

EI-738

ALBERT HANSON

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SIGRIST: Good afternoon. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Monday, April 22nd, 1996. I'm in Woodbridge, New Jersey with Albert Hanson. Mr. Hanson was at Ellis Island in the Coast Guard for about three weeks. He believes it was sometime near the end of 1945 at that time. The tape may also pick up some songbirds I can hear out in the backyard. And Mrs. Hanson's in the kitchen and we may hear a little kitchen noise. Anyway, thank you for letting me do this interview, kind of by coincidence. Can I ask you for your birth date, Mr. Hanson?

HANSON: My birth date is June the first, 1925.

SIGRIST: And where were you born?

HANSON: I was born in Fall River, Massachusetts.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh. Can you give me a little bit, sort of a thumbnail sketch of your family background?

HANSON: My family background? My grandparents came my Shlesik Kolstein [PH].

SIGRIST: Can you spell all that for me, please?

HANSON: Oh, I can't spell Shlesik Kolstein. [chuckles]

SIGRIST: We'll find it.

HANSON: Yeah, but in the late 1800s my grandfather came over to get away from the Kaiser, because at that time the Kaiser was taking the young boys off the street. He came over here with my grandmother. And we wound up—they wound up in Massachusetts. And they came through Ellis Island at that time. And I was born in Fall River, Massachusetts. I came to New Jersey when I was six months old, been here ever since.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about growing up and maybe how you developed an interest in going into the Coast Guard as you were growing up.

HANSON: Well, I grew up on the water all my life. I knew about the Coast Guard. I always wanted to get into Coast Guard because it was a smaller unit or outfit than the Navy. And I felt there would be more opportunity for me in the Coast Guard than would be in the Navy. And at that time, the Navy was underneath—or the Coast Guard, pardon me, was underneath the Navy. And we traveled the world also.

SIGRIST: Tell me a little bit about, perhaps, your parents' views of the military.

HANSON: Well, my father was in the Army in the Cavalry in World War I. But fortunately, he never made it over to Europe. And he spent, like—like, two or three years in the Cavalry. And that's about his extent of the—his service. And I enlisted when I was 17 years old in the Coast Guard.

SIGRIST: And this would have been—

HANSON: 1943.

SIGRIST: 1943. Wh—you mentioned a little bit why the Coast Guard. What was sort of the general feeling at that time in the country? I mean, this is the middle of World War II.

HANSON: The feeling?

SIGRIST: Yeah.

HANSON: Well, it was all patriotic at that time. I know a lot of the fellows in school, they waited to be drafted but they were all enthused that they knew they were going to go. And I just couldn't wait so I went. But at that time it was all—it was patriotic where everybody was patriotic. Yeah.

SIGRIST: Did you have any family members, older, who were serving in the war at that time?

HANSON: No, no. I was—I'm the only son.

SIGRIST: I see.

HANSON: You know. [chuckles] Just to add a little humor to it—I guess it wasn't humorous to my mother—I skipped school, went up and enlisted on a Monday. Wednesday, I get a letter to report Friday. So I had to tell my mother I was going in the service. Then a big war broke out at home and finally, my father convinced my mother to let me go because I wasn't of age. I signed a note—signed by her. I wrote a note and I signed her name to it and that's how I got in.

SIGRIST: Tell me what the process was for enlisting at that time. What did you have to go through?

HANSON: I had to go to New York. I forget now—42 Broadway, I guess it was, take a physical. And you had to be in perfect shape. I had a couple teeth I had to have taken care of before that Friday when I went in. And I had that taken care of. If not, I would not—got in Coast Guard. You had to be in excellent shape.

SIGRIST: The physical, were they looking for anything specific?

HANSON: No, your teeth, your eyes, your hearing. Oh, your—your being. And they didn't want anyone that was going to be sick on them or anything like that, or no—I know a fellow went up with me to enlist. He had a leg he had hurt in football. And he had a slight limp and they wouldn't take him, even with a slight limp. So—

SIGRIST: I'm going to pause for just a second so I can rearrange your microphone here.

HANSON: Sure. I'm slipping?

SIGRIST: Ah, yeah. [unclear]. That should be better.

HANSON: Okay.

SIGRIST: How long did the whole process take, the whole physical?

HANSON: Ah, the physical? The first one? I would say, oh, maybe 15, 20 minutes. But the second physical when I got to boot camp, that one took maybe two hours by the time you got your shots and everything else. At least two hours.

SIGRIST: How long was it from the time you took your initial physical to enlist and the time you were sent off to boot camp?

HANSON: Time I enlisted? One week. I enlisted on a Monday and I was in boot camp on that Friday.

SIGRIST: Oh, so it was very quickly then. And where did you go to boot camp?

HANSON: I went to boot camp in Manhattan Beach in Curtis [PH] Bay.

SIGRIST: And how long was that experience?

HANSON: I spent three—three months there. And when I finished my boot camp I went to school in Curtis Bay, Maryland. And out of all the choices I put in for schooling, they picked out cooks and bakers. So I became a cook. And that's what I did the rest of my time in my service. I—I cooked.

SIGRIST: That's great.

HANSON: [chuckles]

SIGRIST: Tell me—I'm just curious. What—what kind of training did one have to undergo to be a cook or a baker working food service in the Coast Guard?

HANSON: Well, I spent three months in school and we went to classes. We had to cook at every meal, three meals a day when—certain times. Then we went to school at night. And it was just continuous that way for three months. And after we got out of there you—you were—they called a striker. That means that you went to school and from there then I went aboard ship and got my rate.

SIGRIST: And what ship was that?

HANSON: I went on the CGR 1903 [PH]. We—we checked convoys and—

SIGRIST: What does that mean, checked convoys?

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HANSON: Ah, we were checking ships going in and out of New York harbor. We'd go out and meet them and we'd check to see how many ships made it, how many didn't make it, who made it, who didn't. We checked all the ships coming into New York harbor, going out of New York harbor. And we used to go out for maybe nine days straight and come in for three.

SIGRIST: Do you have any stories about this experience checking ships coming in and out?

HANSON: No. Oh, except we used to get some lobsters. We used to check lobstermen out too. And they had to check with us once in awhile and we used to buy lobsters from them for a dollar a dozen. [chuckles]
So—

SIGRIST: Those were the days.

HANSON: Oh, yeah.

SIGRIST: [laughs] Well, tell me a little bit about, you know, how you ended up at Ellis Island for those three weeks.

HANSON: Well, when I got off the CGR 1903, well, I had to go into a pool. And they would assign ships to you. And I got on the General MC Meigs AP116, which was going—leaving New York and going down to the Philippines and from there we're going to invade Japan.

SIGRIST: Say the name of the ship slowly, please, with your head [unclear].

HANSON: Oh, it's U.S.S. General MC Meigs—M-E-I-G-S.

SIGRIST: Thanks.

HANSON: It's an AP116. It's a transport, carried over 5,000 troops. The ship was 563 foot long by 75 foot [unclear] and drew about 25 foot of water. And cruising speed was only about 18 knots. We were fully armed. We had five-inch guns; we had four of them, had four 1.1-inch guns. And we had 20 [unclear] or 20-milimeter guns so we were fully armed.

SIGRIST: And this was going to Japan, or to the South Pacific.

HANSON: Yeah, to the South Pacific to pick up troops. We went down there empty. We went through the canal. We went down there empty to pick up troops to take to Japan.

SIGRIST: The Panama Canal, I assume you mean.

HANSON: Yes.

SIGRIST: Right. And how long did you stay on the ship?

HANSON: Oh, I—I would say about five months altogether, something like that.

SIGRIST: Uh-hmm.

HANSON: It was a good ship. Too bad I couldn't get on it earlier.

SIGRIST: And then what happened at the end of that five months?

HANSON: At the end of five months I went to Alameda. They decommissioned the ship at Hunter's Point in San Francisco. Then I went to—to Alameda, which is adjoin—adjoining town, which was a boot camp, but we also stayed there to get transportation back to the East Coast. Come back to the East Coast, I went to Brooklyn Navy Yard and got discharged.

SIGRIST: How did they get you back to the East Coast?

HANSON: I come back on a troop train, took five days to go from [chuckles] one coast to the other. I went on Santa Fe Railroad, the Wabash. I don't know—went all over the country by the time we back—got to New York. Five days on a train.

SIGRIST: Just filled with—were they just Coast Guardsmen or were they all different military—

HANSON: All Coast Guard.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

HANSON: Most of the—it's quite a big train. They were all coming back to the East Coast.

SIGRIST: So you went to the Brooklyn Navy Yard and then you were decommissioned.

HANSON: I was dis—I was discharged.

SIGRIST: Discharged. Excuse me.

HANSON: Yes, I was discharged.

SIGRIST: Decommissioned. [laughs]

HANSON: Yeah. [chuckles]

SIGRIST: Sorry about that.

HANSON: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Then what happened?

HANSON: Then I went home.

SIGRIST: To Fall River?

HANSON: No, went back here—

SIGRIST: Oh.

HANSON: —because I've lived—lived here. I come down here when I was six months old.

SIGRIST: That's right. You said you came to New Jersey but we didn't ascertain where in New Jersey.

HANSON: Oh, to Perth Amboy—

SIGRIST: Perth Amboy.

HANSON: —which is the adjoining town. When I was around 12 years old we moved to Fords and Fords is part of this township, Woodbridge Township.

SIGRIST: That's F-O-R-D-S.

HANSON: F-O-R-D-S.

SIGRIST: [unclear].

HANSON: Yeah. I grew up there as a youngster, got married and bought a home here and stayed here ever since.

SIGRIST: Well, so, when you—when you were discharged, then where does Ellis Island fit into this? Were you then—how—how did you get to Ellis Island in all of this?

HANSON: I got between the ships.

SIGRIST: Before the—the General Meigs?

HANSON: Before the General Meigs—U.S.S. General MC Meigs. Before then, I wound up at Ellis Island.

SIGRIST: Bef—all right. So before you were put on the General Meigs was when you were at Ellis Island.

HANSON: Yes.

SIGRIST: On—

HANSON: I had to carry—I went from the CGR 1903 with my sea bag over my shoulder and suitcase and got—took the St. George Ferry over to the Battery and took a little picket boat, they call it, and going over to Ellis Island.

SIGRIST: Tell me what the first day at Ellis Island was like.

HANSON: Well, [chuckles] Ellis Island to me was a cold, barren place. Of course, I wasn't stationed there so we didn't get the best of quarters. Where we—where we slept, it was a big room just full with two-decker cots or beds, whatever you want to call them. It was cold. There's many nights I slept with my pea coat on and my clothes with a blanket over me. It was cold. The wind would blow through those corridors like you'd never believe. It had water bugs that took off at you. They'd fly. I just didn't care for the place. I couldn't wait to get off of it and I—I always wondered how my grandparents made out, or what they thought when they landed there, and if it was in that condition when they landed. I'm sure it was in better condition than during the war because—

SIGRIST: Okay.

HANSON: —I guess during the war they just—it was makeshift. And I—it was just—to me, it was a barren place. I couldn't wait.

SIGRIST: And the intention was to just keep you there until you were put onto the next ship.

HANSON: That's correct, yes.

SIGRIST: Tell me what you did for those three weeks while you were there.

HANSON: While there?

SIGRIST: Yeah.

HANSON: Well, being that I wasn't part of their personnel, I helped out in the galley. I peeled potatoes with a potato—potato-peeling machine. You put the potatoes in big and they come out small. They just grind them away. And that's what I did for three weeks until I—I got to board the ship, the Meigs. Then I cooked.

SIGRIST: Did you have to participate in any kind of drilling or anything like that?

HANSON: Yes, on the Meigs I did.

SIGRIST: But at Ellis Island?

HANSON: Ellis Island, no. An interesting thing, I met Sid Cesar at Ellis Island. He was in the Coast Guard. I was just going to—just before I left there, he come in and he was a seaman. And I met him about a year later; he was the chief. So—

SIGRIST: Sid Cesar, the comedian.

HANSON: Yes, Sid Cesar. So he—he was in the Coast Guard too.

SIGRIST: Tell me—during those three weeks that you were at Ellis Island, tell me what the average daily schedule was. What time did you wake up?

HANSON: Oh, I used to wake up, like, oh, maybe five in the morning.

SIGRIST: And was your wake-up time different than most of the other Coast Guardsmen's wake-up time?

HANSON: No, their—theirs was about five in the morning. I got up about the same time. Of course, I didn't have to go prepare breakfast. But I would go into the galley and breakfast was about six o'clock. And I'd just help out wherever they needed me.

SIGRIST: So what would happen from five to six? I'm just trying to get a—

HANSON: Oh. See, not—

SIGRIST: —daily sort of—

HANSON: I wasn't—when I wasn't working in the galley my time was free, because I wasn't a permanent personnel. I was just a guest, I guess you'd call it, there. And the little chores they gave me was just in the galley peeling potatoes or helping out whenever I wanted to. I had no fixed schedule. I just—of course, I couldn't go ashore or anything, you know, until they—

my turn came. I think I got ashore about every third day or something like that.

SIGRIST: What—do you remember the officers and the people who were giving you orders?

HANSON: No, I—

SIGRIST: Not their names necessarily, but things that stick out in your mind about—

HANSON: No, I don't. The only thing I remember, when I got there they wanted me to turn in my liberty card, or my pass—Coast Guard Pass, you'd call it. And I wouldn't turn it in. I kept it in my pocket because I wouldn't let that go to anybody.

SIGRIST: Why do you think they wanted you to turn that in?

HANSON: Well, what they do is they—they—they collect it and they give it to you when you go on liberty. You couldn't get on—go on liberty without it. You had to have it to go on liberty. But I couldn't turn mine in. I kept mine and they didn't argue too hard.

SIGRIST: What about recreation for the people there? I mean, was anything offered to you in terms of [unclear]—

HANSON: Not that I know of, no.

SIGRIST: —or something.

HANSON: Nope. I just sat around and bided my time and waited to get off. I know there was Japanese prisoners of war on the island.

SIGRIST: Why do you know that?

HANSON: Because some of the fellows that were guarding them told me. They had the Imperial Japanese Marines. There was some there. And they were on the other side. We were in—as you come off the ferry, as—if I remember right, there was a big building there—the old ferry slip. There was a big—we worked there right into the building. That's where we stayed. On the other side is where they kept some prisoners of war.

SIGRIST: Do you know anything else about that? Things that the—your—

HANSON: No.

SIGRIST: —colleagues might have told you?

HANSON: No. The only thing I know, it was very cold coming back at night to—the ferry—it was—go back and forth—would stop around six o'clock, wouldn't run anymore. Then when you'd come back they had what they called a picket boat, just a small boat. And you couldn't go inside because there wasn't enough room. You had to stand out on the deck, like—I guess maybe the thing was no more than 30 foot long. And it was cold. And they went across that bay at—in the winter and after awhile it was fall, and it was cold. I used to try to get along side the smokestack from the engine room and lean against that to try to keep warm, getting back to the island.

SIGRIST: You said that you were allowed off the island maybe every third day or so.

HANSON: Something like that, yeah.

SIGRIST: Where would you go and what would you do?

HANSON: Well, I used to come home because it was easy for me to come home. I used to just catch the St. George Ferry. I could take the little—they called it Rapid Transit across Staten Island, take the ferry at the end, which was running now into Perth Amboy, and took the bus and come home. It would take me, oh, an hour, hour and a half to get home.

SIGRIST: What about for the men who didn't have families so close? What—what—

HANSON: Well, they used to go to the USO or go down to Broadway and just kill time down there.

SIGRIST: And then were there—

HANSON: And come back.

SIGRIST: —restrictions as to when you had to be back and—

HANSON: Usually, the next morning you had to be back but a lot of them come back to sleep. If they had time off, they didn't have the money to—to rent a room or anything. So they would go out during the day and nighttime they'd come back and go to sleep there. And if they were off the next day, they'd go back in the morning and do the same thing all over again.

SIGRIST: I see. Since you were in the kitchen working the peeling machine—

HANSON: Yeah. [chuckles]

SIGRIST: —what other things stick out in your mind about—about the kitchen facilities that were there to feed the Coast Guardsmen?

HANSON: All I remember is in the galley itself was tile, white tile. Where they fed them, I don't remember too much because I didn't get in there down where the chow line was. I was in the galley part.

SIGRIST: You were fed in the kitchen?

HANSON: Yeah, I used to eat in the kitchen. I—I didn't bother. The other way, I'd have to get in line. And so I didn't get in line. I used to eat in the kitchen and I know they had a dishwasher. I never got assigned to that.

SIGRIST: You mean a dishwasher machine or—

HANSON: Machine. Right, a machine.

SIGRIST: Were—were—all the people who worked in the galley, were they all Coast Guardsmen or were there civilians who worked there?

HANSON: No, no. They were all Coast Guardsmen as far as I know. I didn't see any that weren't, that were civilians. They were all Coast Guard.

SIGRIST: What kind of food was being served?

HANSON: It was the nor—it was the normal food. [chuckles] Like I always hear remarks, "Oh, we got beans," and all this. No, very seldom you get that. The food was good. It was good food. In the morning you'd have either pancakes or eggs, or scrambled eggs or hard-boiled eggs. I don't remember fried eggs. I—I cooked fried eggs on the small boat but not—not when you've got a lot of people. It's either scrambled or hard-boiled, and cereals, hot cereal, cold cereal. Lunches, you've got your regular meal, the same as your dinner. You could get your regular meal with dessert and all. The meals were good.

SIGRIST: Was there—was there a place at Ellis Island where you could go and buy anything, if you wanted it?

HANSON: Not that I remember. They—you used to have to go to St. George. St. George, Pier 18. That's what they called small stores. That's where, if you wanted to go buy shoes or clothing or whatever, you could go there and get it.

SIGRIST: Get on one of these picket boats or—

HANSON: And—and you go to shore and you take the St. George Ferry over and it was right there. You just walked down to St. George Ferry. It was within walking distance.

SIGRIST: Do you remember—these picket boats that you're talking about are smaller vessels.

HANSON: Yes.

SIGRIST: Well, what did the regular boat that went back and forth to Ellis Island—

HANSON: It was a ferry.

SIGRIST: Uh-huh.

HANSON: A small ferryboat. And I think—I'm not sure but I think that's the one that sunk over there some place in Ellis Island. There's one under water or someplace and it might be that one. It's only a small ferryboat, not one of the larger ones.

SIGRIST: Does anything stick out in your mind about—about being on that ferry at some point, perhaps seeing something that you remember or—

HANSON: Not really. No, it was just a regular small ferryboat and just the smell of saltwater going back and forth. In those days, you could smell the salt in the water. I don't—don't know about now. [chuckles]

SIGRIST: The harbor smells. [laughter]

HANSON: That's—yeah. [laughs]

SIGRIST: [unclear]. Tell me about disciplinary measures or anything like that. Does any of that stick out in your mind, either a colleague of yours or— or you being called up for something that you did at that time during those three weeks?

HANSON: No, I had a clear record and the guys were with had clear record. Usually, on land bases you didn't find too many problems. Maybe at sea but not on land, and there was no problems at all.

SIGRIST: Oh, and am I to believe, from what you say, that actually things were perhaps were a little more lax?

HANSON: No.

SIGRIST: No?

HANSON: No, they were tight. They're a tight ship. But there you obeyed the rules. During wartime, you obeyed—obeyed the rules.

SIGRIST: What were some of the rules during that—those three weeks that you were there? What were some of the rules that had to be obeyed?

HANSON: Oh, I had to make my—my sack. I had—that had to be made at all times.

SIGRIST: And can you describe what a sack is?

HANSON: A sack is your bed, your—it had to be—bed would consist of a mattress with a cover on it, and a small pillow with a cover on it and one blanket. That was it. And that had to be straight, all straightened up in a neat order, blanket—blanket neatly fold—folded, your clothes in order. We had a locker then too. That locker had to be neat and that—that was about it.

SIGRIST: What—

HANSON: Shoes shined.

SIGRIST: What clothes had been issued to you at that time? What—what would be in your locker at that time?

HANSON: Oh, just my pea coat then. The rest was in my sea bag because I didn't unpack. I didn't want to stay that long. But the clothes that were issued to me were paid for by me. When you went into the Coast Guard at that time they took so much a month out of your \$30 or whatever it was, \$36 a month—so much to pay for the clothes that they give you. So I paid for my own sea bag.

SIGRIST: And then—and then when you were discharged, did you keep those clothes?

HANSON: Yes, they were yours. Yeah, I paid for them. Well, three years, I had replaced a lot of clothes—you know, in three—three years. And they were my clothes. Yes, I took them all home.

SIGRIST: We should say, for the sake of the tape, that a pea coat—you've mentioned this a couple of times—is a dark blue—

HANSON: Blue.

SIGRIST: —heavy wool—

HANSON: Yes, coat with a high collar. And it was very warm. It was a warm—

SIGRIST: Did you have a dress uniform?

HANSON: Yes, I had dress blues and I had undress blues. The dress blues, I had tailor-made because—

SIGRIST: What's the difference between a dress blue and a non-dress blue?

HANSON: A dress blue is the ones with the stripes on the collar and cuffs. And they were—they were better material. Undress blues were—they were blues—blue uniforms with no stripes on the collar. It was just like a working clothes and blue—blue pants. We had the pants with the buttons, 13 buttons with the flap with the 13 buttons on them. And my undress blues were wool. And they were—they were warm and all but I didn't wear them too much.

SIGRIST: Was there an inspection process that you had to undergo?

HANSON: In boot camp we had—they called sea bag inspection. You had to lay all your clothes out in order on the—on your bunk. They were all rolled. They had to be rolled. They had to be tied a certain way and laid out a certain way. And they used to come and check to make sure they were—done that and you had every piece of clothing that was issued to you, whether—

SIGRIST: Who did the inspection?

HANSON: Usually, like in boot camp, usually it was the—a chief who was in charge of your barracks and a gold braid [PH]. That's some officer come—

SIGRIST: A gold braid?

HANSON: Gold braid.

SIGRIST: You mean, like [unclear]?

HANSON: A commissioned officer. Yes, a commissioned officer. A chief would be a non-commissioned officer. And they would come and they would check everything. These shoes, check the—

SIGRIST: Whoops.

HANSON: Check—they would—shoes. Make sure your shoes were shined and your dress neat, plus your sea bag. Everything had to be in order.

SIGRIST: In the—in the three weeks that you were at Ellis Island, did you have an occasion to—to be in a dress uniform for any reason?

HANSON: Just when I came ashore. All the other times—being a cook, I wore my white—white pants and my T-shirt and a white apron. And sometimes the cooks had—if somebody hollered I wasn't wearing one, I would put it on. Outside of that, that's what I wore mostly during the day.

SIGRIST: Yeah. Can you describe for me the potato machine? I've never heard—

HANSON: Well, the—

SIGRIST: —a description of this.

HANSON: The potato machine looked like an old-fashioned washer machine and the bottom was wavy. And it looked like it was—had sandpaper on it, a rough. And you would just dump the potatoes in there, put the cover down, turn the water on, turn the machine on. And it would turn around slowly and it would—and it, being wavy on the bottom, would rotate the potatoes and just took the skins off. And you just kept going until all the skins were off. And sometimes those potatoes got pretty small.

SIGRIST: I was going to say, and most of the potato too.

HANSON: [laughs] Yeah.

SIGRIST: You mentioned before the water bugs, which makes me think that they're—

HANSON: Ah!

SIGRIST: What sticks out in your mind about them?

HANSON: About the water bugs? They were about, oh, I would say an inch—inch and a half long. They were what they call water roaches, really. They had wings and they would fly. And it always seemed like they would fly at you. Now, they probably weren't but it always seemed that way. And the place had quite a few of them.

SIGRIST: Where did you see these? What part of the—

HANSON: All over. I didn't see them in the galley but I'd see them where we were sleeping. That's where I'd see most of them.

SIGRIST: Were there any other vermin that you remember being on the island?

HANSON: [chuckles] No, that's—that's the only ones I remember.

SIGRIST: [laughs] No good rat stories or anything?

HANSON: No. No rats. Just these water bugs and they were big.

SIGRIST: W—where were you allowed to go on the island?

HANSON: The only place we could go was just in our own barracks, or I guess you call them barracks. That's it. We—we couldn't roam.

SIGRIST: I see. So a good deal of the island was off limits to you.

HANSON: Yes. They had it, like, parts of it was fenced in with high fence—I guess where they had some prisoners and stuff. That's—was all fenced in. It was—we couldn't go near that.

SIGRIST: Did the Coast Guard have any medical facilities there that you know of?

HANSON: Not that I know of. But they had one on Staten Island. When I was on the 1903 I had my eyes checked; I had to go to that Marine hospital on Staten Island. And that's where they would send us.

SIGRIST: I have to ask you this question. The ship that you just referred to, the 1903, is that part of the number of the ship or is that the actual name of the ship, like—

HANSON: No, it was—it's called—

SIGRIST: —the year, 1903?

HANSON: It was the CGR 1903. That was the number and it was called the New Jersey.

SIGRIST: I see. Because you've mentioned that—

HANSON: Yeah.

SIGRIST: —a couple of times and I was wondering if the name of the ship was 1903 or that was just part of the number of the ship.

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HANSON: The reason we—I always say 1903 is because that's the way we used to refer to it. Instead of saying the New Jersey, we say 1903. It—that designated it with that—it was that New Jersey, because there was other ships named New Jersey.

SIGRIST: I see. Well, Mr. Hanson, I want to thank you very much.

HANSON: Oh.

SIGRIST: This has been most interesting. I haven't heard a—a good water bug story from the Coast Guardsmen for a long time. [laughter]

HANSON: That's the only thing I remember is the water bugs.

SIGRIST: The lasting Ellis Island memory. [chuckles]

HANSON: Yeah, and it was cold.

SIGRIST: And it was cold. This is Paul Sigrist signing off with Albert Hanson on Monday, April 22nd, 1996 here in Woodbridge. Thank you very much, sir.

HANSON: All right. Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]