NPS-110
DR. HARRY SILBERMAN
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RUSSIA, 1907
AGE
RESIDENCES: Pinsk, Russia
Jersey City, NJ

CRAIG: Yeah, I do. (microphone disturbance), Okay, I'm talking with Dr. Harry Silberman here at 35 Broadman Parkway, Jersey City. And it's 12th day of …

SILBERMAN: 12th day of September.

CRAIG: September 1978. Okay, Dr. Silberman you were born in 1898 …

SILBERMAN: 1898.

CRAIG: And…

SILBERMAN: January 1, 1898.

CRAIG: And where were you born?

SILBERMAN: I was born in Pinsk, Russia. Pinsk is the city on a very important river in Russia. It's actually a part of, originally from Poland, part of Poland. It's the breadbasket of the Ukraine.

CRAIG: Well, um, do you remember what--what Minsk, what Minsk was, uh Pinsk, I'm sorry, what Pinsk was like. Can you describe your life there, your family's …?

SILBERMAN: Yes, I--well, actually I recall the city was a very bustling; I used to walk down with my aunt to the waterfront to see the boats, rivers—river and the boats were there. And around the age of three, of course, we were—we had a tutor, our education was started right at that time. Actually the house that I remember, my house, was on more or less of an estate consisting of a very large house having two others houses along side, one along side of it, one about fifteen hundred yards away from—had a long yard with barns. And right behind the barns was a tremendous big, part of a stonewall—a high stonewall. We used to climb up that wall and imagine it to be a castle or something. We don't really know what it is. But that probably belonged to my grandparents.

CRAIG: So you were rather well-to-do, your grandfather, at least, was well-to-do.

SILBERMAN: Well, we don't know. He was a silversmith. My grandpa was a silversmith. And we never saw him, constantly, he used to come and visit us occasionally. He traveled all over the world to my point of view. He was a guild silversmith, and it seemed to me that no matter where he went he'd come back with tales from Antwerp, Rotterdam, Holland, Amsterdam, from London, from America, there was a job waiting for him at all times. Actually, the raising of the children, they had only two children, unmarried, but they had--my mother was a child of theirs, who died in 1898.

CRAIG: And as you…?

SILBERMAN: I was born, no, she died about nine months after I was born. And immediately after she died my father, then he left for America.

CRAIG: His reason for going to the States?

SILBERMAN: Well, I don't know his reason, but it seemed to me that during that time there was a great deal of ups--upheaval in Russia:. pogroms, and tragedy. And many people as possible tried to leave Russia if they could. And in those days leaving Russia was no different than leaving Russia today. You couldn't get a visa, and you couldn't get a permit. So it was all underground railway. And it was a very well conducted railway, evidently, because as a kid I never really heard of anything that was obstructing them. We had--our last (?) was an aunt of mine, which was the last one of the family to leave. My sisters, my brother and my uncle.

CRAIG: What year was, what year did you leave?

SILBERMAN: I was about seven-and-a-half years old.

CRAIG: So about it was about 1906 or so? 1905, '06, right.

SILBERMAN: It was 1906.

CRAIG: Uh-huh. Okay. How did you leave the country, now? How did you escape?

SILBERMAN: Well, coming back to the house of my grandparents.

CRAIG: I'm sorry.

SILBERMAN: My grandmother, during the occupied time, she had the only big house in the area, and the only house that contained a big oven, with big baking ovens. And because of that, she did a lot of, keep herself busy and feed the children. She had a small grocery store along side of the house there. She would bake, uh, baking for a matzo factory on Easter. And I recall during the winter months when the oven used to be shut down, still it would retain the heat, I used to climb up on the top of the oven to keep the, all the kids would climb on top of the oven, and that's where we slept.

CRAIG: You had how to keep warm.

SILBERMAN: It kept us so warm, it was beautiful. And I don't recall anything as discomfort. Occasionally we would go outside and play, until we'd hear the clatter of horses' feet and we'd see a bunch of Cossacks come down, four or five men on horseback, and snapping their whips. And, of course, we kids, we used to run and hide underneath the porches away, get away from there, so they wouldn't see us. But generally speaking we had no discomfort, no trouble while we were there. And when it was time for us to leave, all arrangements were made evidently, and we just took whatever belongings we could carry. And we got on a hay wagon. And to this very day, every time I look at the map it seems a tremendous undertaking because we actually left Europe from, from, what's the city's (?) ?

CRAIG: Bremen?

SILBERMAN: Bremen. Now, if you look at the map, you see that, this is from Pinsk to Bremen. It's quite a distance to travel, and most of the

traveling was done under, at night. We would have protection by soldiers who was hired by the company that took us, our underground passes. And they would stay and protect us from marauders and robbers and things like that. But if they saw any border guards anywhere's at all, you jump out of the wagon and hide out in the wheat field. So we actually had no difficulty. We finally reached about a hundred yards of the border, we were told to get off and run. Now, whether it was necessary to run or not, I don't know. I was just (?) that's as far as they went and we went over there. And, of course, once you got into the German territory, everything was safe.

CRAIG: But you weren't issued a visa. Did you at any time run into any sort of problems, or did they provide you with papers, or did you …

SILBERMAN: No, no papers. Everything was arranged through the underground evidently. Because at no time, and it was only, were we held up, except in Bremen we were given an examination. And I recalled I had the possibility of, uh, eye, uh …

CRAIG: Trachoma?

SILBERMAN: Trachoma. And they put me in the hospital for two days, and they found that everything was all right, so they let me go, and then we got on board ship. And, of course, it was a quite an experience because the ship was a, I don't know what they call the ship itself. All I know that if we went near to the side of boat, we could just put our hands right into the water, see.

CRAIG: You were right down there in the bottom of the steerage.

SILBERMAN: We were right in the steerage. And we'd look and we'd, our bedding was spring mattresses. Springs, no mattresses, just plain ordinary springs. Hammocks. And ample food that we ate was potatoes. We'd go to a barrel, and we'd get herring's and we were given a lot more bread. And it doesn't seem that we had any other food at all except that which was thrown down to us by the first and second Class passengers who would throw food down at us from the …

CRAIG: From their decks above?

SILBERMAN: From their decks above us. And it seems to me that we were the happiest group of people on board ship because the people, those who were able to bring instruments brought their instruments along, and we had music every day, and we had entertaining, singing. And as a kid we had no inhibition about the outcome of it. (Automobiles can be heard in the background) All you heard was that you were going to America and the streets were lined with gold, covered with gold. And when we hit the upper bay, New York upper bay there, and, we saw the, uh, covered with papers and everything, and saw there was no gold. (?) And of course we saw the Statue of Liberty. And at that time we didn't think too much of an effect. All we knew was that we had come to America. Of course, we weren't very successful, everybody in the steerage were taken off the boat on tenders and delivered to Ellis Island. And the other passengers, the First and Second Class passengers docked right at the pier at Manhattan. But we never questioned anything else, and of course, the business of sending us to Staten Island because, of Ellis Island, was kind of, you were sponsored by somebody. In my case, I was sponsored by my father. And he wasn't sure just when I was arriving because there was no

schedule of boats coming in. And at that time, I think about 1904, he purchased a farm up in Parksville, New York, Suffolk County. And he, believe it or not, turned out to be quite a successful farmer. The little knowledge that he had, he was able to gain, and the advice of his neighbors. And secondly he had, although he couldn't speak English, none the less he was able to communicate with his neighbors. And therefore, we had to get off at Ellis Island to wait until his arrival. Of course, the interesting thing to me was that I'd never met my father. And it wasn't till he got off the boat, we used to watch for the boat coming from Manhattan daily, and he finally came down, and my aunt said to me, because I was looking out the window, she said, "See that man coming over the gangplank over there? He has a red beard. That's your father." And that is the first time I met my father. Of course, my stay in Ellis Island was not unusual. We had a regular area where we met, they examined us, reexamined, (?), and so on and so forth, out of the (?), not out of the (?). But we kept in a dormitory, a hammock, both for my aunt and one for my self, that's where we slept. We used our own bedding, which we brought from Europe to use as some mattresses, and the like.

The food was similar to what we had on the boat. Probably oatmeal, some cereal. But basically it was herring and potatoes and bread. And most of the bread was never sliced, no thin slices. They just give you a chunk of bread, a corner of bread, and you just broke it and you ate it. And as I said, the treatment was nothing unusual. Of course, we must have had other cases that were not as easy as mine. Well, we were sure that we would get off, because we had a sponsor. And finally the time came when we did get off. And I recall that the first apartment I stayed with my aunt, she came there and you know, she had been engaged to a young man from Europe who was also from Pinsk. And he met her and of

course, they got married. And luckily he married her apparently immediately. Because we stayed practically with them. And people don't appreciate (?). I don't know why, today. The people who are unable to, who cry because they haven't got the facilities. Bathroom facilities, toilet facilities, ample rooms and so on. The people who came over there, we lived on 94 Rivington Street, still standing today. It was a four-story walkup, four families on each floor, one bathroom toilet on each floor for the use of the four families. We were never, we were never concerned very much as to complain about it for the simple reason that we thought it was just an interim stop. We hoped, eventually, to progress further by our own self, by our own will, and that's the unfortunate thing today. Today the people are spoiled. They look to the federal government to give you lodging, and if they don't get a color television, they complain about it. And of course I started my schooling in August, in September, there so I went to P.S. 121, Essex and Ludlow and Delancey Street. It's not in existence any more. They tore it down. From there I went back to Parksville, New York and stayed with my father, and there I went to a one-room schoolhouse right on the main highway, on Route 17, still standing on Route 17 between Liberty and Parksville, New York. It's not being used as a schoolhouse, unfortunately, but I think it should, because they did far better then than they do in any schools today. The thing that I, I've been giving a great deal of thought in this years past, is how I was able to communicate with most of my classmates, schoolmates. And I'm still at a loss to this very day. It doesn't seem to me as if I had any difficulty whatsoever. But, of course, my language was Jewish. We were Marius(?) Hebrew. I could read and write Jews. I was able to speak Jewish, but I couldn't read and write. So that was a most unusual thing. From there I went back to New York City, oh, I think about 1911. And then I went to, through

the years I went back and forth, for certain semesters I'd stay here, and one semester with my brother, another semester with an uncle of mine, and then with my aunt and grandmother. By that time my grandmother came to New York. So she sold her property, whatever she lived at in Pinsk.

CRAIG: This was '11 or '12?

SILBERMAN: About 1911 or '12. And we stayed with her again. And then I went to P.S. 79 on Second Avenue and Second Street. I graduated. From there I went to Peter Stuyvesant High School. I think it was Peter Stuyvesant High School. I'm not sure. Any way, I went there for two weeks, and it bored me to death. And to this very day I still don't approve of the curriculum in the high schools, most of it. And I got a job as an errand boy. I worked from nine to six, six days a week, and at night I went to a prep school. And this prep school was a very interesting school. It was situated at the old Tomashevsky[ph] Theater, which used to be on East Houston Street facing Second Avenue. It's not there any more.

CRAIG: I think I've seen a photograph of it.

SILBERMAN: So the theater was on the first, on the first four floors. From the fifth to the twelfth floor, the school was there. And from the twelfth floor was a, they had a girly show.

CRAIG: Oh, a burlesque?

SILBERMAN: Burlesque theater.

CRAIG: Oh, Okay. (He laughs)

SILBERMAN: And believe it or not, it's hard to believe. I never attended a broad show until long after we graduated. However, we went to school from seven at night to eleven at night. (he clears his throat) I think I've spent the most interesting days of my life going to that school. I wasn't the only one. There must have been over nine thousand students. They had morning, noon and night, morning, afternoon and evening attendance. Those who worked at night went to school in the morning or afternoon. Those who went to work during the day went to school at night. Well we actually went seven days a week, because from on Sunday morning we used to meet for review work. From 1914 I was interrupted. In 1916 I was operated on, a mastoid operation. (Traffic can be heard in the background) In the 1917 I entered the university of, College Park at Maryland State College. By that time I had completed four years of college work, junior college, and two-and-a-half years of commercial work. Typing, stenography and the like, bookkeeping. I had so much time on my hands I had to take something else up. So, I didn't want to stop going from nine to eleven. (he clears his throat) During the interim from 1913, when I graduated, 19, oh, in the middle of 1913 I started to do a little selling. And I got to live by becoming a traveling salesman in the (?) I was in there selling silks, ribbons, velvets and the like. And it was an interesting job because it was not on a commission basis, it was a trade salary line. Therefore I was given all, everything that I needed, could buy. It wasn't a regular line. It was up to me to go out and find markets to sell. And there was a lot of interesting details about that. One year I find the a certain article that had to be sold, and I realized that I was able to find the National Casket Company to use that commodity.

CRAIG: And what was the thing?

SILBERMAN: It was a silk, a perfect lavender silk, very fine, sheer silk. It was hundreds of yards, and I couldn't picture anybody else could use it except to use it in caskets, caskets. On another occasion he brought in two pieces of heavy gold and silver material, a type of brocade, and I had to find a market for that, and I realized that the only one who could use it would be a shoe manufacturer who dealt in ballet slippers. So I sold it to (?) and company in, I think Astoria Long Island at that time. Another occasion I had thousands of yards of baling. I had to announce it so people could use it, and I thought I would go up to Woolworth's. At that time I was about fourteen and a half years old. I tried to dress myself as well as I could, so I wore a derby hat, a high collar. But I managed to sell the merchandise.

CRAIG: Very Good! I don't think I could have done that.

SILBERMAN: On another occasion we got some, we got some pins. They were a quarter of an inch long. A couple of hundred pounds, several hundred pounds, And I had to find out who could use it, and finally realized, (he clears his throat). I went to ribbon factories. At that time the biggest ribbon manufacturing firms were in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. So I went on to Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, sold them the pins over there. They can use them. And so on. I mean, it was a challenge. Everything that you came to was a challenge. Of course, uh, coming from a farm, I didn't, my father never discussed with me, just what I want. But my outlook would be however I selected. A stranger at Syracuse University only because I liked the uniform. I visited my, during all this time my family finally moved down in Washington, a great many of them. While visiting them, one of my sisters said how will I pay my tuition

over in Syracuse. “Why don’t you go somewhere nearer, close by me, how about Maryland State?” So I went down to Maryland State, and I never went to Syracuse so I couldn’t compare one school to the other, so I entered Maryland State as a student to (?) agriculture, and I took up animal husbandry, majoring in dairying, and I had three years of dairying. During that time I tried to sell the farm, and eventually opened up a creamery in Parksville. And I dreamt of having a herd of cattle supplying me of milk for the use of, for this creamery. But before I was able to graduate, he sold the creamery and went into the merchandising of cream butter-made. However I never finished my dairying because, and then in the third year about eight of us were called in to a professor at that time, and advised that he had nothing more in Maryland, and cannot, can’t offer any more, unless we go somewhere else for a post-graduate course in our field. Although back to them in our, which at the University of Maryland they have the School of Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy. So about eight of us went there. Now I had no more. (Traffic noises increase in the background) I had the idea of becoming a dentist, and I was being singular, an impresario. However, in 1920, the University of Maryland, Maryland State College, merged forming the Greater University of Maryland, having gone to the undergraduate and graduate school. At that time I was very active on the campus. I had, my last year, in 1919, I was business manager of the newspaper, I was advertising manager of the yearbook. I was a member of two clubs. I was president of the fraternity. And I kept myself busy working. So I was very well known on the campus over there by the university officials. And naturally being on the, active on the school, we went in Baltimore to interest the student body from these different schools, the School of Medicine, Dentistry and so on, and the deans to come back here in the general community of the university. And there I met the

deans. And one of them, the School of Dentistry, I recall we were sitting and talking, and he invited me to enter the School of Dentistry. That was the fist time I'd heard of the School of Dentistry. And I said. "Well, what can you offer me? If you give me a good offer" I said, "I may consider it." "Well, " he said, " I'll tell you that what I'll do. I'll put you in as a special student. Come in, I'm not going to put you in freshman or sophomore year. You take the exams, do everything on the exams, the freshman and the sophomore year exams over. I don't care how you do it, or what you do it, when you do it. I'll put you in your third year." Well, I didn't answer him right away. I told him I'd see about it. However, on my way out, I bumped into Dr. Leonard, who was then president of the university, who I knew personally. He stopped to converse about the, my success with the different publications. But then I told him what the dean told me and he urged me to take it. So a few weeks later I called up the dean and said, "I'll take you up on that thing." So that's how I got into dentistry.

CRAIG: (?)

SILBERMAN: I got into dentistry in 1920. I did my two years in one year, and I graduated in 1923. And I've been practicing ever since for fifty-five years.

CRAIG: Wow.

SILBERMAN: During the interim, I've done a lot of interesting work. And again, I'll say that it depends upon yourself individually, as to how much success you can make out of working. During the time I was in the College Park, which is the undergraduate school, I had occasion to work in Washington, D.C. An interesting experiences if you can call

it that. I had the pleasure of selling shoes to Margaret Wilson, who was then the daughter of the, then-President Wilson's daughter. And a lot of her girlfriends from there, from different departments and so on. I recall one year, one time (?) food market and I (?)

(END OF SIDE A, TAPE 1) (BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE 1)

CRAIG: Okay, so you sold a quarter's worth of cheese to Mrs. Rosenburg?

SILBERMAN: (?) It was in the, right in the Secretary of State.

CRAIG: But only a quarter's worth.

SILBERMAN: "Only a quarter's worth," she said, "young man. No more." It was interesting. (?) When I recall the one other experience I had in 1919. I worked then in Asbury Park, New Jersey as a head waiter. And I got in a little argument, and then I decided to leave them. And I, the next day, I found myself in Chicago with the Department of Agriculture. I wanted to go, up to the, wheat grain, threshing grain. Now, unfortunately, that year I came late, and that year they couldn't use too many people because the crop was not too good. However, they got me a job in a small combine, about fifteen or eighteen farmers. However, I had to wait about ten days to two weeks in Chicago until I was assigned for one of the cut jobs. So in order to keep myself busy, I got a job as a short order cook in one of the restaurants, and I lived in Chicago. And I must have done well because the, he boosted my salary, and asked me if I could stay on. But no, I planned to go down to this combine which was about a hundred miles south of Chicago, in Joliet, Illinois. And I figured I was the highest priced field hand they had, fifty dollars a month. However, I never realized how little those people made it,

the field hands. Luckily for me, the place I worked for, their son was a sophomore in the University of Illinois, School of Agriculture. I was a sophomore in Maryland State, School of Agriculture. So he couldn't higher at me, and I couldn't higher at him, and we were just on level ground. So I was accepted or literally, I made it. So my stay over there in Illinois was rather pleasant.

CRAIG: Oh. During the war years, the first war, did you serve in the army at all?

SILBERMAN: When I came in Washington in 1917, I immediately joined the National Guard. I was out in District of Columbia National Guard Company A. When the United States entered the World War One, the National Guard was called out. However, it was a little bit different then when they're called out today. At that time you had to be discharged from the National Guard first. Then you re-enlisted in the Federal government. A number of us who didn't pass examination were not accepted. So all these men who remained, who were not accepted, then they were immediately thrown into a home guard, its part of a home guard in District of Columbia. However, being at college, part of the college, and being one, just a few of us in the, who'd enlisted in the Army Corp, I felt very, very much out of place, and I finagled my way into the service. Now, my, with the help of the colonel in charge, who said I probably could pass the eye tests, forget about the flat feet. But the eye test, I'd be all right. So through a friend of mine, I got the charts, and I covered the eye chart, and I memorized it. So I went down to the examination and I passed with flying colors. I had a 20/20. Once I got in, I put my glasses on again, and my first start was in the infantry, I was assigned the legal division. The lieutenant saw me come out with the glass, eyeglasses, he nearly burst a blood

vessel. Threw me out so fast that I didn't know that I was there. "We can't have you in here like that." So I joined the artillery. I found that was just as bad because men with eyeglasses, they threw them out. But I stuck it out so I was in the, put behind the counter to hand out garments, uniforms, and so on. I went through the Student Army Training Corps. And at that time there, I was also part of the band of the Student Army Training Corps. On parade I played the bass drum and in the orchestra, I played my clarinet. And the reason I took up in the band is only because we were the only ones who were given a pass every weekend. All the others were allotted a certain passes. But men in the band were given a pass every weekend. So the little work that I did for (?) was because I had a weekend pass.

CRAIG: So, you were, I guess, mustered out about 1918?

SILBERMAN: I was mustered out in 1918. And while we were being mustered out we were encouraged, those who wanted to get citizens papers, could get it immediately. And there were a number of us who were not citizens. I for one, joined up; we all climbed into a big truck and were taken down to the District of Columbia and sworn in as citizens of the United States. And that's when I first got my citizen papers.

CRAIG: That was quite a few years after you came to this country, about twelve years.

SILBERMAN: That's right.

CRAIG: Why the delay? Was it just something that you figured…?

SILBERMAN: I never figured, I never gave it a thought. It wasn't on my mind until I once I got into school there. You must remember that my father, my folks didn't know very much about it. And there wasn't, me, my folks never discussed schooling with me, which that to me is just right to do. To carve that out, when I quite high school, I got my first job, which was two dollars and fifty cents a week. Grandma said to me, "Now, as long as you're working, regardless of how much you make, you have to have the realization that you have a home to uphold and take care of. So you have to figure out, you have to consider, some obligation to pay towards the home. Therefore when you bring in the two and a half dollars, bring it to me and I will dole it out," she says. "Seventy-five cents will be to pay me for your food and lodging. Seventy-five cents will be put in the bank so that you start saving. You have to learn to save. And the dollar, whatever other tips that you may get, is for your weekly allowance for your lunches, entertainment." And actually entertainment I used to go up to the Loew's Theatre up in Delancey Street, third balcony for five cents. Lunch, you can get a good sandwich for seven cents, excellent sandwich. And there was, I never felt the need for any more. For that matter, we only got in the army was fifteen dollars a month at that time. Oh, and speaking of the army, when I was discharged from the army, I immediately joined the National Guard. So I can, I think am the only one that probably possesses three discharges.

CRAIG: That's a record, I guess.

SILBERMAN: Two from the National Guard, and one from the Federal Government. Now there's something else that I would like to speak about, with (?), on National Vision papers. In our travels, if you traveled in foreign country, you've got to show some sign, a proof of

citizenship. And in my travels to Canada and the islands, I was never satisfied with the proof that I had showed, which was voting. Proof that you voted in the election. I considered that very unsatisfactory because it's not the right proof to the end. So I wrote to the government telling them that I would suggest a card to be given to all citizens who travel to show their proof of citizenship. And they took very well of it, I recall, I was sent up to New York, the division bureau and there they, I was presented, I was given a card, I have my provision, one of these cards and I said, "Why don't you have these? You know, it should be done for some of the other fellas doing it." And I think it is just as appropriate today as it was fifty years ago.

CRAIG: Oh, there was one question I wanted to ask you. I think you mentioned one time that, that going back now from the 20's, post-war, going back, you said your father's name was changed too.

SILBERMAN: Yes. Actually, my name is not Silberman. That was my mother's name. My father's name was Kogodokog, K-O-G-O-D-O-K-O-G. When he came here, he was sponsored by his father-in-law, which is my grandfather. And of course he met a lot of friends of my grandfather's, and they would introduce him as Charles Silberman's, gran, uh, son-in-law. And he kept saying, "But my name is not Silberman, my name is Kogodokog." But he got so tired of answering to the name Silberman, that he finally accepted it as his own name. Actually it was never changed officially, or legally. But the strange point is that my father's family came over here; his three brothers, sister, and a nephew. And evidently he must've sponsored them because they always took the name Silberman. They still consider themselves the Silbermans to this very day.

CRAIG: Ok, um, sorry, do you mind if we talk a little bit about what you did between the days of being mustered out of the National Guard and practicing dentistry all these years.

SILBERMAN: Well, I've been practicing dentistry for fifty-five years. And I like the term "practice," which is a true connotation of what dentistry, with any profession is. And actually, I'm quite really sure I'll never become an expert in it. There is so many variations, so many things that you have to try out. And in order to keep yourself up with everything, its, I've spent possibly fifty years back at school, taking courses. Anything, a course, taking from a few hours to two years. I took a course, a two-year course in mouth flushing [ph], not because I wanted to try flushing [ph], but to be able to enable me to discuss work-related problems with, not (?) to them. Similarly, I took up, children's dentistry. I spent three years on the staff of New York University. And fifty years later, forty years later, I just swung the pendulum back here, way, way down the other side in geriatric dentistry, teaching at (?) university. And at the present time, I'm doing, agreed to doing geriatric dentistry at nursing homes. You don't have very many men who, uh, are interested enough to devote some, to give their time to a nursing home. Because they're in relations where they're nervous because Medicaid pays whatever you do, and the fees are very, very low. But the satisfaction of being able to do something for these people is well worth the time and effort that you have to give to it. At the time, I'm, I've been working for St. Joseph's home for the blind, in Jersey City, (?) Home, nursing home, Jersey City, and the Liberty Nursing Homes in a private home in Jersey City. Well they're three nursing homes, each in itself has quite a variety. The most interesting one is the Liberty, because we have no instruments

whatsoever, no equipment there at all. Everything that we do, has to be brought in by my, in my bag. We do the work while the patients are in the wheelchair. And most of the time we can't put them in the other leg of the chair because they have (?), it's very difficult. We do extractions in it, of course, we're handicapped in not having a drill, but I do have a polishing, its one of the Decker tubes…

CRAIG: Oh, um, drinnel, a drinnel [ph]tool?

SILBERMAN: It's a polishing tool. But yeah, I use for woodworking shop downstairs. I brought it over there and I use it, sandpaper it is, to polish dentures with. Of course we don't do anything in the mouth with it, but we do it outside of the mouth. But it's most interesting. In fact, I gave a, a tailored clinic in the American Dental Association one year. On that topic. And the pictures to show everybody. So it could be done if you make up your mind that something should be done. As far back as fifty odd years ago, you even went to the patient's home and did the work. Well (Traffic noises). My engine would be consistent with the [ph] hood engine I used to use with my (?), my school days. As least when I had a hood engine. Whoo!

CRAIG: (Laughs) Those were the days before Novocain and stuff like that, I guess.

SILBERMAN: Actually before Novocain, we had cocaine. We had cocaine. But the needles we used to have, was terrible in (?), uh, platinum needles, maybe one fourteen gage, sixteen gage. And we used to sterilize in the flame. Where we used to use the cocaine to inject, prepare the cocaine, and inject it in the patient's mouth. Of course it's a far cry from the present time that we use a needle, a stainless

steel needle, a twenty-seven gage. So thin that you barely see it. It probably can a patient can't even feel the prick of the needle. Of course, we have the Novocain so you didn't have to use any, instead of using three and four [ph] copials for each injection, we used anywhere from about one amp to fill the copial pretty good. Basically down through the [ph] Santanese Association Company, the materials are better, and the equipment passes the, the new high-speed engine is delightful.

CRAIG: Pump a lightly a foot.

SILBERMAN: Well we don't have a pump, it's still the same work. We still use the same bar, we still use the same stone. The only difference is you use a, instead of using a [ph] calabine stone, we use a diamond stone, impregnated stone. Instead of using an [ph] hood engine of sixteen thousand revolutions or a electric engine, we've got eighteen thousand revolutions we use at high speed to run a thousand revolutions. We don't cut today, we shave. Gently, and on each tooth, and cut things, uh, everything what you want to do. But as far as treating your patients, you still get the same fear, apprehensions. So psychologically so you have to show the patients, whether they're a child or an adult. The fear. Mike Groupa says, "The only thing you have to fear, is fear itself."

(Break in tape) (Tape Restarts)

SILBERMAN: Well, they'd (?) for throwing to horses. It was easy, we used to get up at five in the morning, clean up the horses, three days a week and they'd feed us some things, being allowed to work in the field.

CRIAG: Right.

SILBERMAN: Then about ten o'clock the farmer could have his sandwiches and coffee. One o'clock was considered the big dinner, three o'clock is, they did have service for coffee, then about seven o'clock you'd eat dinner, at the place that you work with. Unfortunately they had to hire groups. The, uh, English weren't the only ones. There's a lot of Norwegians and Swedes. I don't know, originally the Swedes, we had other (?). Meat, heavy meats, bread, and so on. Well we ate potatoes morning, noon, and night, field corn, occasionally we'd find something else in with it. But, uh, I had a day, I lost (?)

CRAIG: (Whistles). Respect one's chickens (laughs).

SILBERMAN: Yeah, but I came back to school. I came back broke. And that was the first time I knew that I'd need something else. I came back to school, I (?) my confidence "goodbye." See those days, you never, I never thought of going to say to my father, "I need money I want to go to school." I know this seems bad. So if I needed the any help, I borrowed some money from my brother and my sisters, or my grandmother. I came back, when did I go back there, I went back to school and I remember we had the curly-birds [ph] (?) coach a (?) person. And (?) going back to school (?) I says (?)

CRAIG: Well, trying to get that nowadays isn't that easy.

SILBERMAN: What's that?

CRAIG: Trying to get something like that nowadays, you just couldn't do it.

SILBERMAN: But you see, I don't agree with you. Just because they (?) when I finished that year, I had about seven hundred dollars in cash. My

first week I told you I make about two and a half dollars a week. I go up at seven [ph] to my grandmother. She said that as long as you're decided to go to work for you to realize, you have a home to help (?), as long as you do good in school (?) do good in school. As long as you have any money you have to realize you have some responsibility [ph] too. So with two and a half dollars a week (?). Seventy-five cents you're gonna put in the bank you'll learn how to save. A dollar from your week's salary (?), car fare and lunches, whatever else I made, tips and so on, from deliveries and so on (?) lunch, coffee was five cents. Now, lunches, I just had a sandwich, and a coffee with strawberries (?), roast beef and cheeses. It was never more than about seven cents. A glass of milk was two or three cents. So, my whole lunch would be, with a piece of pie, twelve or fifteen cents. So the maximum(?) was fifteen cents. Same job today, you couldn't, same (?), it wouldn't work for two and a half dollars a week. So it would work for ten times or maybe fifteen times more, twenty-five or thirty five dollars a week. Let's just say its twenty five dollars a week. Ten times (?) Let's see how much it costs (?). The sandwich today, the same sandwich, would cost a dollar and half for the sandwich, fifty cents for a piece of pie, two dollars, coffee, (?) so it's costing let's say two dollars (?) for lunch. Ten times two is twenty dollars. (?) good for five dollars.

CRAIG: That's true.

SILBERMAN: (?) today. (?) The other difference is that you don't work as much for the same amount of money.

(END OF SIDE B, TAPE 1) (BEGIN SIDE A, TAPE 2)

CRAIG: That's very true.

SILBERMAN: We worked from nine to six. If we were very busy, we worked til six-thirty. That's six days a week,(?). Today you work from nine to five, but even if you, sometimes it's six at some of those places. You work on a four, four and a half days(?). If you work Saturday, Sunday, or so, you get the extra pay. So it depends upon… Another cultural trouble with the people today, there's no home life today that they used to have years ago. You never find a father and mother staying put in their own home today, reading to the children. Ninety percent of them act like (?). They're busy, going to this, here, there, everywhere. Instead of staying home with the child listening to, (?) having them read a book.

CRAIG: Hm. Well.

SILBERMAN: Of course, I don't see all of them do it. Thank heavens. We don't have that in my family. We are very, very fortunate. I was the first one to enter college in my family in 1917. I was with service in 1917, 1918. I was a member of the National Guard, the (?) National Guard. That's interesting too. In those days, the National Guard, when activated by the Federal Government, was not taken in total as is being done today. Today, when the National Guard's called out, the whole unit comes out. In those days, you had to be discharged from the National Guard, reexamined by the Federal Government, and re-enlisted…

CRAIG: As a federal unit.

SILBERMAN: And then you get in. So, just so happened that I was discharged from the National Guard, the unit. I couldn't get into the Federal Government, because, on account of my eyes and flat feet. So I was put in the home guard. All the companies that left men over who couldn't get in the Federal, became members of the home guard in Boston to be called upon in case of riots, and other causes. I was called out on to take a look at (?)

CRAIG: What was that for?

SILBERMAN: Riot, among the people that are colored; race riot. However, I happen to know that, I was under the Colonel, the guy who did it in Maryland, I went to see him. I said, " Why can't I go to (?)" "Well, no one was there." So I argued, "I'm on the track team, I work, felt good enough for that, why can't I go to this?" He said, "Oh, alright, well forget about your flat feet, if you can pass your eye test, you're going." So I had a friend of mine copy the chart. And I memorized it. I came here without my glasses. And I saw every blessed thing the Lord shown (?). I passed…

(END OF SIDE A, TAPE 2)