guy.'"

I thought it was kind of a funny comment. He wrote letters for me, but I thought it was funny that he was that straightforward about the value of letters of recommendation and what they're worth and what they're not worth. Later, I realized, the guy was right. It's kind of like, in certain cases, you have them, but there are letters of recommendation, and then, again, there are *letters* of recommendation. I guess he felt his wasn't going to be one of those *letters* of recommendation. So, that came back to me just as an observation, but, other than that, I didn't really have that much contact with the administration.

I knew one of my friend's (in the dorms) dad was one of the Campus Police officers for the Queens Campus. We used to talk to him a lot, but that's probably it.

SI: I also wanted to ask what your responsibilities were as the president of the dorm and being part of the governing association, at a time when student life is changing so much. Drugs are coming on campus, alcohol use is coming on campus (not that it was not there), changing norms.

MB: I think, I'll tell you, the real thing with the dorms were the issue of women in the dorms and women in the rooms, because they start out by having these rules--like you just couldn't take a woman into the room. I mean, I'm certain people were doing it all the time, but, in theory, you weren't supposed to be doing that, but they started lightening up on those restrictions.

Then, at one point, I think they had something like you had to keep your dorm room, your door, open with like a book or something like that. There had to be a crack or something, and then, people started debating, "Well, would a matchbook do it?" as opposed to a regular book. [laughter] I remember this debate, "the matchbook debate," but, at a certain point, it must've changed, by my senior year, because I can remember having women overnight in the room.

So, now, in that instance, was it because it was Ford Hall and you had your own room and it was much easier and it wasn't a heavily-populated dorm? I just don't [know], but you're right. I mean, there was that evolution in the visiting policies, the curfews and this, that and the other thing. The alcohol and the pot, in theory, I think the drinking age was twenty-one, but, I mean, we all had alcohol.

I remember my favorite mix, which was pretty pathetic, was Southern Comfort. I would get Jiffy Pop. They used to have a stove that was available. I'd have girls over--we'd drink Southern Comfort and make Jiffy Pop popcorn. I mean, I guess when you're twenty, that sounds great. I mean, now, it sounds absolutely awful.

So, I know I had Southern Comfort in my room, which is kind of a syrup; I think I would mix Southern Comfort with Coca-Cola. It sounds like something you'd throw up, just thinking of it makes you think you'd throw up. So, I know, at that point, that alcohol was available, or, if it wasn't official, it wasn't really prosecuted or anything.

What else do I remember about that era? I know there was, continually, the voting. You know they allowed us to vote on whether there'd be co-education, and I think at least one of the votes I took part in, we voted it down. So, I know it was at least in one class that had the distinction of

voting down co-education, which I think nobody would do today, but I think, at the time, everybody thought it was great. "We voted co-education down."

Now, I don't know if it was my senior year or junior year or what, but I know that [happened], and I doubt that they would pay any attention to the students. I think it was one of these things where other pressures were going to decide, but maybe they felt they wanted to see what the reception would be, "What if they start having women here?" if the student body would react well or badly.

So, I guess maybe the way they found that out was, even if they decide they're going to do it, they want to at least see if the students would go for it or how they'd react to it. I just thought it was sort of funny, because I mean there was always women on the campus, I mean either in the classrooms or [campus], because, even at that point, women could take classes here.

[Editor's Note: Rutgers College became coeducational in 1972.]

I mean, it wasn't like it was fifty-fifty, but there were Douglass girls here all the time. So, it wasn't like the women were sort of an unheard of thing or they had to be bused in from [elsewhere], though we did date girls from other places. I remember dating a girl from Georgian Court and she'd come in through--somebody arranged it. She'd been bused in with a bunch of other girls from Georgian Court to some kind of social mixer or something. I ended up dating her for a while. That's why.

I remember, I always thought she was very exotic because she's from San Juan and her parents had lived in a converted monastery, in Old San Juan or something like that. I thought, "This must be something else." I never got to know her well enough where she invited me home, but I always thought that would've been the trip to take, to see how they lived.

To me, it just was like I couldn't conceive of somebody living in a converted monastery as their home. I mean, I'm certain it wasn't like a whole mountain with a big monastery on it, but I still think it must've been something else. It must've been full of incredible antiques and things like that. So, yes, there were definitely women around on the campus.

SI: Did you meet your wife at this time, while you were here?

MB: Yes, I did, though we did not [date]. We were not involved. I did meet her through the Episcopal Church group, and we still joke about the time, I think it was like a wintery night or something like that. Anyway, she's over on the campus and she wanted a ride back to Douglass.

So, she came over to my dorm and knocked on the door and asked for a ride back to Douglass. I don't know what it was--I didn't feel like driving her back to Douglass. I don't know if I was studying or just didn't want to do it. So, she said, "Well, okay, I'll go back to Father Lambelet's," and that was the Canterbury House, which is still there. If you go on Mine Street, the Episcopal Church has a little [building], or they may call it Canterbury House or whatever.

SI: I think it might still be called that.

MB: Yes, it's a gray building. I think it used to be gray. It may still be gray. Anyway, so, I think after she left, about fifteen minutes later, I think I had a guilty conscience. So, I walked over there and maybe I wasn't even certain she'd be there, but I walked over to Canterbury House and she was there. So, I said, "Okay, I'll take you back."

So, we sort of got along, but we didn't get along, that type of thing, in college. It was only later that I started dating her. It was after college I started dating her, but I had known her from at the end of my sophomore year on. So, I knew her for two years here, junior and senior.

SI: What kind of things would you do with the Episcopal group?

MB: Well, what I did was, I found out--I guess a lot of ministers have to do this, not just the church on campus--is that they rely heavily on volunteers. They almost have to draft you in. So, I'd gotten a little bit friendly with the Minister, a man by the name of Lambelet, which is L-A-M-B-E-L-E-T. I'm not certain how that started.

I cannot remember, but all I know is, at one point, he said, "Well, why don't you come to one of the meetings of our vestry, the student vestry? You might like to meet some people there." So, I showed up. This was like in my naivete, "Okay, why not? Meet some people." So, I went to the thing. So, he introduces me, and then, he says, "And I'd like to nominate Mike to the vestry." [laughter] So, like, "What?" The way he did, I just figured okay.

So, I went along with it, but I didn't have the slightest idea. I didn't say anything like, "Oh, I want to be on the student vestry," or this, that or the other thing. I think they're so desperate to have volunteers or people (and I think this is true of any volunteer organization), once you show the slightest interest, they really try to bring you in. I think that's what I learned from Father Lambelet all those years ago, because it's still that way in a lot of settings.

Basically, I think he relied on the vestry [as] like his core number of kids who would show up every Sunday for the services and to help him set things up, that sort of thing, or get the word out in certain ways. It wasn't the type of church [where] they would try to proselytize. They weren't looking to get converts, but I think he wanted to identify the kids who were Episcopalians and make sure that they would show up at [services].

He was very active. I mean, if you think about it, it's not a big church. Even then, it wasn't that big a church in terms of population, but he actually got the church built. Lambelet was able to raise the money for that church. It was kind of a phenomenal thing, for a relatively minor religion, minor sect.

At that point, there were still some people who were very well-heeled who were Episcopalians. He got Frelinghuysen, who was a Congressman at the time, and of the family associated with this university, he got Congressman Frelinghuysen to give them money for the land that they're on over there, on what used to be known as the University Heights, to St. Michael's Chapel.

[Editor's Note: Republican Peter Frelinghuysen, Jr., represented New Jersey's Fifth District in the US House of Representatives from 1953 to 1975.]

He was able to go around and raise enough money to build that church, which is kind of, even now, I think, "Wow, it's kind of phenomenal," that he was able to get people [to donate], because students didn't have the money. He had to go around to people in the state, and he was able to solicit enough. He got enough money to build a chapel, which is, to me, whenever anybody in the religious area is able to get people to fork out money for a building, I'm always amazed, because it's one thing to give money, a collection plate type of thing, but it's another thing to actually build something that costs real money, but he did.

So, he was that type of guy. He would get people to do stuff, like me, "Show up and meet some people," instead [of], "Show up and I'll put you on this committee. I'm not telling you I'm going to do it, but I'm going to do it." That's what he did.

So, I helped with that. We put out newsletters, publications. He had a little bus. We'd shuttle people around in it. He had activities. One time--he actually brought people on campus--he brought James Billington, who I think taught at Princeton at the time, up to give a talk.

Billington wrote a book that was very famous, and still, to this day, is a well-known book, called *The Icon and the Axe* [(1966)], which is a cultural history of Russia. So, he got Billington to come here. By having these public things, he'd try to get people interested in his [church], he tried to build an interest in this religion on the campus. Billington later went on to be the Librarian of Congress. I don't know if he still is or not, but you may have heard his name.

[Editor's Note: James H. Billington (1929-2018) served as the Librarian of Congress from 1987 to 2015.]

SI: I think it was in the 1990s and early 2000s.

MB: Yes, sort of like a very distinguished historian, but Lambelet persuaded him to come to the school and talk at his church.

SI: Would you say that Lambelet, or the church in general, had a social activism bent to it?

MB: He did, a little bit. The one thing he did was, and there's allusion to this in here--I forgot, I saw him in the yearbook, and I'll try to find, if I can--but the University, these guys (and Lambelet wasn't the only guy who had to go running around, who raised money), the school was building up its facilities in Newark.

I mentioned this name to you earlier, Charlie Engelhard, they actually got Engelhard to fund a building up there, but there was a lot of controversy, because Engelhard was--I knew I saw it someplace--basically involved with the minerals, precious metals business, but a lot of it was in South Africa. So, right away, on college campuses, even back then, South Africa, it was like an anathema. So, there was a lot of debate.



Lambelet expressed an interest in that. He was upset about that, that they were taking money from Charlie Engelhard, but he wasn't that active. I mean, I don't think you would've seen him walking around picketing things. Well, anyway, I did see in here a certain page where there was some reference to somebody picketing Engelhard or Engelhard monies.

I think, although I don't think it's still that way (and the building may not even be standing anymore), but I think the building he funded was the Business School, the physical plant for the Business School in Newark, or money for Newark. Oh, here it is, "SDS Pickets Engelhard Representative." So, Engelhard was definitely [under scrutiny]--oh, and here's that name, Gudmund Brynjolfsson. Remember, I mentioned the guy.

Rich Levao defeated him. They both ran for student body president. It's kind of strange. Levao was like, if you will, an independent, living in the dorms, and Brynjolfsson was like in Chi Phi, which was considered the biggest "animal house" on the campus at the time, but Brynjolfsson was very presentable.

He didn't look like [a rough guy], but, I mean, girls from Douglass just wouldn't even go there. I mean, it was like, if you walked into the Chi Phi Fraternity, you're taking your life in your hands. That was the reputation the place had. I'm not so certain it was that bad, but, again, if you'd seen the movie *Animal House* [(1978)], it was sort of like that.

I always sort of thought Chi Psi was sort of like "the other fraternity," the fraternity house where--what is the name? Greg Marmalard--the guys who were like the really straight shooters, I thought it was Chi Psi. Then, you had Chi Phi, which is like the "animal house." Every campus, I think, has the same [dynamic]. Wherever you go to college, I think you'd find these opposing fraternities.

SI: Is there anything else you would like to say about Rutgers before we move on?

MB: Well, I think I mentioned to you a little bit before about how I was on *The Scarlet Letter* and I'd taken advantage of the fact of...

SI: I do want to get into that. Let's talk about it now.

MB: Well, it's actually [related to later events, but], yes, really, it did happen while I was an undergraduate. I had heard a rumor that they were, and it was looking pretty shabby at the time, thinking about tearing down Winants Hall, which was on the Queens Campus.

It dawned on me that I could take a copy of *The Scarlet Letter* in to see Mason Gross, who was President of the school, and give him a presentation copy, even though Randy Schaeffer didn't suggest I do it or anything like that. I just sort of did it on my own initiative, because I wanted to find out. I had sort of my own little agenda--I wanted to find out if the rumors were true. So, I took the book in.

I still have to give Mason Gross a lot of credit--he actually made time to see me. As President of a university, I'm certain his time was pretty precious, and it wasn't like he said, "Come back in

five hours," or something. They squeezed me in almost immediately, admittedly for a brief period of time, but he was very, very gracious, which is what he was.

He looked through the book and was very, very pleasant throughout. Then, I just mentioned something to him, that I'd heard something about Winants Hall. He made the comment to me, which was that the building didn't have any architectural merit. In the back of my mind, I thought, "Well, whether or not they're going to tear it down, at least I know that Mason Gross is not going to stand up for it." If somebody says, "Let's tear this thing down," he's not going to say, "Oh, no, we can't do that, because it's a very important building." I just kept that in mind.

So, later, when I was in law school, I had an opportunity to do an independent project. I focused it on doing a historic preservation nomination for the Queens Campus. The ultimate goal was, hopefully, to encourage them to save the Winants Hall, which they did. Not only that, they did a special funding for it and they basically, twenty years ago, rehabilitated it. They gutted the whole building and they did a wonderful job.

It used to have--and this is part of the problem--although it was big, it was actually a cheap building. It doesn't look like a cheap building, but it was a cheap building when they built it, which is why it was in bad shape. The roof was actually sagging, or those walls or whatever.

I can remember going in there. Talking about Professor Balinky, one of the Economics teaching assistants had an office on the fourth floor, the top floor. You had to go up this wooden staircase all the way up. I thought, "Am I going to make it up there or am I going to fall over the side?" The building was so shabby.

Then, I later met an alumnus who had known Paul Robeson. He told me that his recollection of Robeson was that, because he lived on the fourth floor (this alumnus said Robeson lived on the fourth floor), he said Robeson used to run up that stairwell--that very stairwell I was going up thinking, "Ugh, will I ever make it?" this wooden stairwell.

He said he would run up all four flights. He said he always knew when Robeson was back, because he said he could hear the guy running up the four flights, and then, he would jump in his bed. He could hear him jump in the bed and hear the bed slam against the wall.

So, that was a Robeson anecdote from somebody who knew him in college, but, nevertheless, the building was in really pitiful shape. Later, the school did fund a total rehabilitation of it. Now, it's like one of the little crown jewels down there, but the rumors led me to have this interest in it. I worked with other people. Now, if you want to talk about that in more detail later, I can.

SI: Why don't we stick with that now, then, go back to law school?

MB: Okay. Basically, this is a project I did in law school. It started out, I had an environmental law professor and I asked him if I could do an independent [study]. Actually, I did it for one academic credit. I think the Professor told me later, if I'd expand a little bit, I could put more credits on it. He said he thought I missed [an opportunity], which was kind of stupid on my part. I should have made like a three-credit project.

Anyway, I put together a nomination for the Queens Campus to be on the National Register of Historic Places. In part, it was to save Winants, but I also thought there should be more attention paid to this, because the school was doing so much racing into the current era that the history of the school was being a little bit pushed to the side. So, I thought, "People may have an interest in some of these buildings and the history of the school."

So, that worked out, but, in doing this, I worked with Professor Richard B. Wilkens, Rutgers University Campus Planner, who actually, kindly, walked me around to many of the buildings, pointing out interesting details, architectural details. So, I had some good help from the school.

Then, I was working with a man who was in the administration by the name of Maurice Ayers or Maury Ayers. Rutgers, at one point, had an architectural firm and it was called York and Sawyer. It was one of the big New York architectural firms. They did Colonial Revival architecture here.

The school has grown so large, you can't see it, but, basically, York and Sawyer did the College Avenue Gym, they did the Microbiology Center--if you look at these buildings, they have a common theme--the Demarest Hall. They're all sort of Colonial buildings with little cupolas on them. That was all York and Sawyer's work.

In any event, Ayers had a connection to architecture, so, he was very interested in saving Winants. So, he also encouraged me to do this. I also went to the Alumni Association, who helped sponsor me to do this project, because they had an interest in saving the old Rutgers, too.

So, this one project for this one thing led to me doing other nominations of other buildings on the campus. So, I also did that. Then, I did the Bishop House and I did the Alexander Johnston Hall and I did Woodlawn. Each one of these buildings has some kind [of significance]--and New Jersey Hall and I forgot about Demarest House, too.

So, I did all that, some of these buildings that were listed on the Historic American Building Survey, which meant they'd already been surveyed by the government. They weren't on the National Register, but they're eligible for the Register. Once you're on the Historic American Building Survey, you're automatically Register-eligible, Bishop House being one of those and the Demarest House being another one. So, I would crank these out.

I think I cranked it out to the point where the school got a little tired of it. I think they felt, they're afraid that I might just turn everything [into a landmark]. It's one thing to save certain buildings, it's another thing to sort of like put them in a straightjacket, because you've got to consider the modern era and adapting to it.

Then, I found later, now, they like it, but there's a point in time which the school, at the top, higher levels (and this was after Gross had left) was a little getting wary of all the little historic nominations--but I was still being encouraged by, if you want to say "rogue elements" at the school or the Alumni Association, because they wanted to see these buildings saved. They felt it was a way to keep the old Rutgers alive. So, I did that.

Then, one of the people here who took an interest in this, a guy by the name of Bill Lyons, who was, at that time, head of the government relations with the federal government for the school, he got a Congressman interested in this. We pushed for the Old Queens Building to be elevated above just the National Register, of basically buildings that have either national or state importance, but aren't necessarily a National Historic Landmark, which is like the highest level, but he got the Congressman involved, we got people involved, to make Old Queens a National Historic Landmark.

So, the one building here that's a National Historic Landmark is the Old Queens Building. It's considered to have national significance, the architecture of the building. So, that was an interesting project, did that over a number of years. That was my little, mini claim to fame with the Alumni Association. It led [to], they put me on--again, a volunteer group--the Rutgers Alumni Association, and I got a little award. I was recognized as a Loyal Son for doing these various nominations.

To this day, I still feel like this little interest, or not little interest, but any building here on the campus, I'm always looking to see how it's kept, it's maintained. I look to see, "Are they keeping it up?" Now that I think about it, I actually gave them money for a plaque. There's a plaque on New Jersey Hall. It just says, "In the National Register," but I paid for that plaque. Then, I wrote a plaque in the Demarest House. The Alumni Association put a plaque in there for Demarest, like this one you have for the Bevier...

SI: Bevier House.

MB: Yes. If you go into Demarest House, you'll see the same thing for Demarest. I wrote that plaque. Because I was with the Executive Committee of the Alumni Association, they spoke to Dean McCormick, I sat down with Dean McCormick, asked him--they wanted to know if there's something that could be done at the time of the Bicentennial of the Revolution.

He said he thought the Chapel should have a plaque listing the alumni who were involved (or anybody at Rutgers who's involved) with the American Revolution. So, I wrote that plaque. I did the research for that. So, if you go into the Chapel, in the front, there's a plaque. I wrote that in 1976. The plaque was dedicated in November 1976, with members of the Frelinghuysen Family present, including Rodney, who later became a Congressman, like his father.

So, it almost all started with me meeting Mason Gross and him saying he didn't think [it was important]. If he'd said, "Oh, Winants Hall is the greatest building going. Nothing will ever be done to it," I would've said, "Okay," would've just let it go, but, then, I thought, "Maybe it might not be here."

So, one thing led to another--it's like a snowball. It was like a little project that became, ultimately, I ended up writing plaques on the campus. That's still been my focus. I think, with a lot of things, you can stretch yourself too thin. So, with Rutgers, what I've ultimately decided is, I just focus on the buildings. Because I was involved with the Alumni Association, it just got to

be too much work and it was too diverse. I figured, "Well, the best thing is, just what's your strength? Just go to your strength."

SI: What is involved in trying to save one of these buildings?

MB: Well, the thing about the National Register is, basically, what it does is, if a building's on the National Register, it then has to be given a review process if any state or federal money is going to be used to alter it. So, that's where I thought the magic would be of getting Winants Hall as part of a National Register site, because, if they're going to tear it down, they'd have to use state money. So, it meant the building would have to be given due process, in effect.

"You can tear it down, but you've got to show why," and I just sort of thought, "Well, that might slow it down a little." It turned out, what they did was, instead of tearing it down, they basically took the top two floors and just evacuated them. I don't know how familiar you are with [it]--I think you're too young to have known this--but, basically, for a while, they actually had a lot of the windows bricked in or cinder-blocked in, because they said, basically, "The top two floors are condemned. It's unsafe to even let anybody on," or the top.

Yes, they only used the two first floors--the other two, well, they said, "Fire hazard," and they blanked the windows. Then, I was told--I don't know if it was Maury Ayers or somebody else--had told me that, "They're thinking about renovating it, but they're really afraid that the thing may just collapse, because, when it was built, it was not an expensive building. There's no steel or anything. As big as that building is, it's just got wooden beams and these beams have rotted away. For all we know," there was some concern, they actually thought, "when we remove these beams, the whole building might, 'Boom,' just implode," but it didn't, luckily.

I looked at it--I took photographs at the time. They had all these cranes that took the roof off and they took everything out of the thing. The thing was solid. It stood on its own, basically, the four walls. Then, they put steel beams in.

Now, I think you'd need like a major bomb to knock it down now, but, essentially, I did the project to make sure that they would at least spend some money trying to either renovate it or, if they would decide to destroy it, that they'd give some second thought to it, but they're forms. There's basically a standard form.

What you have to do is, you have to describe the architecture of the building and its significance. Some buildings have significance just because of who's involved with it, if you have a famous person or whatever. In the case of the Queens Campus, you had some famous architect, John McComb, [Jr.], designed the Old Queens Building, designed New York City Hall, designed Alexander Hamilton's country home, which has just been renovated--so, a famous architect of the early 1800s--and the University association, the other buildings, sort of fell in with that.

They're all part of like a [story]. You could see the growth, nineteenth-century growth of a college; Demarest House, a unique piece of architecture associated with George Cook and the President of the College, Demarest; New Jersey Hall as a good example of Romanesque Revival

architecture, and I forgot the other thing to mention about [it]. The Queens Campus also had buildings by Henry Hardenbergh, the Geological Hall and Kirkpatrick Chapel.

[Editor's Note: George H. Cook (1818-1889), state geologist of New Jersey, vice president of Rutgers College, and fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, began his career at Rutgers in 1853 as a professor of chemistry. The Cook College at Rutgers University (later the George H. Cook Campus, after Cook College became the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences) was named for him. William Henry Steele Demarest served as President of Rutgers from 1906 to 1924.]

He was involved with this library here. It was the guy who put that library up, Sage...

SI: The Sage?

MB: Sage Library, trained him as an architect. He may have worked on this building--I'm not certain--but he also did Alexander. He renovated Alexander Johnston Hall and built these other buildings.

Hardenbergh was the most prominent hotel architect of his day. He designed the Plaza Hotel, which I was talking about earlier, designed the Copley Plaza in Boston, designed the Willard Hotel in DC, designed the Dakota Apartment Building in New York City, but his first buildings are here at Rutgers, so that these combinations made all these buildings a landmark, landmarkable. Bishop House was a Historic American Building Survey building. It was known just for being what it is--it's a prime example of Italianate Revival. Bishop was a prominent industrialist and he was a Congressman.

Then, Woodlawn was kind of an interesting hodgepodge of buildings. It was originally a Victorian building, but the last owner, the guy who gave it to the school, hired the McKim, Mead & White firm to come out and renovate it. If you look at it, if you go to certain angles, you can see the Victorian part, but they made it look like a Colonial building. So, that was a major architectural renovation. Anything to deal with McKim, Mead & White is significant.

So, each [met] the different standards--architectural firms, famous people, architects, general history, that sort of thing. So, I think that's what they're afraid of. When I started nominating things, they started realizing the Rutgers Campus encompasses enough stuff that's got somebody associated with it, one way or another, that it could have really gotten out of control.

In my mind, I limited it to anything that was pre-World War I. That's all I was going to do and it was just going to be like this, but I didn't really communicate that to them. They didn't know where I might strike next. [laughter]

SI: Was there anything on the Douglass Campus that you worked on?

MB: Well, the Woodlawn is on Douglass.

SI: Yes, Woodlawn.

MB: Yes, and then, what I thought was interesting is, to show how they had changed or some of the things had changed, someone (independently) at the school nominated the--there's another, College Hall or whatever, on the Douglass Campus, which I didn't even think of doing. They did [that] on their own, but that was also a Historic American Building Survey building.

In the 1930s, the Department of the Interior, as part of this Depression effort to get people back to work, they commissioned a lot of architects to go around the country taking photographs or measurements of buildings they thought were significant. So, anything that was thought significant enough to be measured by the Department of the Interior in the '30s was automatically eligible for the National Register.

So, that College Hall was one of those buildings. I just felt, "Okay, I've done enough." I knew that the school was starting to get a little antsy about it all, so, I didn't do College Hall. Then, I later found out, they decided to do it on their own. So, I realized that they've [changed].

At this point, people might be surprised to find that the school had real reservations about a lot of this preservation stuff. Now, they've got a historic preservation program through the Art [History] Department. So, it's really caught on. I still [keep up], and I know some of the Art [History] Department people. I'm a little bit involved with that.

I work with one of the Art [History] professors here--I'll try to get her name right--Archer St. Clair Harvey, and, also, I've worked with Carla Yanni a little bit. You may know her, too. She's gone back to being a full-time academic, but, for a while, she was in Old Queens as an administrator.

SI: Once you put together these proposals and submit them, is it pretty much done, or do you have to continue to fight for these things?

MB: Well, normally, each state has what's known as an SHPO, State Historic Preservation Office. So, it has to go to that office. They review the materials. If they want more, they'll ask for it, but, a lot of times--they're trained architects themselves or whatever--they can come out and take a look at it, decide if they like it. Sometimes, they may want more supporting materials. I didn't have too much of a problem with that.

A lot of times, I found that (sometimes) they would rewrite the proposals that I'd come up with. They felt it was enough to justify it, but they knew, like, some of the architectural terminology better than I would. So, they would "fancify" the proposal, but nothing I ever submitted was turned down.

Then, again, I was a little bit selective to begin with it. I mean, I began with buildings that were either done by prominent architects or had some historic person. It wasn't like I just saw a building out here on College Avenue and said, "Man, that's interesting." I'm certain there are some buildings out there on College Avenue that would merit it, but I didn't go down that route.

With Ford Hall, I mentioned that, too, that they're thinking about [changing it], when the comment was made. Ultimately, they decided, with Ford Hall, that they're going to repurpose the building. I like all these phrases people come up with, these ways of describing things, these diplomatic phrases, "To repurpose the building." It sort of says what it is, but I never would've thought--well, like this, this used to be a house; now, it's an office space. Ford Hall will no longer be a dormitory. I think the reason is the fire codes and things like that. Even though, for a hundred years, people have lived in that thing, it's no longer considered safe to live in. So, they'll turn it into office space.

I had spoken with, as I mentioned to you, a couple of people, Rich Levao, '70, and Omer Brown, '69, who'd been involved with the school. Levao actually called them to tell them that alumni like this building, that they ought to keep it up or standing, but it has architectural significance.

Even Carla Yanni, when I spoke to her about it, she said, "Yes, I mean, the building, actually, in terms of architects, probably the most famous architect to have worked at Rutgers, period, built that building," is a man by the name of Bertram Goodhue.

It's an interesting building. It's not one of his major buildings, but Goodhue did a lot of major work. If you're familiar with New York churches, he did the St. Bartholomew's [Episcopal] Church, which is on Park Avenue. It's near the Waldorf Astoria. It's right next to the Waldorf Astoria. He also did St. Thomas's, which is on Fifth Avenue. He also did the main library in Los Angeles, if you've been to Los Angeles.

SI: I have not been to the library.

MB: Yes, if you ever get a chance to go to the library, it's like a Byzantine whatever. It's really a stunning library. He got very much involved with Spanish Revival. It's a hodgepodge, but it's a fascinating building. Sometimes, it shows up in movies I've seen. It's a very striking building. He did that.

He did the state capitol for Nebraska. The state capitol was done by Goodhue, Lincoln, Nebraska, and it's an Art Deco skyscraper, of all things. I thought every state capitol was a variant on the one in DC, but it's not. I mean, there's a couple that aren't and Nebraska's not. I think the one in Louisiana is also not the typical style. It's always like a shocker to me when I see a photograph of this, but Goodhue's like a very famous architect and he did this dormitory.

SI: Have you been involved with historic preservation in your own community or anywhere off campus?

MB: No, not really. I think it's sort of like what I mentioned to you earlier--I realized you sort of have to have a focus of some sort and different focuses. I think, for architecture, this is it. This is my focus. I'd come back down here, look at these buildings.

Actually, I did work a little bit on the one at Columbia as well. I'd worked on the Low Memorial Library, which is an easy building. Columbia got worked up over that, too, even though they



have a big historic preservation program, because they're landlocked. They don't have that much land. So, if you start preserving their buildings, it can really impact what they can do.

So, they got a little worked up, but I ended up working with a guy by the name of Dolf (Adolf or Dolf) Placzek, who was the head of the Avery Architecture Library, and I also worked with Carolyn Pitts at the Park Service on the Low Memorial Library. She was involved a little with the Old Queens thing. So, I knew her from the Old Queens nomination.

Columbia's views were--I thought they should nominate their North Campus, which is the original McKim design--but I think they're a little wary, because they may want to do changes. So, basically, they narrowed it down to just the Low Memorial Library, because there's no way they'd ever do anything with that, because that's sort of the symbol of Columbia.

So, that was fine, but it's not unusual for people to react adversely to these things, because the National Register listings do not prevent you from tearing a building down. It just means, if you're going to use state or federal money, you've got to give it some kind of review process. It also means, though, that the state or the feds, to the extent they have money set aside, you can apply for it.

They've done that. They've gotten money for the renovation of the Kirkpatrick Chapel because it's a National Register listing, from the state. I guess they're renovating those stained-glass windows now, but, a few years ago, they renovated the outside and the roof using state money.

SI: I know they renovated Bishop House.

MB: Yes, Bishop House, too. So, I mean, some of this is because they're National Register buildings, they're able to [apply]--so, there is a plus.

The one thing is, if you're a National Landmark, to be a National Landmark, you have to agree to maintain the property. That's the only thing they have as a restriction, to accept that designation, you've got to, as part of that designation, agree that you will maintain and keep the structure up. The others, you're not obligated.

So, I think for Columbia, they just were wary of getting involved in anything, because, every now and then, they may want to change something. Even though (if you go up there) you think it's like this monumental campus, I mean, [if] you think about it, it's actually a tiny campus for a major university.

So, in fact, they're expanding Columbia. They bought, I don't know, ten acres or something. They're moving into what's known as--I think it's the Washington Valley, the Manhattan Valley or something. Basically, the area around 125th Street and Broadway, they bought up all those blocks. They're going to build a whole new campus there, because they just ran out of space. So, I think their fears were [justified]. To the extent they wanted to build anything new around there, they just didn't want to deal with another layer of bureaucracy.

SI: That leads us back to law school. Why did you choose Columbia?

MB: I applied to a number of different law schools. I got into Columbia. This is where the Owen Isaacs thing came in a little bit, [that] I was mentioning, because, just coincidentally, he went from being head of the residence halls at Rutgers to the head of residence halls at Columbia.

I approached him about being a dorm counselor up there, because it was going to be tight, affording it. He agreed to let me be a dorm counselor. So, having been friendly with him, I mean, I never really thought I'd be relying on him post-college, but it turned out I went up there. So, I was a counselor for one year in the dorms at Columbia.

I mean, I think, basically, what people try to do is, at least with the law schools, you try to go to the best law school you can. I mean, that's true of anything, but, basically, with law schools because it's like a career thing. Then, it's time to really start making the investments, if you can. That's why I went to Columbia. I mean, I applied to about five or six law schools. I guess, it's funny, at this point, I cannot remember, I think I was waitlisted at Harvard, but I'm not certain. I just don't remember.

That's why I was telling the little joke that Matuszewski told me about it, because I asked him to write a letter for me for Harvard. So, I think I actually got waitlisted there. So, he was partially right. Maybe if Matuszewski had been the world's greatest Slavic studies professor and written a letter for me, maybe the waitlisting would've been an admission--I don't know.

At that level, I mean, all these schools have got these phenomenal faculties and whatever. I mean, some of the professors I had were just the leading guys; there weren't that many women faculty at that time, but the leading men in their field. Now, the law school faculties are pretty diverse, but, in any event, you get the leading professors. Generally, these are professors who were like the top students in their law schools, clerked for Supreme Court Justices, that type of thing, have written the textbooks or are the living authority in a certain field.

When I was involved with the Alumni Association here, one of the graduates of the school was a guy by the name of Austin Scott. His father'd been President of Rutgers. He'd gone to Harvard Law School, and then, taught at Harvard. He was like the leading authority on trusts. If you mentioned "Scott on Trusts," people [know it]. I think it's still that way. (I mean, it's probably been revised by someone else.)

[Editor's Note: Austin Scott served as President of Rutgers from 1891 to 1906. His son, Austin W. Scott, RC '03, published the four-volume *The Law of Trusts* (now known as *Scott and Ascher on Trusts*) in 1939]

So, they decided to make him a Loyal Son. He was still alive. This is like in the late '70s or something. They nominated him. They wanted me to drive up to Cambridge and bring him down, but he was just too frail. He couldn't come down to New Brunswick.

That just came back to my mind, because when you're talking about why you want to go to some of these law schools, they have the guys who write *the* authoritative book in a particular field.

Scott had written--and, when I say "Scott on Trusts," it was like a four-volume [text]. It was like a gigantic thing in this one area. So, that's why I chose (or why I wanted) to go there, because the professors were first-rate.

I enjoyed law school. I was not one of the better students at the law school, but I enjoyed it because of just hearing these guys talk, hearing the interaction with the students. It was quite interesting. The Socratic method, so, you're called on in class to answer questions.

It's just kind of a fascinating [thing], if you're just looking at pure intellectual exchanges. That's why I think law school is kind of an interesting place to go. I don't think I would just go to it for the heck of it, though. I mean, it's three years, it can be a big expense and what-have-you.

I used to tell people that, "If you could, somehow or another, swing one year of law school, it'd be a great experience just to have that," because, mostly, basic courses and basic concepts of law, you learned in that first year there. The other two years, you're learning things that are helpful, but not quite like the level of first-year law.

You get constitutional law, you get torts, which is negligence, you get contracts, which makes sense, real estate. I mean, each one of these, these are all like the basic things that you're going to need. By taking them, you learned a lot about just everyday life or everyday business. So, I don't regret going there. I don't necessarily regret practicing law, but I just was glad to get out of the law when I did.

SI: Did you develop a specialty?

MB: Well, in law school, I didn't. I'm not certain that you really can, because they did want you to really diversify. You might be able to take a couple of courses in an area, but I don't think you'd ever [specialize]--it isn't like college, where you could really load up.

SI: You mentioned that you took an environmental law course.

MB: I took environmental law.

SI: Was that interesting to you?

MB: It was somewhat interesting. I mean, I think I was reaching the point--that's what I mean--sort of like towards the end, you're just trying to think of courses to take. They're well aware of this at the law schools, because a lot of law schools are trying to change the nature of law school, to make the last year either more practical or maybe the last semester more practical. Some of it's just too theoretical and you don't necessarily have to have three years of theory.

I had the commitment to the Navy. I was in the Navy for a little over three years, and then, I practiced for about three years and just decided I really didn't care for it. The irony is, I enjoyed law school--most people don't--but I enjoyed it just because of the way I approached it. I think if you're killing yourself to get really great grades, you're not going to enjoy it. It's like anything else--if you're killing yourself, it's just agony. I wasn't killing myself.

Then, the Navy was interesting--it was just criminal law. It's criminal law practice. Where else can you get good anecdotes? I mean, I was like a trial lawyer for about a year-and-a-half, and then, I was an appellate lawyer, handling defense cases, like the worst criminal cases in the Navy. It was like the type of stuff you'd see on TV shows. Although I was on the appellate level (not trying the cases), I mean, I had murders, arson, riots, rapes, you name it. If you have an interest in criminal law, it was just phenomenal training for that.

In fact, when I was in law school, I did take a course in criminal law. One of the professors there, he recommended people go into the JAG [Judge Advocate General] Corps if they're seriously interested in criminal law. I later ran into him, years later, told him I went into the JAG Corps. He was totally fascinated. We went out to lunch. I mean, he wanted to hear all these stories, because this was his great theory, that the JAG was the way to go in criminal law. So, he wanted to know what one of his students had actually experienced.

Then, I went into civilian practice at McCarter and English, which was basically a litigation firm, but on the corporate side, corporate cases. I didn't care for that that much. So, I went to a New York firm, because I developed an interest--one of the cases we litigated was in the area of trademarks. So, I went to a law firm that specialized in that; realized I didn't care that much for the trademarks.

I figured, "I've been exposed to everything," really, from my perspective. So, then, I went back to school and got a business degree. Then, I graduated from business school in 1980. So, I've been in one form of business experience or another, largely finance, in one way or another, since then, though, sort of, if you will, side trips, because I worked for Dow Jones for about a couple of years as a corporate bond reporter.

I also worked for the Standard & Poor's rating agency, though not in the rating capacity, but on the stock. They do stock reports. I was doing stock reports. I did stock reports for about five years, in the energy area, oil and utilities.

SI: Going back to Columbia and your law school degree, that was still during the Vietnam Era. Was there a lot of antiwar activity on campus?

MB: Yes, there's a lot of [it]. I mean, first of all, it was like the second worst year at Columbia in terms of disruptions on campus, because I started in '69, but the Spring of '70 is when there was the Cambodian Invasion, in which everything exploded. That was the year of Kent State. The Columbia Campus, this is when the Weathermen were getting going with their bombings.

[Editor's Note: From April to July 1970, American and Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) forces conducted the Cambodian Campaign or Incursion to eliminate Communist forces in eastern Cambodia. On May 4, 1970, Ohio National Guardsmen fired on students at Kent State University, killing four and wounding nine others. Some of the students had been protesting the United States' entry into Cambodia, while others just happened to be nearby. The Weathermen or Weather Underground, a more extreme and ultimately violent splinter from Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), operated from 1969 through the late 1970s.]

They experimented [there]. Columbia never really broadcast this very well--if you're familiar with Columbia Campus, there's a statue of Alma Mater, which is in front of the Low Memorial Library. That was bombed and bombed in the sense that it was dynamited--and so much so that this thing was like almost blown off its base. The statue was crumpled around. They got some alumni to pay for the thing to be refurbished. If you went there now and you looked at it, you'd never realize the thing had been dynamited.

At the time of the Cambodian Invasion, all these college campuses erupted. Sure enough, Columbia did, and it was an incredible thing. I was a counselor in the dorm. I saw the New York Police force come out en masse on the Columbia Campus. What happened was, there was students or people--I'm not even certain that many students--but people started at Times Square and marched up Broadway to Columbia.

They essentially paraded around the lower campus, where the dorms were, pulling out the pavers--the pavements were red-brick pavers--pulling them out, just heaving them through all the windows on the ground floors of all the buildings ringing the campus. The police came on campus. They learned a lesson at Columbia from the '68 [unrest], where they had the police charging the students and like really mayhem.

They didn't do that this time. I was told (though, I don't know if it was true) that they had a different president of the school at that time. His name was Andrew Cordier. He was only president for like a year or two, but he'd been involved, a very senior official, at the UN and was apparently very well-versed in diplomacy. I could see this, because I was on the fifth floor of Hartley Hall. So, I could watch how the police were being deployed.

[Editor's Note: Andrew W. Cordier (1901-1975) served as Columbia's Acting President from 1968 to 1969 and as President from 1969 to 1970.]

Instead of actually just lining the police up and charging across the field, what they did was, they lined the police up at various entrances, and so forth, didn't have them do anything. They just lined them up. The people were, right, marching around, throwing their bricks, and so forth. Then, it suddenly dawned on them that they'd been surrounded by the police. It was very quietly done. They just stopped and they just sort of walked off the campus.

So, instead of using the police force to crack heads, they just used the police force to establish a presence. As I said, it's done, as I thought, Cordier being the diplomat, in a very diplomatic manner, so that there was physical damage to the campus, but nobody, no students were hurt, no outside people were hurt. They just ended it--but they ended the academic year.

At least for the Law School, it was like you had the option of either taking a pass/fail exam or being graded, if you wanted. They just figured, "If you just want to get off the campus, we'll just give you a pass. Get out of here." So, it was very disruptive, but, even over the course of the next two years, there were still the occasional disruptions.

Now, when I was at that University Dorm Council, the dorm I was in had the Navy ROTC, had an office on the ground floor. That was firebombed. Although the dorm didn't catch on fire, the office caught fire. This is when I started to realize how people die in fires. The dorm had two stairwells on either side. So, I had to go back and forth between the two stairwells, because I was the counselor for one of the floors, and wake everybody up, make sure everybody got out of the dorm.

I got a lot of smoke inhalation, not so much that I had to go to the hospital, but enough so that I could taste the smoke for a couple days afterwards. I realized, "That's what kills you, is the smoke inhalation." You hear about these fires and people dying, you think, "Oh, it must've been a horrible death--they were burned." Even if they were burned, there's a good chance they were suffocated from the smoke inhalation beforehand.

I wouldn't recommend it, but, if you're ever [in a fire], I would say definitely stay low to the ground and get out. You don't want smoke inhalation, because it'll kill you. I mean, basically, your lungs won't function.

So, that was an interesting experience, [laughter] but that job, I got through Owen Isaacs. So, I was always grateful to him for that. It was just like a fluke thing.

SI: You graduated in mid-1972.

MB: '72, yes.

SI: Then, you went right into the Navy

MB: I had to wait a couple of months, but I went in, I think, by October of '72. I had to pass the bar exam. So, I took the DC bar exam. I made the mistake of relying on--I went into one of the dean's offices and asked him about it. It didn't matter which bar exam you passed; they didn't care. So, I wanted to go someplace where there was no residency requirement. I wanted to be able to take it quickly and whatever.

So, he recommended the District of Columbia bar. I still remember him saying, "Oh, Columbia graduates don't have problems with it, just the Columbia biography." "Oh, okay, it's going to be easy." I misunderstood what he meant, because I got down there, I was taking a review course. I said to somebody, "I understand this bar is not that hard to pass." The guy looked at me, "What? Are you crazy? No, it's not an easy exam."

It was three days of essays. Most bar exams, even then, were only two days, but the DC bar was three days. I think, though, the one reason, they had the lack of residency requirement, the way they countered that--because everybody would just come flooding into DC and take the bar exam, practice there--was by making it a very tough bar exam.

I thought, "Ugh," I couldn't believe it. So, what he meant was, yes, Columbia Law School graduates do pass it and it's not that challenging, but it doesn't mean it was an easy bar exam, and it wasn't. I was really [challenged]. I passed it, but still.

So, I went into the Navy after finding out, like in October of '72, that I'd passed, and then, [went to] the first duty station. The funny thing is, I wanted to stay in the New York area. So, I put down the Brooklyn Navy Yard and I was hoping I'd get it. One of the guys I served with--it was the Navy Annex at the Brooklyn Navy Yard--one of the guys I served with was from Little Rock, Arkansas. I was talking to him about it.

I said, "Well, what'd you think about it? Why'd you come from Little Rock?" I thought he was going to say, "Well, I always wanted to go to New York," or something like that. He's from Little Rock. They gave you a "dream sheet." You get like five or six choices. I put New York first and these other things. He said he put New York last on the dream sheet. He said, "I found out, if you put New York anywhere on the dream sheet, they gave it to you." [laughter]

Here I was, like begging them to send me to New York. The detailer (that was the name or the title of the guy who assigned you) didn't tell me that, "We're looking for people for New York." Apparently, New York was considered a hardship station and nobody wanted to go there, because the Navy--they didn't care where you were--you got the same salary.

So, whatever they paid you was [fine] for most people in the Navy. They were living in New York--they couldn't afford it. So, they didn't want to go there. It even included the JAG officers, didn't want to go there, but this guy, to his credit, really took advantage of New York and said he was really glad he got it.

They were closing that station down, and then, I got to go to Washington. That one, I really did beg to get, because they wouldn't have necessarily been bad stations, but I just didn't really want to get sent like to some isolated part of the country. I luckily got Washington.

SI: You had to go for officer training in Newport.

MB: Yes, Newport, Rhode Island. I had one summer, the summer between--I guess it was between second and third years--in Newport. Yes, that's right, second and third years.

The next summer, I went to school there also for justice school. The first summer was what was loosely referred to as "fork-and-spoon school," which meant that they sort of taught you the various protocols of the Navy, like how to wear a uniform, that kind of stuff, [laughter] because we weren't going to be in command of people or in a combat situation.

We did have the option of going to the gun range and firing guns, which I did. I did it. I had a forty-five and I was firing away with the thing. I said to the guy who was the instructor, said, "This is kind of interesting."

By the way, I didn't hit the target once. It's incredible. I watch these TV shows and the guys are like, "Bang, bang." You're watching the stuff and the guy like shoots the gun out of somebody's hand. I'm firing a forty-five and he said, "It takes a while." I just said, "I'm so absent-minded, I'm convinced, before I hit that target, I'm going to shoot my foot," and these are powerful guns. So, I didn't go through with it.

Some guys figured, "Well, I'll get a medal." If you get proficient, they'll give you a medal. So, they wanted to get a medal while they're in the military, but, essentially, it was just learning the protocols of the Navy for one summer. The next time we were there, it was just learning the various unique aspects of military law, but it was nice.

I mean, Newport, Rhode Island, in the summer, who's going to [protest]? I can't complain. It was stunning, it was beautiful. You wore your summer whites, beautiful. You're on the Narraganset Bay--I mean, people pay to go there. I mean, I was getting paid to go there, whereas most people, if they're ever in Newport, [are] paying to be there.

SI: At the Brooklyn Navy Yard, that was when you were acting as a trial lawyer.

MB: Yes, I was a trial lawyer. Most of the cases I had were just AWOL sailors, occasionally, had something a little more serious, an occasional little petty thefts, assaults, things like that.

One of the judges, interestingly, one of the judges, it was near the end of his Navy career, was a guy by the name of David Sheehan, S-H-E-E-H-A-N. He became one of the senior attorneys (and I think the managing partner) of a firm here in Newark. It used to be called Crummy, Del Deo, Crummy actually being an Irish name. At a certain point, they finally said, "We can't call it [Crummy]. We just have to drop this name." He was a wonderful lawyer and, obviously, [they kept it] while he was alive, but who's going to hire a law firm that the first name is Crummy? So, he became the managing partner of that.

The next time I saw his name in the news was with the [Bernie] Madoff case. You've probably seen that they have, basically, a trustee for these people who've been swindled. He is the trial attorney for--the guy who is the trustee is Irving Picard, but his assistant is David Sheehan, this guy I served in the Navy with years ago, is the guy who's actually, when they have to litigate, Sheehan's the guy out there litigating it. He's been on TV, I've seen. I was thinking, "There he is again."

So, again, forty years later, somebody crops up again in your life, and I remember him. What I remember about him was (a great exercise, knowing this guy), even though military law is not the same as, let's say, civilian law, it still requires a temperament, a judicial temperament. He had that. When people talk about a judicial temperament, I know what they mean, because he was very even-handed. He would listen to everything.

I thought, "Gee, this is what judges should be," because I would get wrapped up in something and you're not supposed to do that as a judge. You're supposed to really apply the law as the law is, balance society's interest and all this stuff. Sheehan was great at that. So, I think, when I heard that he was involved with this Madoff case, they chose wisely.

SI: Are there any anecdotes from your time there in the Navy that stand out?

MB: In the Navy?



SI: Let's start with the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

MB: The Brooklyn Navy Yard, the anecdotes are not that good, in the sense not that they were bad, but they just weren't that interesting. I did have one case at the NAD Earle--that's the Naval Ammunition Depot Earle. It was down here in New Jersey. At virtually any Navy facility, there was a Marine detachment. They tried this one Marine who was basically a bad actor. They just wanted to get him out of the Marine Corps. They wanted to give him a bad conduct discharge and just get rid of him.

So, they had a whole series of charges against him. As they were presenting their evidence, I realized that their evidence had nothing to do with what they charged this guy with. So, actually, I got my client to go on the stand and said, "Look, I'm going to put you on the stand and have you testify as to what you did."

They didn't have like somebody who's trained as a lawyer conducting the trial. You don't have to. The military requirements are that the defense counsel has to be a lawyer, but the prosecutor does not have to be a lawyer. I guess the judge did not have to be a lawyer for lesser cases. So, they're trying it away and didn't seem to think there was anything odd about me having the defendant take the stand and admit to all the things he did.

Then, I moved for a dismissal of all the charges. The guy was totally flabbergasted, didn't know what to do. So, he called a recess and he went running down to the office to talk to the commanding officer, who was a major.

So, it shows it wasn't that big a command. He was just a major--not to poo-poo that. In the Marine Corps, a major is pretty significant, because any officer at a certain level, the Marine Corps being so small, being a bird colonel, a full colonel, is like a god in the Marine Corps. So, the Major understood what I had done. He knew what I had done.

So, the guy comes back and he dismisses the case, but the Major isn't going to let me off that easy. He calls me in and he says, "Look, I know you had to do what you had to do. I understand you're a defense counsel--you have to represent the guy--but," he said, "look, this guy is a bad actor." He said, "We didn't get him this time, but he's just going to keep misbehaving." He said, "What you've done is, you've just delayed the inevitable."

Sure enough, like two months later, he's court-martialed and thrown out. It's the same thing. They just knew. I think, the next time, they knew how to write up the charges, so [that] they wrote them up correctly, but that was an interesting case.

I also thought it testified to the fairness of the Marine Corps, in the sense that they weren't going to ramrod the guy out and they weren't going to ramrod [the system]. Just because they mischarged him, they weren't going to say, "Well, we made a mistake. He's out anyway." They observed the rules. So, that was an interesting anecdote on that side.

On the other side, at the barracks in Brooklyn, I knew a lot of the Marines because they performed what was [inmate transport]--they were "chasers," which meant they had to take the

prisoners out of the brig and bring them over. They had their clubs and they would just sit while these guys were being interviewed by us or whatever. So, I knew a lot of them.

So, they told me an anecdote one time, which I thought was kind of amusing, but it was sort of the other side of the Marine Corps. As they were closing down the facility, everyone's getting a medal for good service or whatever, as part of their time in there. One of these, if you want to call them "bad actors," one of the Marines refused to take the medal from the Colonel.

I mean, you don't do that with a colonel. In the Marine Corps, when you address an officer, you don't say--in my case, you would just be called, "Lieutenant Barr," or something like that--but, in the Marine Corps, it isn't, "Colonel Barr," it'd be, "*The* Colonel." They would say, "Would the Colonel," this or that?--because I learned that the hard way.

I went sailing into the Colonel's office one time and just sort of forgot to address him as *the* Colonel. He stopped the conversation, said, "You have to address me as the Colonel, properly. It's not Lieutenant, it's not loose--it's Colonel this or Colonel that." I said, "Okay."

So, anyway, this enlisted man refuses to take the medal. So, I knew, "Okay, this is a big problem," after my own introduction to Marine Corps protocol. So, the Sergeant Major promptly walks up to this enlisted man and decks him, just punches him in the face, knocks him right down. He yells out, "Did anybody see anything?" The whole rank of Marines say, "No, Sergeant Major, no." [laughter]

So, the enlisted man then said to me, "But, the Sergeant Major's a little worried that somebody [might talk]. This might leak out and, the next thing you know is, there'll be a blemish on his record. He might get court-martialed."

Anyway, that's the level of my anecdotes, nothing really big--but, when I got to Washington, really big cases. I had one guy who stabbed his wife with a Thanksgiving carving knife, killed her; had some drug mastermind killing people; had another case where some Marine (this is out at Camp Pendelton) had the brilliant idea that he would kill a Marine, and then, take other Marines to the site where he left this guy and say, "You give me all your money or I'll do the same thing to you." These are just records of trial.

I had another guy who got fed up with his roommate because his roommate was messing up their bunk area or something like that. He came back one night, found his typewriter upside down in the middle of the floor. He went over and took out his gun and shot the guy point blank in the face. That was the end of that guy.

[We] had one Marine--I didn't have this case, another one of the officers had this case--where a Marine sergeant found his wife was fooling around with another Marine sergeant, went into the showers with a gun, shot him right there, killed him in the showers. The guy who's defending him said to me, "I don't want to ever meet this guy. I've seen his correspondence. I mean, this guy is so hostile and so full of rage, still at this point, I just [don't]."

So, these are the human-interest stories. I mean, the human-interest story I had with the guy who killed his wife, I used to tell people this when I was practicing law in the civilian world, especially when I was at a meeting where people were doing contracts. They'd go, "Ugh, I can't take this anymore." So, I'd start telling my anecdotes about the murderers and stuff, because people want to hear these stories. They're kind of fascinated by human-interest stories. That's why people watch these crime procedural shows on TV, because of the human interest.

So, to me, that was the high point of the law. I mean, I enjoyed law school, when most people were like killing themselves. I mean it's not that I didn't work there, but I just realized I was not going to make the Law Review, so, I might as well make the best that I could for what it was and come out with a really positive experience, which I did. I always look very fondly at the Law School. With the military, I try to put the positive there, great anecdotes about the criminal law and I still tell these criminal anecdotes to people.

So, anyway, I don't know if that's what you're looking for. I did have one case that was interesting. I had a case of a guy and I still remember his name--his name was A. Q. Howe, his initials, A. Q., Howe was his last name.

You couldn't actually get thrown out of the Marines. Now, the military is set up so that, if you realize it was a bad idea, a bad fit, they'll discharge you. They'll just get you out, but, back then, you just couldn't say, "I made a mistake. I shouldn't be in here." So, you'd have to engage in bad acts. Then, they'd throw you out. They'd give you a bad conduct or, if it wasn't bad behavior, a general discharge.

So, this guy was doing a lot of AWOLs. If you do enough of them, they'll throw you out, but they ask you, at the trial, though, make sure that you weren't pressured into asking for a bad conduct discharge, if you were pressured. He said, "No," this was at Quantico, which is in Virginia, "no, no, I've got a job in the District of Columbia waiting for me. I just want to get to this job." So, they said, "Okay, you're out."

I got a letter from the guy about six months after the trial, saying, "Can you get me back to the Marine Corps?" So, I figured, "Okay, this job didn't work out for the guy, because he wants to go back in the Marine Corps." There's nothing I can really do for him.

I think it was either that Sunday after I got the letter from him or two weeks later on a Sunday, I was reading *The Washington Post*. Then, I see, "Gunman Killed At IHOP," and I'm looking at it closely. It said, "The gunman is identified as a man by [the name of] A. Q. Howe," my client. It was my client, had tried to hold up an IHOP and was killed by the DC Police, or maybe it was the Maryland police, whatever it was.

Apparently (and I didn't realize this), on the border with Prince George's County, one of the Maryland counties that borders DC, there's a lot of people going back and forth, but the jurisdiction's very loose as to where the police are. So, there are a lot of these crimes literally on the border.

So, this guy had figured out--he thought he'd get away with a crime by holding up the IHOP, and then, dashing back into DC, safe. He figured they wouldn't follow him. Well, unfortunately for him, the police had caught on to this idea and, actually, had staked out this particular IHOP. So, they got into a gun battle and that was the end of it. So, yes, those were my anecdotes.

The guy who stabbed his wife with a carving knife, I had a letter in the file from George Wallace--Wallace was Governor of Alabama at the time--got a letter seeing if I could get clemency for his client, because his children were living with his parents in the foothills of Alabama. I still remember that, "The foothills of Alabama, being taken care by this elderly couple. Could you please get him clemency?" anyway.

SI: When you were on the appellate side, you were not in actual trials.

MB: No, [in] appellate, the trial had already been conducted. So, your job was to go through the record of trial to make sure there are no errors or that the trial is properly conducted. So, you might see, if something was, you had to make sure the evidence was there and that they filed the proper procedures.

It was very hard to get something overturned. In fact, if anything ever really happened, quite often, it would happen because--the military had their own appellate judges-sometimes, the appellate judges (just like in our civilian court system), they're aware of something that has to be addressed. So, they'll take an issue, like the Supreme Court sometimes will take cases because they see an issue there that has to be addressed and it hasn't been addressed. So, they figure, "This case is the way--we'll address it through this case."

One of my cases, one of the few cases I had where I got any relief, the judges spotted something I never even thought of. It was duress as a defense. In criminal law, if you're forced to do something by somebody on the outside, you can say, "Well, I didn't really want to do this. I was forced under duress to commit this crime."

They spotted that in one of my cases and they wanted to establish the duress defense in the military. That was, I think, the only case I ever won, and it wasn't even one that I raised as an issue. [laughter] It was because the judges decided, "We want to establish this principle in the military justice system."

We would have to prepare a brief for each case. You'd always find something. You'd cite something or another, but you knew that most of these things weren't going to go anywhere. I'd write these like two or three-page briefs; I would write like short briefs.

We used to joke, internally, if it was better to just waive the case. We'd refer to those as "waiver winners," which meant we wouldn't raise any issues, because we often found that the judges, almost perversely, would look for something. If we put a waiver in, if we waived it, they would look, to just sort of like, "We're going to get these guys," the appellate defense attorneys. "We're going to make them sharp. We're going to spot issues that they didn't spot."

Then, we had this big debate, "Were we doing more for our [clients]? Who did we have more of an obligation to, ourselves, in effect, to writing a brief, or to the client, get the client relief? If you had a better chance of getting a client relief by not raising an issue, then, just waive it through." We had this ethical debate, "Should we do just waiver winners, where they got relief, or try to get it through the briefs?" because, generally, you got more relief when you didn't raise anything as an issue.

SI: Did you work directly with your clients at this level?

MB: The clients, in some cases, they'd already served their sentence. The more serious actors were at Fort Leavenworth. Fort Leavenworth was where, if they got like a bad conduct discharge, usually, you could only get like six months in the brig. Sometimes, they would just be confined locally, but the dishonorable discharge, you could get life. Some of those guys, if you're a murderer or something, you're in Leavenworth.

Now, the guy who I had who killed his wife with a Thanksgiving carving knife, he had some correspondence with me. I may have spoke with him on the phone; I can't remember. At least one or two of these guys, I spoke to on the phone--but I did get him clemency, because he was a senior enlisted man. He'd served like ten years.

It was like a fit of jealousy type thing. He found his wife was (he was fairly certain his wife was) carrying on with another sailor. So, he confronted her over the Thanksgiving dinner. He claimed he'd blanked out. He just didn't realize he'd picked up the knife and she ran into it. No one could really disprove it, though most people assumed that he actually just killed her.

So, he did get a sentence. So, they found him guilty of some kind of manslaughter or something like that, but, what I'm building to is, they do have a clemency board, aside from the judicial boards there. I did get him clemency. They bought the argument that his kids were living with the elderly parents and that his wife was dead, so, someone had to look after the kids.

So, I used to tell people it was the old orphan defense, "I killed my parents, I was an orphan--please give me mercy." In this case, "I killed the wife, the kids were orphans--please give me mercy," and they did. They let him out, but he sent me this letter, a really strange letter (or, to me, a strange letter) in which he said, "Well, I feel badly. I still think about my wife, but she acted wrongly, so, she deserved what she got."

So, I thought, "Well, this is really something else." So, I asked a couple of the women in the office, who were the secretarial support staff, what they thought of this. They agreed with him. I was kind of like shocked.

They were Southern women. They were from Virginia or something like that. So, I think it's sort of like some of the Southern honor codes. It's like an honor code type of thing, because I thought, "Well, this is a little extreme. It's one thing, maybe, if he wanted to sock his wife, it's one thing, but to kill her is something else." No, it was okay.

Oh, yes, one of the women told me--this is [when] Elvis was still alive--"Lieutenant Barr, if I could have a night with Elvis, I'd do anything to have a night with Elvis." She and her husband, he would come and pick her up at work.

Some of the characters I ran into, they were just fabulous. They had this Pontiac, a big Pontiac convertible, drive right into the navy yard. She'd go racing out there and jump in this Pontiac, "Phew," racing off the base. I just thought--this is in DC--like the nation's capital, where everything's like very staid and to see this couple in their Pontiac racing down the streets with the top down.

SI: You mentioned earlier that this was a period where the post-Vietnam demoralization was very palpable.

MB: Yes, I learned a lot from it, because we had Marine officers, especially at the appellate review activity. Because it was a fairly big activity, we had a lot of Marine JAG officers. I learned a lot from them about [Vietnam].

By the way, though, if you're in the Marine Corps, you're considered a combat officer no matter what, as opposed to the Navy JAG. These guys, every year, had to pass the physical, I mean the running and all the physical stuff. So, they were in great shape, as opposed to some of the Navy officers, [laughter] but I would talk to them.

They said that, apparently, there'd been a program that McNamara, when he was Defense Secretary, had pushed, which was to sort of allow people into the military who they might not normally take, give them a second chance.

You'll see this like sometimes even in movies today, but, especially in the World War II era, they'd always have a movie with like the sad sack who shaped up in the military. Well, it turns out, actually, if somebody's a really semi criminal, the military's like the worst place for them, because they can't adjust to the discipline. They're even worse in the military.

So, anyway, McNamara brought in this whole group of people, I mean, fifty or sixty thousand people. They were saying that these guys like created a whole business for the court-martial system, essentially, but they were telling me these stories.

[Editor's Note: Project 100,000 began recruiting men in October 1966 and continued through December 1971. These soldiers, who generally tested low on IQ tests, became known as "McNamara's Misfits" (among other pejoratives) due to Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's belief that their mental capabilities could be improved through technological means, such as videotaped courses.]

In effect, people were so resistant to going into the military, I guess they thought, "Maybe we'll take," people [who] had like juvenile records or things like that. You'd think maybe they'd shape up. They wouldn't; they were even worse when they got in the military. The Marines that I talked to were indicating that just like the morale was down, the people who were in weren't at the level they should be. The military was sort of cracking [down].

Then, I later read this--there was a lot of study of this--just what I'd heard from them, the rolling the grenades under the tent, that type of thing. That happened at such a point, towards the end of the Vietnam Conflict, the military was just destroyed--I mean, the officer corps is one thing, but the people, the regular troops.

I'm not trying to knock everybody who was in there, but what I'm saying is, there was enough problems with discipline and just getting people to do their work and whatever that the military gladly got out of Vietnam. It took them years, I mean, really a long time, to rebuild the military.

If you read about that era, it's kind of a fascinating thing, because you just think, "Oh, everybody's *gung ho*. They want to do this," blah, blah, blah. At a certain point, I think they realized the damage it was doing to the institutions, the military institutions. It wasn't like World War II, where people were willing to (more than willing to) do stuff.

SI: The demoralization was stuff you heard about, not stuff you experienced.

MB: No, I didn't really. I mean, the only thing you'd experience [was some nuisances].

I wasn't saying it was because I was a JAG officer or what, because, I mean, the thing is, if you were a staff officer, the line officers have uniforms that are slightly different in terms of the insignia. So, they could tell right away, by looking at like your shoulder boards. You'll have a star on your shoulder board if you're a line officer. If you're a JAG officer, you'd have like some other type of symbol, or like the doctors would have medical symbols or something. So, they could tell right away.

They knew the staff officers really weren't like the guys who would enforce discipline. So, a lot of times, the enlisted men would just like ignore you. They wouldn't salute, things like that. So, I think that was relatively minor. I just wrote it off to their being [frustrated]--or they do fake salutes, to try to get you to salute. They'd go, "Ah." They could still go like this--I mean, then, they'd scratch their head instead of saluting. You'd be like saluting an enlisted man. It was like stupid little things like that.

I just thought it was, again, because they don't like lawyers. When I saw these guys, though, who had been Marine officers who'd really been in combat situations, they'd been to Vietnam, even if they weren't in the field in the sense of going out there with guns, but were close enough to the military activity to know what was going on, that's where I got my stories from, the anecdotes or my senses.

I did not experience that kind of disrespect, if you will, that these guys were talking about, or the nature of the people, or they would see how pitiful that some of these guys were as soldiers.

SI: Were you discharged or were you just put on inactive duty?

MB: Well, it's funny you mentioned that--I just opened a bank account where, if you're a military veteran, they waived the fees or something like that. So, I said, "Why not?" I had my

DD-214, which is what you get when you first are released from service, but my discharge was actually like six years later.

So, I was like in the Inactive Reserve. I never had to do anything, but, in theory, I guess during that timeframe (I think it was like six years), they could have called me back to duty. At that point, the military was just so [into] downsizing and everything, for them to call me back would've [been exceptional].

Of course, they never did, though there was someone in my class--I think he's a chaplain or something--who went back. He stayed in the Reserves and, at our fortieth reunion, which would've been just a couple of years ago, he showed up in his uniform. I don't know if he was in Afghanistan or not, but he was overseas. I mean, he was like in combat areas.

I can't believe a guy from the Class of '69--when you look at this yearbook, you'll see there are pictures of people burning their draft cards--is on active duty in the military, just was like shocking to me. He walked the College Avenue parade; he was walking down there in his camouflage uniform. It was a real uniform that he actually wore on a daily basis.

Yes, I didn't think about it. I mean, some people did. I had a couple friends who decided to stay in the Active Reserves. I just was glad to get out. I just didn't really want to. It was a couple of weeks a year. It's not that much time. If I look at it now, maybe, maybe differently, but, at the time, it didn't make any sense. [laughter]

SI: When you got out of the Navy, where were you living?

MB: It's funny, because we actually lived there for a long time, we lived in Harrison Towers, right here on Easton Avenue, 575 Easton Avenue. So, I was looking around for a place and we just figured it was easy. I knew I was going to work in Newark, so, I could just go down to New Brunswick, a good train ride--even when I worked in New York, a good train ride, and, even when I went to graduate school for business, a train ride.

We lived there for a long time. It was only about fifteen years ago that, then, we moved out to Bedminster, the Hills development. So, I lived in that Harrison Towers building for a long time, off and on. We had one interruption. For a while, we thought, "Well, we'll buy a house." We bought a townhouse up near the athletic center, and lived there for maybe a year or two, then, went back to living in Harrison Towers.

We just liked the apartment better, but I think, at a certain point, we just figured, "This isn't going to make sense." I mean, I could live here forever, but we wanted to have a house. So, I wanted to build some equity in a house. So, we moved and we've lived there since, but I haven't lived in that many places, even though I moved around a number of places when I was a kid. Maybe because I did do that as a kid, I didn't necessarily like that.

I've had a lot of jobs, different careers, over the years--when it's come to living, since I was in the Navy, I've only lived in Harrison Towers, three places, three different places, in, I guess, forty years. So, that's one place of stability I can see.



The one thing I will say about moving around a lot as a kid--at the time, I didn't like it, because you get pulled apart, you have your friends, you have to make new friends--but that's it, I can always make new friends. I said that to one of my friends when I was leaving the Navy, said, "Oh, we won't see each other anymore." I said, "No, we'll make new friends." He said, "Well..." I said, "No," because you learn that. Once you can accept that idea, I don't feel uncomfortable.

I've done a lot of marketing jobs as a result. I worked in banking for a while. Even now, where I am, where it's not directly banking, but I make calls, business calls, I don't feel uncomfortable going and meeting people for the first time, because I had to do that. For a lot of times in my life, I was the new kid on the block. So, once you get used to that--so, inadvertently, my parents prepared me for the new world of change.

SI: You and your wife got married while you were in the Navy.

MB: Yes, absolutely. We would've gotten married when I was in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, but we got married in her hometown, which was Ridgewood. She had the minister for her church, but we also had Father Lambelet, Clarence Lambelet, co-officiated the wedding. We stayed close to him.

So, it was a nice gesture and he agreed to do it. I mean, co-officiate, I'm not so certain what he did. [laughter] If I look back on it, I really think of her minister as being the guy that really honcho-ed that, but he was there as well. He must've said a few words or a few things.

It was nice, I think, because, in effect, we knew each other because of Father Lambelet. Otherwise, I don't know if Helen and I ever would've met. I mean, it's funny you know her name, too, which confirms what she said. I'm going to tell her this anecdote, that you know her name, everybody, because she keeps telling me that and I sort of believed it, because she tells me that, but you've confirmed it to me.

SI: Yes. [Editor's Note: At the time, Mrs. Barr worked for Rutgers University in its RIAS accounting system. Prior to the interview, Mr. Barr and the interviewer discussed how her signature was prominently displayed on many related documents, which led to her being recognized by many throughout Rutgers.]

MB: Yes, and RIAS, she mentions that all the time. When you said RIAS, I'm not so certain I know what it stands for, but I've heard that name over and over again.

SI: Rutgers Integrated Accounting System?

MB: Oh, is that it? okay.

SI: Administrative System?

MB: Yes, whatever. Yes, she talks about that, so, I know. So, when you said that, "Oh, yes, I've heard of RIAS." [laughter]

SI: You obviously have had a long career and I have kept you here for quite a while, but I just want to ask about any anecdotes or memories that you have from each period. When you were practicing law, you said you really did not like it, but does anything stand out?

MB: Well, the thing for me about the law was, I found that I didn't enter--I guess nobody does--enters the practice thinking that I'd leave it. I did like law school. I just knew that I wasn't setting myself up to work for one of the big Wall Street type law firms. What I found was that the practice was much different from law school.

Law school, you could make [it, in] a sense of being sort of interesting, intriguing, if you like, almost like it was a gigantic liberal arts college experience in a certain way, only it was a more narrow field. A lot of the law is just drudgery. I couldn't get that interested in the cases. I found that it wasn't that interesting.

If you're representing people, you've got to throw yourself into the case. You can't be, "I could care less," that type of thing, and I really didn't care less if somebody didn't honor a contract, didn't really matter to me that much. So, I just realized, "I don't have the right mindset for this."

Then, I've since found out that I'm not the only one, that the law is one of these professions that has a tremendous dropout rate. It's maybe as many as forty percent of people with law degrees just don't practice.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

MB: So, I don't really have any great anecdotes about civilian practice. I mean, I wish I could tell you something that was fascinating. I mean, a couple of cases were interesting, but nothing like the law where you're dealing with, as I said, like TV show plots, which is what the Navy JAG turned out to be.

In terms of [afterward], I went to school. I was in investment banking for a while. That was sort of interesting. I mean, I worked at Kidder Peabody, which has since gone the way of most investment banks. It's totally disappeared. I worked at Manufacturers Hanover. I find banking, as a concept, a very interesting area.

The other thing about banking (and business in general), you're more the actor. In the law, even if you're your own boss, if you will, you're always doing something for somebody else. You're in a service capacity, whereas if you're in business, and this is what I finally decided, made my [mind up], you're the actor.

In fact, I met somebody in business school whose dad was a lawyer. He said his impression of the law was, from his father's practice, "In some ways, lawyers are like garbage men. They're picking up other people's messes." That was how he described the law. Well, it's a little bit like that, but, basically, it's not the center, whereas banking could be (or whatever).

I liked marketing a lot, too, the interaction with people. I'm still fascinated by marketing concepts. When I go into stores, especially department stores, I always try to figure out how they're trying to sell things. I've noticed a lot of department stores, when you first go into them, they have like the perfume departments. So, it leads me to believe perfume is a high-margin item. They're always having people around giving samples out, so, they're really trying to [push it]--the psychology of how you sell things.

The other thing I've always had a fascinating thing with was, again, businesses' succession planning, how you come up with your successor and the way to do that so that the business continues. The thing that got me thinking about that is, of all things, an actor from the so-called Golden Era, Cary Grant.

I don't know if you're familiar with him, but he retired at age sixty-two. The reason he did it was--he could still make movies and they still kept sending him scripts--he was an actor in romantic comedies and he felt that he wasn't credible anymore, even though people wanted to see him. No one was going to believe that a sixty-two-year-old man was chasing after women in their twenties.

In reality, he was, but, on the big screen, he didn't think that would play. In fact, his last romantic comedy was a movie called *Charade* [(1963)]. He made certain--I think it was his idea--to have Audrey Hepburn chase him. There's a romance, but he doesn't initiate it.

I thought, "This guy planned his career." He realized it's not going to go on. So, he just retired, did something else. For years, I was thinking about, listen to this, with Paterno, Joe Paterno, thinking, "What's this guy doing? Clearly, he doesn't have any succession planning. He's not thinking of the future, whatever." I realized he just wants to be the guy with the most winning record. He's sticking around way beyond the expiration date--and look what happened.

The irony is, I mean, this guy, if he'd retired like ten or fifteen years ago, he might not have been the winningest coach, but he probably might go down as being one of the greatest coaches. Now, I think people, they'll think of "Paterno, scandal," and then, "Asterisk: he won a lot of games," the reverse.

[Editor's Note: Joe Paterno served as head coach of the Penn State football team from 1966 to 2011 when he was fired in the aftermath of the Jerry Sandusky (his former defensive coordinator) child abuse scandal.]

So, to me, this is all what business is about, just thinking about planning different things--marketing, succession--just how you function in different ways. So, that's part of why I went into business, because it seems to me like it has more to do with a proactive way of dealing with life.

I found this current position I have is very fascinating, because it deals with a country I studied in college, Russia. It's part-time, so, I don't have to do it every day of the week. Then, we have this art project we're working on now.

So, it just seems like a great way to, like I'm saying, do what Cary Grant did, "Get out while it makes sense and do something that makes better sense of your talents. Don't stay too long at something, so that you end up not being able to get involved with your succession planning (or whatever you want to call it), the next stage. Always be prepared for the next stage." [laughter]

I'm laughing because, for me, sometimes, the next stage is only six months out, because I keep moving around, but anyway.

SI: Is there anything else you would like to add for the record?

MB: I think that's probably [it]. I probably have overtalked myself here.

SI: No, I am very thankful that you answered all the questions fully and candidly.

MB: All right.

SI: Thank you very much. I appreciate all your time.

MB: Okay.

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Reviewed by Hami Asif 8/25/2024

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 9/3/2024

Reviewed by Michael C. Barr 9/16/2024