

Transcript of  
Oral History Interview  
with  
**George Naum**  
by  
**Millie Rahn**

February 2, 2005 & September 28, 2005

Manchester, New Hampshire

Interviewed and transcribed by Millie Rahn, folklorist and oral historian

**Transcript of two interviews with George Naum (GN) by Millie Rahn (MR) on February 2, 2005 and September 28, 2005 at City Hall in Manchester, New Hampshire. Total interview time: 149 minutes (2.5 hours). Note that the transcript of the second interview comes first, chronologically, replacing lost material in original interview. Also, note that the transcript does not always strictly follow tapes, due to edits by Mr. Naum for chronology, and tape prompts in second part have been eliminated.**

Tape 1, Side A [September 28, 2005]

MR: Today is Wednesday, September 28, 2005. I'm here in the Stiles conference room at Manchester City Hall with George Naum. We are going to re-interview him, because of my technical glitch, and talk about his early days in Manchester growing up and go from there.

GN: I was born in Manchester, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1927 at Notre Dame Hospital. It was called *Notre Dame de Lourdes Hopital*. My mother always said it was room number five. I don't know how she remembered that. I went to school. Started out at Main Street School; it's now West High School's gymnasium. What they did was they kept taking room away from the grammar school, because the high school needed some room, so we only went about four grades there and then we had to go finish up at the Varney School. Then I went on to West High School.

Growing up, well, I can remember we did a lot of walking. [Laughs] Main Street School wasn't very far. It was only about four blocks away, but Varney School was a little longer haul. We walked to school. We had an hour for lunch. I walked home and had lunch and I walked back to school. And in high school we did a lot of walking. I used to walk to the city library, which was over on the East Side. Sometimes I walked over; sometimes I'd take a bus over and walk home or vice versa. It was a good place to do your homework because the library facility at West High School wasn't too good. So it was nice.

MR: You were born in a French hospital, but your family wasn't French.

GN: No. There's only two hospitals, really. There was Notre Dame and Elliott Hospital, which was on the East Side of Manchester. I guess they went to Notre Dame because it was closer. My older sister was born in Notre Dame. I was born in Notre Dame. But my younger sister, she was born in Elliott. My mother, I think she used to say she preferred Notre Dame. I don't know why. She thought they had better care or something there.

My folks were Albanian. They both were born in Albania. My mother came to this country through Portland, Maine, and my father came through Manchester. I believe their marriage was arranged by relatives.

MR: What made them decide to come to Manchester?

GN: I'm not sure, really. There may have been others that had located here. I know they had some close cousins in Melrose, Mass[achusetts], but why they settled in Manchester, I'm not sure. There was my father and my uncle. My uncle was older. I think my father may have come here at age nine. I don't know what extent his schooling was. I would say he probably went to maybe sixth grade. My uncle was older. I forget how much older, but my uncle was in World War One very briefly. My father wasn't.

Together they opened up a wholesale banana business in Brattleboro, Vermont, with the relatives from Melrose. I don't know how many years they were in Vermont, but they opened up a store there. They had a store in Brattleboro and there was a soda fountain type of thing and fruit and vegetables. I think they came back to Manchester and were in the fruit business. They were also in the banana business. They ended up getting a store on the West Side on Granite Street. It was a three-decker. They lived in a couple of the apartments and ran the store.

In the summer my dad did peddling fruit and vegetables in different parts of the outskirts of Manchester. I think he had routes out towards Lake Massabesic and as far as Chester and also

in Hooksett and Sunacook. Prior to that my grandfather had a route with a pushcart. He sold mostly bananas. He would sell them by the pound. I don't know if he could even figure the weight, but he sold them by the number. Four bananas, five bananas, whatever it was. [Laughs]

He had customers and he told the story that if they didn't have the money to pay him, that he would say well okay, next week I'll collect it. Then he would mark on the side of the house somewhere what they owed him. Then on occasion the house got painted, so he'd forgotten what he had marked the house for. It was tough. It was tough work for him, really. He graduated from a pushcart, my grandfather did, to a horse and wagon. That made it a little easier for him. Of course he never drove. I think he retired when he was fifty years old. Kind of took it easy. My uncle had gone back to Albania and brought my grandmother here. I don't know what year it was, but she was here for a number of years.

We grew up in the same house, same tenement, with my grandfather and my grandmother, and my father and my mother, my two sisters, myself. We weren't too bad off. Of course we had a store; we had a business. I can remember people coming into the store. It was the Depression. Things were tough. They had a big piece of one of these paper billboards they put in windows, like the circus is coming or something? Well, they'd fold that in half lengthwise and they'd paste white paper on that and they'd have a name down and they'd have it blocked off, and every time they'd come in and didn't have the money, they'd mark it down what they owed him. Then when they got enough money, they'd pay him. So most people tried to keep up and pay whatever they owed, but then there was a lot that just moved away and we never saw them. But, you know, they were fortunate because people were worse off than they were. We didn't have an awful lot of things. I mean I never had a two-wheel bicycle. I had a tricycle and I drove it till my legs were too big for the pedals.

MR: So you worked in the store?

GN: Yes, I used to help out. We sorted bottles. People would bring bottles. Returns for two cents or five cents, depending on the size of the bottle. We had to sort them as to their brands. Sometimes people would bring an off-beat brand that we didn't cover, but we'd have a certain pile to put those in. We weighed potatoes by the peck and half peck. I believe a peck was fifteen pounds, but I may be off. It's either fourteen or fifteen pounds. It's hard to remember, but I remember we had to break a hundred-pound bag and put up bags of a peck and half peck. So it was nice growing up. As we got older we learned how to make milkshakes and sundaes and all those things.

MR: In the store?

GN: In the store.

MR: So it was a little more than fruit and veg by then.

GN: Yes, they had a big, long soda fountain. They had three tables with those wire-backed chairs. Had candy, cigars, cigarettes. So it was nice. It was mostly business from the neighborhoods.

MR: Let's talk about the neighborhood. Did you speak Albanian growing up?

GN: Yes.

MR: When did you learn English?

GN: When I went to school, or playing before that. I picked it up. I mean, we just talked Albanian really in the house; we didn't really speak it outside. On occasion.

MR: Was there a large Albanian community here?

GN: Not that big. It's funny because most of them are settled on the East Side of Manchester. There were only a couple other families, I think, in our area. One family moved

over to the East Side and they opened up a store similar to ours. Not so much fruit and vegetables, but a little soda fountain and cigars and cigarettes and stuff like that. There weren't too many. Most of them were on the East Side. I can't really tell you much of them.

There was a Theodore family. Mr. Raco Theodore. R-a-c-o, I think it is. T-h-e-o-d-o-r-e. Anyways, he had the banana business and he managed to get the franchise for Chiquita bananas. We sort of phased out of the wholesale banana business. We used to have bananas brought up by truck from H.P. Welch Trucking Company; used to bring them up from Boston. Green. They put them in the basement of the store. We had two rooms that were banana rooms and what they did is they hung up the whole stock of green bananas and they had gas jets that would be running and the heat from those would ripen the bananas slowly, slowly. Then they would just take whatever hands as they ripened. When they were peddling in the summertime, from spring till late fall, they used to peddle the bananas on the truck. My dad was all. When I got bigger I used to help him.

I used to go to Boston on early, early Monday mornings and buy things like watermelons and some fruits and vegetables out of Boston, and then buy whatever local stuff that they would get. They used to fill the whole truck and drive back. It was a thrill to go to Boston! To see all the big buildings and go down the market district there and go into the little hole-in-the-wall restaurants and have a cup of coffee and a corn muffin. That's where I got my fondness for corn muffins. Coffee was hot, so I'd always put a little bit of ice water or an ice cube in it to cool it off. They were nice. It was a nice trip to go down. They had to wake up early in the morning, sleep most of the way down. On occasion, it depended on the timeframe, we might stop and visit relatives briefly in Melrose, but that wasn't too, too often. It depended on the timeframe.

MR: It must have taken a while, though. That was before [Interstate] 93.

GN: This was in the '30s, I guess late '30s. I'm trying to think. It was before the war, that's for sure, because when I was younger, my mother and our family would go to Portland, Maine, to her mother. My grandmother and grandfather were up there. I had uncles and aunts and cousins up in Portland. I had an uncle would drive down and pick us up when school was over and we'd go up to Portland. This is when I was real young. My dad would borrow a car and he would come up and pick us up around Labor Day weekend.

MR: So you spent your summers in Maine.

GN: Then he'd bring us back home. I used to like Portland. My grandfather had a very nice place. It was not too far from where the Portland arena is. I can remember going in the attic. He had a brick apartment building. He also peddled fruit, vegetables, and stuff. Mostly with a horse and wagon. Originally he started out with a pushcart. I can remember going in the attic and standing on the chair and pushing a transom open and I could look over the whole harbor of Portland. It was nice going up there for the summer. Then when I got to be maybe seventh or eighth grade, we stopped going up there and I started caddying. I think I started caddying maybe in 1941, when I started as a freshman. I started that summer before freshman year. I started caddying and I enjoyed that a lot.

MR: Where would you do that?

GN: Manchester Country Club. Yes! An A caddy was eighty cents and a B was sixty-five, I think it was.

MR: So you had to work your way up?

GN: Yes. There were some wonderful people that played golf in those days. Most of them were businessmen. Doctors, lawyers, dentists. They were always pretty decent, although the ones that had a lot of money sometimes were the cheapest ones. There was a banker and he

would, on the thirteenth hole, which is a small hole, the furthest from the pin would buy a round of homemade chocolate milk and homemade root beer, maybe crackers. Very inexpensive. I don't think it was more than five or ten cents. If the banker was the furthest from the pin, he would pay for the round for the golfers and the caddies, but he himself would excuse himself and say, I think I'll have a glass of well water, and walk over to the well and pump himself a glass of water. So he saved for himself maybe ten or fifteen cents. Then when he got in, he always asked you if you were an A or a B caddy. So if you were an A—you always told him you were an A—he would put down a dollar bill and the pro or the caddy master would break that dollar bill and he would drag twenty cents and leave you your eighty cents. Mr. Banker.

Today they have a foundation in his name: the Norwin S. and Elizabeth Bean Foundation. It gives money to worthy causes. I tell people that was some of the caddies' sweat money. It's ironic because they have a caddy scholarship and I told the guy one time-- I says why don't you hit the Bean Foundation up? They give a lot of money and I told him the story of how the banker used to clip us twenty cents. He later told me he tried, but he couldn't get any money out of them.

Some golfers were great. They'd give you a buck each just like that; they'd give you a buck and a quarter, some of them. We used to fight. Colonel Knox was the secretary of the Navy under Roosevelt. He also was the publisher of the paper. [William Franklin "Frank" Knox, secretary of the Navy, 1940-1944; publisher of the Chicago Daily News.] He would fly to Manchester and the pilots came down to play, so we used to fight to get the pilots because Knox would give you a dollar bill that had one fold in it where the wallet folded over. The pilots would start at the end of nine and they'd buy you a sandwich or milk. [Mimics conversation] You want a hamburger, son? So they bought you something to eat. Then they'd go back out and they

played a second nine and when they came in they paid you three dollars for 18 holes. So when you saw that the pilot bags were coming out, you fought to get that job instead of the colonel's. The colonel played with his group and the pilots played either with themselves or some friends that they made, because they flew him up here quite a bit.

They also sent a captain from the police department to walk around with the colonel and his foursome. The captain carried a shotgun in an empty golf bag. This was during the war. I don't know whether they expected the Germans to pop out of the woods. Anyway, they had him. One guy was a broker and if you talked about the Red Sox he would give you a dollar and a quarter, but if you didn't talk about the Red Sox, he only gave you a buck. [Laughs]

Oh, but there were some nice people. I just told somebody the other day that about this time, when they're starting college, some of these golfers would ask the caddy to wait for them. They'd go in the locker room into their locker and they'd take out articles of clothing that they may have gotten for Fathers Day or a birthday and they would come and give the older caddies that were going off to college these articles of clothing. Sometimes they would be beautiful sports jackets, slacks, all kinds of shirts and sweaters. You know, we didn't have much money and not too many guys were getting off and going to college. That was pretty nice of those guys, those golfers.

MR: What kind of heritage and ethnic groups was your neighborhood made up of?

GN: We had a pretty good mix. There were Belgians. There were Germans. There were French. There were Irish. It was a real mixture. They had several of these social clubs. The Germans had a couple of clubs. The Belkies, or the Belgians, had their club. The French had their club. It was a place to go for the older ones, the parents. Some of the clubs had some pretty good things for the kids. Turner Hall was more or less German, but they had a good gym

program. I mean these are very good gymnastic programs. Some of these kids became great gymnastics. They also had a bowling alley in the basement, so a lot of the kids whose folks belonged there could go down and they could bowl and now and then they'd maybe have dances for the kids. [Harugari?], that's a hard one to spell. That was also a German club. They had had bowling, too. I know my wife's family was involved in that. They would have dances sometimes for the kids. There was another one called the Workmen's Club. That was also a mix, but mostly German.

MR: Did everybody get along?

GN: Yeah. Oh yeah. You never heard of any gang problems or like that. Most of them got along. You went to school together too. Various parks had programs, so you played more or less together.

MR: Were the churches divided by the different ethnic groups or were they more open?

GN: Yes, pretty much. The French had their own churches. Irish had pretty much their own. The Germans more or less were the Presbyterian churches. I'm trying to think what else?

MR: So it was Catholic and Protestant mostly?

GN: Yes.

MR: Was there much of a Jewish population?

GN: Not on this side of the river. Only on the East Side. Although we had a Jewish [man] who lived across the street from us also, and he ran a clothing store. Max Kavesh. K-a-v-e-s-h. The father came from Russia and I guess when they got out of that country, a woman came with that family and she ended up, it was like a maid. She did all the housework, all the cooking. Max, the son, ran the store. I think the father kind of ran the store first and Max went, I think, a couple years at Boston University and then he had to drop out to run the store. It got too much. Maybe

they expanded what they carried. Maybe the father could handle work clothes and stuff like that, but Max used to go to Boston and he'd get you a suit. I went to Boston with Max when I got out of the service.

That was a treat! Max knew Boston like the back of his hand. The first race I ever saw in Rockingham was coming back from Boston with Max. He said you want to stop at Rockingham Park? I said I never saw a race, and I was stationed outside of three race tracks in Maryland-- Laurel, Bowie, and Havre de Grace—and I never saw a race. One of my best friends was from Rhode Island and he was an exercise boy and here I go, the first race I see is in Rockingham with Max Kavesh. But Max was very nice. We used to call him Uncle Max. He had a half-brother and he was Uncle Frank. As I say, they ran a clothing store across the street. They had a little small beer joint run by a Belgian fellow. He was right next to Max Kavesh's.

MR: This is downtown or in your neighborhood, across the street?

GN: No, in my neighborhood. There were several of those little beer joints where people would go and spend a few hours after supper. Guys would go down and have a nickel or dime beer and waste two or three hours and then go home. That was really before television started. When television started, that was more of a draw. The clubs would have them, but then these small little beer joints would pop a TV in and attract a few customers.

MR: Do you remember the flood, because you were fairly young?

GN: Yup! I remember the flood and I remember the hurricane. Hurricane was something. Boy! See, out Granite Street was lined with elm trees. I can just remember the howling winds and the next morning Granite Street looked like a war zone. Elms had just toppled over left and right. [Nineteen] '36 was the flood and '38 was the hurricane. I can remember we had to walk over town. My grandmother was visiting somehow and they sent my cousin and I over to bring

her home. I can remember going over Granite Street Bridge and the water was not too far underneath the sidewalk. It wasn't long after that they stopped everything going over that bridge. I can remember they had fuel tanks in the middle of the Merrimack River and they got washed off their cement platforms and flooded downstream. One of them got stuck under the bridge, one of the piers of the Granite Street Bridge and got hung up for quite a while. I can remember walking down and there was a trestle across Granite Street, from the West Side to the East Side, down off of Second Street. We'd walk down and go up on the trestle and walk out to the bank and watch stuff floating down the river.

MR: As we're doing this interview, we've just been through severe hurricanes in the southern U.S., so hurricanes are definitely on people's minds right now. I always have to tell the tape things like that for context. [Laughs]

GN: We were just hunkered down. I don't know if we knew it or not, but I think they must have heard something about the hurricane. I can remember the wind blowing and I think we had a chimney on the roof, some of the bricks fell off it. But the elm trees going down, that was really something. Then I remember they had the National Guard out and they set up pup tents and slept where West High has their field now. It was an apple orchard belonged to the Amoskeag Industry Company. It was an apple orchard and the National Guard had set up tents and stuff there. I think they may have done it with the flood too.

MR: I know the hurricane was around this time [of year], mid- to late-September [1938], because there was just the anniversary last week or so.

GN: Yes. I think the flood was like March or April, something like that. It was the spring floodwaters.

MR: Because there was so much snow was one of the causes of it.

GN: Yes, the runoff. Now when the hurricane came, I know I was going to Varney School because we had to walk to school and there were these telephone trucks and guys were working on telephone lines. This is also in here too [transcript of earlier interview], about them talking funny. We found out they were from Missouri and they had shipped them guys on a train, flatbed trains, with their equipment and stuff and they got shipped up here to help with the telephone, getting all the lines and stuff back.

MR: And that's still going on. A lot of people from New Hampshire went down south recently. It's fun to remember things and to re-remember them in the course of interviews.

GN: I can remember the guys not only talking funny, but they stopped and they were good to us kids and they'd talk, you know? They had rope on there that they used for different things, maybe for pulling up wire or something, and I can remember them kind of showing us rope knots and stuff that they made.

MR: What do you miss most about the Manchester of those days and now?

GN: Well it was all small, local establishments. We had a lot of them. Actually on the West Side, because those were the only ones I was really familiar with, but they had a little store or these ten-footers. They had signs in the window. Go by boat to Germany. Travel, travel business, you know, but on a real small scale. Whoever ran this, I don't know how much bookings they did, but I can remember they had a lot of those stores. They had little cigars. People had little cigar manufacturers. Guys. Most of the Belgians were the ones who were the cigar makers. Some of them worked at the "724" cigar factory [R.G. Sullivan] and a lot of them did their own. They had their own brands.

There was one guy that had a brand named White Mountain Cigars. The second floor of our tenement was rented to a Belgian couple—family--and they made their own cigars. They got

the stuff and made their own cigars right there, on the second floor. You always could smell their food. It was great.

MR: So you pretty much stayed in your own neighborhood for shopping and school?

GN: For meat, we had two or three local meat-- There was Schricker's. There was Max Rasp. They had their own. One would make terrific sausages and the other guy, maybe, whatever his best, popular item would be. People would go from one to the other to the other. They'd pick up something here at this guy and if they didn't like his stuff, they went over to this guy and they liked his stuff better.

MR: Were there a lot of beans?

GN: Baked beans? Yes. Bakeries made their own baked beans. They made either their own rye bread in these old-fashioned ovens; these hearths with a long paddle. Paddle that loaf of bread and pull it out, oh yes. We'd get people from the East Side come all the way to the West Side to certain bakeries and get their rye bread and put their order in for beans and they'd pick them up Saturday. Saturday morning they made a hell of a business on beans and rye bread.

Hot dogs. They had people manufacturing hot dogs. Sconlon's was one of them. They're put out by Kayem now. There was Weigler Brothers, a couple of brothers that opened up theirs when they got out of the service. They were making their own hot dogs and hamburgers.

Weigler. W-e-i-g-l-e-r.

MR: That sounds German, which would make sense. So all of this came together when you went to work for the newspaper and you really knew this town and this area.

GN: Yes, my greatest strong point sort of was the fact that by working in the store and dealing with customers, you had to communicate with these people. The customer, you had great respect for the customer. When I got out working with the paper it was the same way. These are

my customers out here. It's like Charlie Weaver. Remember the show, Charlie Weaver? ["The Charlie Weaver Show" on radio and TV] Charlie Weaver, this is my people. I got to know them, the neighborhoods. As I grew older I got to know the East Side too. They're all little clans, you know.

MR: Now they're just different little clans.

GN: Well, you know, I hate to say it in a way, but a lot of those people, they never learn English and they want to become citizens. Those were high priorities. When they learned English, you could tell that they were very proud when they could come in and carry on a conversation with you in English. It may have been not perfect, but understandable, that's for sure. And they wanted to become citizens. They still kept their heritage and their ethnic things. Unless some of them were very, very old and sometimes you'd see a couple of them talking in their own language, but most of them, I think, they were pretty proud to be able to converse in English. And they wanted to become citizens; that was a priority.

I can remember my mother. My mother went to citizenship classes at the Jutras Post. That's an American Legion post. Actually that was more geared to the French. They were located more in the French section of the West Side. But she'd go and took citizenship classes and became a citizen. Pretty proud to get citizenship papers. A lot of them were like that. Now, I don't know. They don't seem to care. Very strange. Kind of sad, in a way.

MR: My grandfather came from Germany and he got citizenship, which meant my grandmother got citizenship. She was from Ireland. That was in the early '20s. They came over in the early twentieth century, but it took a while to get their citizenship. That was the pattern then.

GN: I don't know how come they left the old country. I never really did find out. There was a certain period when I guess an opening came up and they just took it. Of course, they're from the same neck of the woods as the Greeks, but my grandfather used to say listen, you know really, the only thing we have in common with the Greeks is we hate the Turks. The Turks ruled them and the Greeks ruled them, too, but the Turks were a tougher people to be under.

I saw some of the Turks in Korea. Man, they were tough. They were really tough. They had a brigade over there and if they went through a village and if they found some of the people hiding hand grenades or something underneath these big pantaloons, [makes noise], out went an ear. At night they had a bonfire and they'd be out there playing their mandolins and smoking cigarettes. The North Koreans and the Chinese gave them a wide berth; they didn't want to tangle with them Turks. [Laughs] So I don't know.

I still think things may have been pretty bad in a lot of these countries and that's why they came over here, and of course realizing that there was work here. The mills were big, going big; that's why I guess they got a lot of French coming down here from Canada working the mills.

MR: Did a lot of your neighbors work in the mills when you were growing up?

GN: Some did, yes. Oh yes. Shoe factories, also. You could always get a job. I remember some kids after the eighth grade, you never saw them. They either went to the shoe factories or they went in the mills. A lot of them had to help their family financially.

It was nice, really. It was a nice time to grow up. Most people got along. It's funny. Some guys used to say, they'd say well, the Irish here don't like the French too much. Funny thing though: they all married French girls! [Laughs] It's a whole different world out there now. A whole different world. I think a lot of these people, they really encourage their children—not

really from my own family, although my two sisters were nurses and they were encouraged to get higher education.

Tape 1, Side B [September 28, 2005]

MR: ....there was a lot of encouragement, too.

GN: In getting higher education, going on to school. There was a guy in town. He was an alderman. He had his own insurance business. I can remember him telling me one day that he went to UNH and when he left home his mother gave him five dollars. She said I wish I could give you more, son, but I don't have the money. He took an ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] and he was in the Army. I think he came out either a colonel or a major in the reserves and he had his own insurance business. But when he ever told me his mother gave him five dollars; that's all she could afford to give him. She didn't have any money. But the ROTC pretty much took care of his education and schooling. He got so much from being in the ROTC and then he also worked in the— What do they call it at UNH, the cafeteria?

MR: Cooperative education? Work study?

GN: They worked in the kitchen, like, waited on tables and stuff like that. I think that's what he did as well as the ROTC to get through schooling.

MR: Do you think most people stayed? Of the people you grew up with, did they stay in Manchester or did they move on?

GN: A lot of them stayed.

MR: You stayed.

GN: Some went away, yes. For various reasons, maybe, some of them left, but most of them stayed around. I can remember when I was working, if I took a picture of some kid playing

sports or something and I'd get his name. I'd say is your father so-and-so? [Mimics exchange]

Yeah. Yeah, he was a great ballplayer. He was a good ballplayer. You knew my dad? Yeah.

MR: Continuity. That's great.

GN: Oh yes.

MR: So are you doing any work in the archives with your old photos?

GN: Oh no.

MR: I don't want to give you a guilt trip. [Laughs]

GN: I was talking to somebody about that the other day. They said they got a lot of stuff digitized now. I really should go. I really should. You know, like coming here [to volunteer at City Hall information desk] on Wednesdays, maybe I ought to set another day just to go over and see if I can help them.

MR: Sounds like a good place to stop. Thank you very much. [End of interview, September 28, 2005]

*[Transcript picks up from February 2005 interview, starting with recollections of high school during World War II.]*

GN: You'd write a letter. V-mail, I think it was. They photographed it or they'd copy it, and they'd send these to someplace they were processed and then they'd print up your letter. Saved a lot of space. They would send us letters too that were the same way. It was kind of nice because you had guys you knew. Some were in the South Pacific. Some guys were in Europe. So-and-so got killed.

Then when I was a senior, along about May, they called us in the auditorium. They had a couple of speakers set up on the stage and a crackling radio and we listened to the war was ended

in Europe. So when we finally graduated, the thing we had to face us was fighting the Japanese. So that summer the atomic bomb took care of that. Bang! Bang! Didn't have to worry about that.

MR: That was 1945.

GN: That's right. I started in '41 and got out in '45. I got drafted. I turned 18 in December. I got drafted and in the spring, I went into the service. March 1946.

MR: Where did you go?

GN: I went to Camp Polk, Louisiana, for basic training. It was a wide-awakening going down there.

MR: What was it like?

GN: Blacks and colored, man! They had bathrooms for colored men; bathrooms for white men. Bathrooms for black women and bathrooms for white women. In these train stations and depots. You'd ride the bus, blacks had to sit in the back.

There was a kid from Connecticut, Joseph Giacco; very dark-complected Italian after being in the hot sun and getting more tanned. Our first trip to Leesville, Joe got on the bus and the bus driver— We almost had a brawl. The bus driver told him to go to the back of the bus. He said I'm not black. I'm Joe Giacco. I'm Italian. I'm from Connecticut, and I'm sitting right here. We thought we were going to have a brawl, but we finally solved that one.

Trains. Of course, I went down in a troop train. I took a leave to come home in the fall and I came by regular train, but in the middle of the train car was a white sheet. That separated the train car so black people had to sit in the back and white people had to sit in the front. Each individual car was set up that way. Like I say, it was a real wide-awakening to see that. Blacks could use this water bubbler. Whites used this water bubbler. All kinds of things like that.

MR: Had there been many black people in Manchester?

GN: No, I was just going to say that. Growing up there was one family. A woman had a son, Ernie Thorn. He was smart. He graduated from St. A's Class of 1938. Incidentally in his class was [the person] who would become a later governor, John King; he was a classmate. For some reason, this poor guy, I can remember them saying he had a job. He drove the bishop around. Then he got a job in the parts department of the Packard car agency. He was doing that for a long time. Way long in later years, he got a job as a bartender down at the Budweiser plant in where was it? Nashua? On the way to Nashua? Merrimack. They were parishioners of St. Raphael's church. Later on I found out from somebody that his father did automotive body painting. Now he may have succumbed to something from that paint stuff; I never remembered seeing Mr. Thorn. Just the mother and her son Ernie.

There was maybe one family on the East Side. There was somebody that went to Central High School that was colored. I forget the name. I remembered because he played sports over at Central. But there's not too many.

The only time we really saw colored people was when the airbase opened up. Grenier Field. They were segregated there. They had a section where they had their service club. The NCO club. I don't know what they did down there, but I had a friend of mine that was a musician in high school. They had a little group that would play, so I went over to help them set up some music stands and stayed. They played at a dance at the colored NCO club at Grenier Field. That's about the only exposure we really had.

MR: So you went to Louisiana and then what happened? The war was over.

GN: The war was over and I got into photography there. When I was going through my basic and almost before it was over, they interview you and they sort of come up with different jobs. They wanted to send me to surgical technician school. I told the guy I can't even cut a loaf

of bread; I don't know about cutting up people. [Laughs] He says well, we'll select three options. I think he asked me if I was interested. The big deal then was radio operator. A guy that had been in the service said, man, you ought to be a radio operator. You know everything that's going on. So I said, OK, I'll try radio operator. Another choice was telephone and telegraph repair, so that was a possibility. I forget what the third one was.

When I finished basic, they put like five hundred of us into the holding company till they decided what to do with us. They had reactivated a photo company that had been in Europe during the war. They were reopening this company and I got assigned to it. They picked eighty of the whole five hundred to go to this company. It was the 167<sup>th</sup> Signal Photo Company.

They ran us through a course in photography. The ones that passed stayed at Polk and the ones that didn't pass, most of them got sent to Japan--this was all under the signal corps—into different signal corps outfits in Japan. We corresponded with a few guys, you know. I came home on leave and I came up from Shreveport to St. Louis, St. Louis to Boston. Then when I went back, I was in a train station in Shreveport and got a paper. The headlines were in big black bold: Polk To Close. I said wow! I want to get out of that place. I didn't like that too much.

They're so segregated down there. The Rebels die hard. I took a basic in North Camp. It was lousy. It was terrible. I got assigned to the photo company and they opened in South Camp. South Camp was a paradise. The PX was better. The service club was better. Everything was better in South Camp. So when they said that Polk was going to close and when I got to my outfit, I said are we going anywhere? They said yes, we're going to move up to Fort Meade, Maryland. I figured oh man, Maryland is closer to New Hampshire; closer than Louisiana.

So we moved up to Maryland and we had a convoy to leave Louisiana. The only trouble was I didn't know how to drive. The only kids that knew how to drive when I was in school were

the kids that lived in Bedford. The kids from Bedford went to high school at West. So the kids from Bedford, they were driving when they were like seven years old on tractors. Then as we got [to be] upperclassmen, sometimes a big storm would come and you never saw so-and-so. You'd say where's this guy? Oh, he's plowing for Bedford. I can remember we had one big snowstorm and Mr. Simon, the gym teacher-- I don't know where he got all these shovels. He had us shovel the sidewalk all around the high school.

MR: That was your exercise.

GN: We had to clear the sidewalks. You talk to people now and they say they made you do that in school? The city in those days, when the mills were going and everything, they had a wooden plow with a "V" and drawn by a horse. They would do sidewalks. They got top priority because people walked. Not too many people had cars. Then in the war years it was worse, because they couldn't get gas. They had rationing. Because my father had a truck, he got a "T" stamp. T stamps were good for ten gallons, so when it came time to go to a prom, first thing, I had to find somebody that had a car that knew how to drive. Then we pooled whatever we could scrounge for gas coupons, see? I'd always get a stamp or two if I could. That's sort of a diversion here for a bit.

The sidewalk plows were really something. That thing would come down and sidewalks were cleared off. You could walk to school. Streets weren't that good, but we didn't care. So Mr. Simon had us clean all the sidewalks. All the kids from Bedford that knew how to drive, sometimes we wouldn't see them during stormy days because they were driving. So I had to learn to drive in Louisiana. I had to go to school to learn how to drive.

MR: You obviously made it to Maryland.

GN: Yes, but I was a nervous wreck. I was a nervous wreck because in a convoy you can only go so fast. You have to stay within a certain distance. They teamed me up with an old Army sergeant. Wherever we stopped at night, he seemed to find a barroom somewhere. He'd say, Georgie, you take tomorrow morning the first two hours. You drove two hours and then shifted. It was like a history lesson. I mean, it was wonderful.

I went through Natchez. Memphis. All these places, all up along the whole line that you had read about in history books. It was a chore, I'll tell you. When I got off that two hours, I mean, sometimes I was getting a little nervous with Sergeant Trail. Peach R. Trail. Peach R. Trail was a highly-decorated soldier. He was a tech sergeant. Peach Trail from Roanoke, Virginia, turned down a battlefield commission.

When I got to Maryland, I got put in a cadre room, which is like two guys could stay in a room. Then they sent me up to school in Astoria, Long Island. The Army ran all their motion picture, still, and lab schools out of Astoria. Astoria used to belong to Paramount; Paramount Studios. The Army took them over and they were making the training films. They used us as extras. It was nice. I liked New York very much. I could go into a bar and get a drink. I was 18 or 19, probably, at that time. You could ride into the city for a nickel. A nickel. You'd get on this wonderful train and boom! All over the city for a nickel. The Army school sent us to different places, like we went to Madison Square Garden. This all hasn't got a lot to do with Manchester.

MR: But it's going to get you back here. You see the world and then you came back. You sometimes have to go away from your home place to put it in perspective.

GN: So I was up there for a while and then I came back down to Maryland and that's when I got with Peach Trail. I had a cadre room with him; otherwise you'd be out in the squad room and there would be Lord knows how many. Cadre rooms were two guys. Under his bed,

Peach Trail had a whole row of boots. Boots that were hand-made in different leathers. [Mimics conversation] I said to him, Peach, how come you have so many boots and they're all shined and they're different leathers? He said, Georgie, when I went in the Army, I grew up poor in West Virginia. He said to own a pair of shoes was something. So every other payday or so, maybe, I'd buy myself another pair of boots, and I kept them up. I said wow to myself; isn't that something?

So anyway, I was on KP and they came along and said I've got some good news and some bad news for you. I said, well, give me the good news first. Well the good news is that we're promoting you to T-5, which is a corporal grade. I'd just come through school. The bad news was we're going to send you to Alaska because they're going to have a winter maneuver up there and we figured you could handle it; you're from New Hampshire.

At that time I had a lieutenant in the company who was from New Hampshire, actually. He was from Portsmouth. He later became captain and he was the company commander. He said you're going to go to Alaska. You can forget about the kitchen. They're showing a movie now about Arctic survival, so you can go over there and look at that movie. It's a Canadian film, so you might get something out of it. So I went over and saw the movie on Arctic survival and tried to pick up a couple things they were pointing out. Then off to Alaska. I was up there for the whole winter—'47 to '48. First of September, right after Labor Day. Flew up. First time I ever flew. Left Tacoma, Washington, flew into Great Falls, Montana. Flew over the Rocky Mountains. Didn't like that trip too much. The guy banked the plane like this over those Rockies.

Anyways, we had a two-day delay because of weather in Great Falls. We went to town and said we were going to get something to eat. The Army pays you like twenty dollars; bills. So we went into a restaurant and ordered a meal. It came to like a dollar and maybe twenty-five cents. Not more than a dollar and a half. Give a twenty-dollar bill. The girl counts out eighteen

silver dollars and hands them to me. [Mimics conversation] I said why are you giving me all these silver dollars? They said we don't like paper money here. You don't? I think they had silver mines. Here I had eighteen silver dollars. I put nine in each pocket.

MR: [Laughs] I was going to say, you're really weighted down.

GN: I split them. I put nine in one pocket and nine in the other. I wish now that I still had those eighteen silver dollars. But I went up there and the infantry troops came out of Fort Lewis, Washington. They trained for a month at Mount Rainier, Washington. They trained out there with snowshoes and skis, and then they airlifted them up to Alaska to a place called Big Delta.

When they come in they stayed maybe a couple weeks to get organized and then they airlifted us out to an abandoned base and we would have a little war game and chase these guys around on snowshoes. We'd fly back. We had a sled. We put all our film on a sled. We had a tent on the sled. We had kerosene for a stove. We had to put on a harness. Four of us would pull a sled. The major was in the back steering!

We'd find a place, set up the tent, and we'd chase these guys around for maybe a couple weeks. Maybe it was ten days. I can't remember now. And then we'd fly back. They would unload and they would get part of their stuff organized and they would fly back to Fort Lewis. In the meantime, they would send up another crew; another gang from Fort Lewis and they would do their training. So we did this and went to different bases. I think I made two trips to a place called Galena and one trip a place called McGrath. McGrath crops up in the Iditarod races. They're always going through McGrath.

MR: Alaska wasn't a state then. What was that like?

GN: No, it was a territory. I got to Fairbanks twice. Fairbanks was like a Wild West town; wasn't too much. Basically we went up to scrounge some equipment. So we flew up and

scrounged some equipment for the photo lab and then went back to Big Delta. We flew into, I think it was, Ladd Field in Fairbanks. I think I went up another time. I think I made two trips to Fairbanks. It was a territory. You got overseas pay while you were up there. I forget how much a month there was addition. It was a wide-open town. They had a whole section of Fairbanks that was a legalized red-light district. Yup. We knew some guys who tried to go up there, but if you're in uniform, man, you were in trouble. But it was legal. It was legal. I think the basic thought was that if they legalized it, they wouldn't have any problems with a lot of rapes and things like that. That was told to us as maybe one of the reasons they had done that.

We flew so much as ground troops that they had to pay us flight pay. So when I got back to Maryland, I got three hundred dollars for flight pay. In those days, we paid no tax. We didn't pay income tax. When I got called back in the service in '50—I went to Korea—they had increased the pay structure, but they made you pay taxes. See? That was a change they made. In addition to that, when I went back the second time, they had started—I think it was Truman that pushed it—they had started to integrate the troops.

The thing when I went back the second time—I'm really jumping ahead of myself here—I was an inactive reservist. I told you that that captain of mine was from Portsmouth. Captain Philip J. Curran. C-U-R-R-A-N. Philip J. Philip J. says to me, when I was getting out, why don't you go in the reserves? He says you can go to meetings if you want to or you don't have to go to meetings if you don't want to, and you can't be called up unless it's a war. If you want to come back in, you can come back, and you won't lose any stripes or anything like that. I said well, oh, OK. So I signed up for three years in the reserves.

I didn't belong to any outfit. I didn't go to meetings. I went one night. The guy wanted to give me the moon. It was right down the street here. It was a military police CID unit; Criminal

Investigative Detachment unit. Anyway, he had a slot for a photographer and he wanted me to go into that outfit. I said I've been here two hours and I don't want to come once a week and go through this, you know? I'd rather not go, so I passed it up. Anyways, I got called up because they called all the inactive reservists. This outfit, they called them up. They went to Fort Banks, Massachusetts; the one I said I don't want to go into? I went to Korea.

I had gone to the Union-Leader for a job, originally, and the guy says I think I might have something for you. So I went home. It was a Wednesday and my dad said I just signed a letter for you. I opened the letter up and I had to take a physical the next day. Sixty-three guys took a physical. Nobody flunked. Some guys had shrapnel. Some guys had steel plates in them. I remember one guy couldn't put his hand up over his head. Nobody flunked. So we had a meeting before the physical and the guy says you have any questions? [Mimics conversation] Yeah, why am I getting called back? Well you have an essential MOS [Military Occupational Specialty]. I do? The guy says I'm a baker. What the hell's essential about that? That's it. How about this other guy. Well, I'm a truck driver. Well, you're essential MOS. Everybody had essential. They needed bodies. So that's when the 63 of us went down to Texas for the training. Nobody flunked.

I had come to the Union-Leader, and the next day, Friday, the boss called me up in the engraving department, which is sort of an allied field. He said, geez, I think I have a job for you. Can you come to work Monday? I said no, I can't. He said you can't? Why? It's a nice place to work. I said I got another job. He said this is a nice place to work, why do you want to leave? What kind of job? I said Uncle Sam just grabbed me. He said, my God! So he says, well, whenever you come back, call me up.

I'd gotten married. Eighteen days later I was in Texas. I ran through an eleven-day armored infantry course. They stopped the training cycle because the elections were coming up.

As soon as the elections were over, they started the cycle up. Meantime, I called my wife. There was a guy from Concord—Bob Swenson. His wife, Polly, and my wife, Sadie, flew down to Texas. They were down there just a few days. They came in on a Saturday. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, we were out in the field. We came back in Thursday and we shipped out Saturday. Went to California.

MR: Ok, so you went to Japan.

GN: Yup and then I went to Korea. The most nervous part was getting from Japan to Korea. It was December 21<sup>st</sup>, my birthday! They gave us Christmas dinner the day before, because they were going to land the day before [Christmas] in Inchon Harbor. Bob Swenson from Concord was another Army photographer, so he and I went together. We went to have Christmas dinner. They had two mess halls on the ship. I don't know how many guys they had—at least five thousand on that ship. During the first mess hall, there's a guy from New Hampshire. He's punching your meal ticket. [Mimics conversation] Hey, how you doing? We recognized each other; names maybe not. The guy goes [makes noise]. He never hit the ticket. He punched, but he never hit the ticket. He did the same thing for Swenson. So we go in and have, I guess it was turkey. I forget now, but we had this meal. Swenson says to me, you know that guy never hit the ticket? I said no, he never hit mine either. Let's take a walk around the ship. So we walked around for an hour or two hours, then we went in Mess Hall Two. The guy goes oh, you're a little late getting here? [Mimics conversation] Yeah, we thought we'd take a walk. Boom! He punched the ticket. Here we are, we had two Christmas dinners. Swenson says to me, well if we die tomorrow, George, we got a full stomach. [Laughs] I says, what a thing to think of!

So the next day: Christmas Day 1950-- In Inchon you can't go in because they have—  
The rise and fall of tide is like thirty-something feet, so the ship can't go in and unload. What

they do is they put the nets on the side of the boat—ship—and then these little boats come out and they stand there and you climb down the net and get into the little boat and then they take the little boat and they run it in and they unload it. Then they put the guys on the trucks and they send them right up to the front lines. We found out this later.

Swenson and I are staying there all day long, one cigarette after another. You got a number on your helmet and when they call your number, you go to the net. I said to Swenson, geez, they never trained us to go down these damned nets, you know? What if somebody steps on your hand or you slip or something? Boy, I guess that's it. You're in I don't know how much water there is there, but-- So anyways they called I don't know how many. I would say they probably called four thousand guys on off there. They didn't call Swenson and they didn't call me. Up goes the anchor. Back down to Pusan.

We unload maybe another five hundred guys in Pusan. That's it. Next morning, Swenson and I get off the boat. We go to replacement depot. They say OK, they'll post so-and-so. Your name, your serial number, and where you're going. So I lost Swenson, but I said my orders were to go up to [Pagoop?], 8<sup>th</sup> Army headquarters. So I ride a train. Train was there all day in the station, just blowing the whistle. Crazy, those Koreans. Give them a whistle and they're like a little kid. [Mimics] Whee! Whee! Then they send little kids out with hardly any clothes on. It's cold. This is December and they had the coldest winter they had had there in twenty years. So you feel sorry for the kids, so you go in your duffle bag and guys were giving the kids clothes. Kids would run off. About an hour later, the same kids were back. They were working a racket. [Laughs] That's when I took the train right up to 8<sup>th</sup> Army and then the guy said I can't hold you, so I'll send you back.

Swenson, I found out later— Our wives corresponded. Swenson, they lost his records, so he was being processed by a guy. The sergeant says I'll give you a deal. Do you want infantry or do you want artillery? Great choices, huh? Here's a guy who's six foot three. He doesn't know anything about infantry or artillery. He says I'll take artillery. He figures it's safer. So for about three weeks, I think, he was in an artillery outfit for the Second Infantry. Then they found his records, they pulled him out, and they put him in the Second Signal Company. They gave him a camera and he went back taking pictures. So he and I actually ended up with jobs that we were trained for. We didn't end up in no line outfit, fortunately. Fortunately.

So, when I got to Korea, I checked in 8<sup>th</sup> Army headquarters. The guy says to me I can't hold you. Every job has a number. It's called MOS: Military Occupational Specialty. He said I can't hold you in your MOS, which was 1-5-2, a still photographer. I said oh boy, here I go, you know? I expected to be sent to a line outfit like Second Division, 24<sup>th</sup> Division, Seventh Division, First Cavalry. [Mimics conversation] The guy goes, but let me see. He says, we got a photo company down in Pusan. He said, I'll send you back down to Pusan. And I said OK, thank you. I knew my old outfit was in Korea, but didn't know where.

About a day and a half later, the commanding officer of this photo company (which was my old outfit) comes up, a major, in a truck, and the driver jumps out and I look at him and I say hey, I know you. He says I know you! [Laughs] This guy I had known from before. So we ride down to Pusan.

I walk in and the first sergeant says welcome back, Georgie Boy. Glad to see you, son. I said it's nice to hear your Rebel voice, I said. If I die tomorrow, it's somebody I know. Well, he says, now Frenchie is waiting for you in the kitchen. He was a mess sergeant from Louisiana. Frenchie's waiting for you, he says. This other guy comes along; he's the supply sergeant. He

said George, just sign this. He said I got your bedding up in the second floor of this school building. There's a cot up there and your bedding's on the cot up there. It's like coming home. I couldn't believe it.

So I'm there for a couple of weeks; not quite a month. They said, well, we're going to send the company back to Japan. Anybody who wants to stay can stay. I says, well, at this stage of the game, I'm not staying here. I'll go to Japan. So I went with the company to Japan.

After a period of time, they sent twenty-eight of us to Tokyo and they gave us a driver and they gave us instructions. Go here, take a picture. Go here, take a picture. U.S. Senator Magnuson from Washington was at the hospital. He's talking to some guys from Washington. Then go over, they're signing some treaty with the Japanese, a fishing treaty. Take some pictures of that. That kind of stuff. That went along for a month.

Then the twenty-eight of us got back to our place in Japan and they said OK, now we're going to send the twenty-eight of you back to Korea. So the twenty-eight of us go back to Korea. The rest of the company stays in Japan. So anyway, we got to Korea. We did different things, running here or there. They'd give us an assignment and we'd go someplace.

Then they come along and they say there's going to be a Peace Talk meeting. We were beating the Koreans and Chinese, so they wanted a break. They sent out feelers through the French government diplomatic channels. They said we want to talk. We said OK, you want to talk? OK. They told this guy, Sergeant Cermack, who happened to work with me in Alaska; he was a movie guy; he stayed in the company. They said, Cermack, you and Naum go up to this place and check in, because we're going to send you up to the opening of the peace talks. They're going to open up in a city called Kaesong, North Korea.

Meanwhile, when we came to this place they said OK now, we got to go down to the airstrip because General Ridgeway is flying in. So Cermack and I go down to the airstrip and Ridgeway flew in in one of those little Piper Cubs, you know? Two or three generals were waiting for him there. They're talking. Ridgeway is not too happy. So he's calling them like Pinstriped S-O-Bs from the State Department. He wanted to have them meet on a Danish ship and he was going to put that ship in North Korean waters outside the harbor of Wonsan. They can sit out there in that boat and talk all they want, he said. Meantime, he's beating the hell out of them. [Mimics] Get them out of my hair. I want them out of my hair. They wanted to meet right smack in the middle of the war zone. State Department orders. So that's what was upsetting him.

Anyways, the next day Cermack and I go up. We were the only two guys allowed in there as far as doing films. The only two. Cermack and I. They had a convoy that morning. We went up in the convoy. Every single vehicle was flying a white flag. We went up to a point and we stopped. We said what are we stopped for? There was a Marine colonel in charge of it, so we went up to the colonel and said what are we stopping for, Colonel? [Mimics conversation] He said we got to hook up with the Chinese, and the North Koreans will take us into Kaesong. Cermack, you know, he was a World War II-decorated-- He said, Colonel, how's about we take these white flags off the vehicles? [Laughs] The colonel says, Sergeant, those are orders, and he walked away. Cermack says to me, Jesus Christ, we look like hell! He says we're going to go in there with the white flags flying? Them sons of bitches are going to think we're surrendering. Propaganda! So here we go, snaking our way into the city. There they are. The movies and the stills, taking pictures of us coming.

Anyway, we spent the whole day there. We come back that night. Cermack and I at noontime, we took all our film and we put it in a truck. They had come up there to set up radio relays, so they could communicate; the radio trucks. So we go to the radio truck and said to the guys, look, we're going to leave you film here. Don't lose it!

So when it was over, we all got together and left. [Mimics conversation] Cermack tells the colonel, we got our film back up at the place that we had at noon. He said wait a minute and he called the Chinese guy and he tells him, through the interpreter, give these guys a ride back up to the meeting place they had. It was a resort hotel, Korean style. We go up there, the truck's gone. So we go all the way back and Cermack says to the colonel, hey, the truck's gone, Colonel. Oh, geez, I forgot. We sent that truck back early.

So the brass hopped on the helicopter and they flew back. Cermack and I arrived back in the Jeep. When we got there, a major comes up and he says, oh there you are, great! Great! Great idea! Great idea sending that film back early. We got it, we put it on a jet, and we flew it to Tokyo. They can process it faster than we can here in Korea. So the film's gone. Then he says to me, I like the idea, the way you wrote your captions. I would take a film tab and fold it; pull the film out. You know, the tab; the paper tab that's attached to the film. I'd fold the paper part and write left to right. Corporal So-and-so, in pencil. You could really see it pretty good. He commented on the fact that he liked the way I did my captions on the tab.

So I look at Cermack and Jesus Christ, it's a good thing that I didn't know that that film came back, not through our doings, but because the radio guys were smart enough to say we got some film. This guy was the film officer that flew over from Tokyo to make sure everything was coordinated. So he said instead of developing it there and transporting it back to Japan, put it on the jet, jet flew it back to Tokyo. Then they put all the stuff on the table and one guy from AP

says I'll take this one. Another guy from INS says I'll take that one. Another guy from Acme says-- It was all pool stuff. Everything we shot was pool, so it went to a pool and they could pick whatever they wanted. So our pictures were in Life, Newsweek; all the papers. Everything. All over the world.

Then they said, now George, you want to stay with Cermack on this job? But you are slated to go back, because they had started to send reservists home. There was so much flack. So many guys had gotten killed. So many guys ended up in the infantry line outfits, so I said I'm not staying here. I'll be sitting on the footlocker, just tell me what time to be at the airstrip, I'm leaving. So I left. I left. That was the end of June 1951.

So when I come home, I called [the guy at the Union-Leader] and said I'm home. He said well, I might have something for you. I think I went a week. There I was: no job. I took all my mustering out pay to pay for the furniture my wife had bought because her mother said you better buy your furniture now because there's a war, you may not be able to get a refrigerator or a stove or whatever. So I paid that off. She had found an apartment while I was gone. She sent me a letter; she'd found this place. It was four dollars a week; cold water flat. So I'd say a couple of weeks later, I got another letter from her. I got some bad news; the landlord went up on the rent. Turned to page two. The rent is now four dollars and twenty cents. I showed it to my buddies. Everyone went hysterical. For Chrissakes, twenty cents! [Laughs]

MR: This was in Manchester on the West Side?

GN: The West Side. Not far from her mother's house. I bought a stove that ran electric and kerosene. The only trouble, the electric stove takes two-twenty [current], but the house wasn't wired for two-twenty, so you couldn't use the electric stove. The landlord wasn't about to

spend money to wire four tenements. So we never used the electric stove till we had to move and got another place.

So anyways, I worked in the engraving department. Then they come along and somebody said there's an opening down in the newsroom, but it's not much of a job. It's an office boy; a courier running. Go for this, go for that. I said well, geez, I'll take it; at least it's down in the newsroom. So I went down there and I got that job and I did that for a good year, anyways, and then I went on the staff.

MR: This was in the early '50s?

GN: This would have been maybe 1953; something like that. It was a job. I took it because it was in the newsroom at least. What they did is they would use me sometimes and give me free-lance jobs that would kind of supplement the pay a bit.

MR: When did you start doing more photography?

GN: Probably in '53 or '54.

MR: What kinds of things did you cover?

GN: Everything! Social. Sports. Advertising. News.

MR: How many photographers were there?

GN: I was the only one, really, that was strictly a photographer. They had a few people that were what they called combination. They were basically writers and they'd get a camera and they could take a picture. The Sunday news had maybe three of those people and the daily probably had maybe three. They figured they could get one person to do two jobs. That was basically their philosophy. These were all guild—union—jobs. They're only allowed to have x-amount of those combo people, according to the contract. But it was a good place to work.

MR: So what kind of changes did you notice in the city when you came back after the war in Korea?

GN: Basically not that much. The mills were going; they were pretty busy. The shoe factories were going. Shoe factories, usually they shut down and they gave their people [off] the first two weeks of July. Shoe shops, for some reason. I don't know why they picked that.

The primary started in '52; first primary. That was kind of exciting in a way. I remember the Democratic guy that was running was Estes Kefauver from Tennessee. He made a name for himself. They had some kind of hearings down in Washington and he was really up in the limelight through those hearings. So he ran. The Republican guy was Senator Taft from Ohio. Of course the publisher of the paper was William Loeb at the time, and he was backing Taft. The governor was Sherman Adams. Sherman Adams started a write-in or draft-in thing for Eisenhower, so Eisenhower wins without even firing a shot, really.

MR: How did you cover the primary?

GN: Wherever they went, you more or less went with them. It was not too restricted. That didn't come until after they shot Kennedy. They really knuckled down and security came. In later years it was worse; the worst thing. They'd stick you so far away you'd have to go into long lenses. It was all for TV in later years. Everything was geared for TV. I've seen them knock ladies off the sidewalk with those booms, those mics, you know? Big blacks. They always had a big black [man] handling the mic. Nobody's going to argue with that guy. Bang! Here comes a little old lady. Whack! She gets whacked with the boom. And you couldn't get close. There was always a vicious fight in later years.

I covered my first one in '52 and I retired in '96. They called me back in early December of '99 because they were short-staffed and they said we need some help on staff as well as with

the primary, Primary 2000. The only two guys I covered in that one was George Bush and Steve Forbes. I didn't run across McCain. Just the way the assignments came. Either one, I didn't care. Before, when the father Bush ran, I was somewhere, I forget. I was getting a group ready for a picture and the father [Bush] goes Loeb's photographer and points to me. Mr. Loeb didn't like him too much. Silver spoon. Money.

MR: I'm looking at some of the questions here. We covered a lot. We're getting social history. When I do programs with kids, I say your history is America's history; it's the world's history. It's on all these levels. Let's talk about some of the changes in the city with the airport, the highway, urban renewal.

GN: I think the airport was a big start. When I was in grammar school and scouts, we took a hike. We walked from the West Side all the way to the airfield. That's a hike. We just hung around and watched planes. Every now and then a plane would come in. All there was then mostly was Northeast Airlines flying mail. Then, I think maybe in the '60s, there was a guy who was running a company in town. His name was Roscoe Ammon. He had a company called Ammon Industries, I believe it was. He was a big airplane buff. I can remember him calling the paper and saying that a certain type of plane had landed out there. It was unusual because of its size. He was all excited, telling us and seeing if we could go down and get a picture of this plane. I think he gave I want to say five-hundred thousand dollars to start a new terminal building there.

He also gave five-hundred thousand dollars to Elliott Hospital to start a cancer set-up there, because he was suffering from cancer and he had to go to Boston and he said this is horrible, this is terrible. People shouldn't have to go to Boston like this, in that traffic and everything. He wanted to start it, so he gave money to Elliott Hospital and he gave money to the airport. Poor Roscoe Ammon. They kind of forgot the poor guy. They opened up this other

terminal that they have now and when they had the opening, I don't know who, but they never even invited the widow, Ros Ammon's wife, at least, to come to the ground-breaking, you know?

Then they changed it all. It's now Manchester Airport. It's no longer Grenier Field. It's no longer Ammon Terminal. But that was the start of it. Roscoe Ammon was one of the early pioneers with realizing, I think, that that was going to be the key to expansion. He was the guy. Always had a cigar. I would swear Roscoe Ammon would walk into church and forget he had a cigar with him. Great guy!

He developed something called the Norwood Meter. It was used extensively in the beginning. Through the movie industry, they would set up and they'd want to get light readings, so they would use a Norwood director to get their light readings. That was one of his inventions. He started out down in the mill yard and then they moved out to the airfield. Who took over that business? I can't remember now, but that was what got him off that Norwood director light meter.

MR: What was it like when the mills started closing down?

GN: I think what really hurt was the shoe business. We used to have some great shoe companies in town. When the mills started closing, that hurt, but I think when the shoe business started going out-- But they were fortunate because they would have smaller companies move in and set up in the mill yard.

Urban renewal knocked down a lot of property. I think they were responsible for the train station going out the window. Knocked down for nothing.

The shoe business? I don't think you can get a good pair of shoes made in the country. Most of it's all out. I had a guy that owned the shoe factory here, Mr. Duckoff. I think he was

Russian in his background somehow. He was quite a guy. He saw me one day and said [mimics Russian accent] I want you to bring your wife to the factory. I want to give her some shoes. Ok, Mr. Duckoff. My wife had worked in a shoe plant, International Shoe. They had a Sundial division. She'd worked in shoes. She knew shoes; she liked shoes. So I brought her over and he gave her I don't know how many pair of shoes. I mean there were alligator shoes, all this stuff went down country: New York, Philadelphia. Big stores. Expensive stores. He said to me you can buy the pocketbooks to match the shoes. Thank you, Mr. Duckoff! [Laughs] She had shoes, unbelievable shoes.

I'm trying to remember now. Textiles really flourished during World War II, I think. Even after textiles did, but then I guess they could find other places with cheaper operations, cheaper help. I think the shoe business really, really put the nail in the coffin, but I think they've done well now because for the longest time, for some reason, they couldn't expand in the mill yard. It was like verboten. You can't go down there. You can't put that there. Now all these things that they wouldn't let go in there before, they're all coming in there now; restaurants and different kinds of things.

MR: How did the highway, both 93 and 293, affect the city?

GN: They're great. And what's really great too is it really opened up the North Country. It used to be a nightmare to drive down to Boston, going 28 down through Lawrence and Lowell. So 93 was perfect. A perfect road. Nice and straight. First of all, they dumped you into I forget where it ended up at the time, but then finally they extended it down through, I forget, but you could only go so far down in the beginning and then you had to get off of it. Once you got on it to come up this way, man, it was like an arrow!

I can remember 93 in the early days. It would only go as far as Plymouth. They gradually went further and further up through and then got a hold-up to go through where the Old Man in the Mountain is. They had a tough time. They had to kind of be careful where they put the road. They finally got it so that it went right through. That was a big boom.

Now it's why the airport is so busy, because people from northern Massachusetts can hop on that and bang, they're at the airport. I still don't know why they didn't do the road structure first. They made the airport and expanded that instead of finding out how to get the road over there a little better. Now they're working on it and the eagles are holding them up in the trees over there in Bedford. They held that up. I don't know when they're going to start going across the river, but they've got to make it better. They've done a pretty good job. They've really expanded.

MR: It strikes me that this is the largest city in the state and it's always seemed to be a focus for shopping. It had everything. It had transportation, it had mills, it had shopping, it had professional services.

GN: The only thing that hurt a lot was when they opened up the Mall of New Hampshire. The downtown businesses went down the tube, you know? Then gradually it's come back. I think the Verizon thing [arena] has helped. God, you've got more restaurants now than Carter's got liver pills! It's helped, I'm sure.

MR: Where do you think the city is going?

GN: I think they're going to do all right. They seem to be on a good phase right now. The only thing that's been kind of a tough nut in the city—I know because I get my taxes—is they're bringing in all these DPs [displaced persons] and people from Somalia and Sudan and I don't

how they picked Manchester, New Hampshire, in the heart of the cold snow belt. You see these poor people going to stores shopping. They must be dying.

They actually dumped a whole bunch of them this past summer and they had to do a moratorium and say hey, this is it. The schools got devastated trying to put these kids in classes and the health department was the one that really blew the whistle and said hey, some of these kids are getting lead poisoning when they go into these tenements. They're the only places they can get, see? They've all been painted with lead paint over the years.

A man was on [the radio] this morning talking. He was saying how there wasn't any planning, at least in communications, in Manchester saying hey, we're going to send these people [there]. All of a sudden all these people are on your doorstep. What are you going to do? I mean, you don't want to just throw them out. You want to try to accommodate them as best you can. But the whole thing is, you don't get any help from the federal government. They don't help. The special ed? That's a disgrace. They say you got to take care of these kids and it's costing a fortune, yet they'll only pay a certain percent. They were supposed to pay forty percent at first, but I think they're probably paying twelve. I don't know.

MR: This is a question I like to ask people at the end of every interview, especially in your case because there's all these photographs. What do you think is your legacy to Manchester?

GN: I don't know. It's nice sometimes because I meet people and they say, gee, we miss your pictures. Why don't you go back to work? [Laughs] I really don't know.

There was a nice lady. Her boy was shot down. He was a pilot shot down in Vietnam. He was a prisoner. She was well along. A nice Polish lady. She worked at one of those stores in the Bedford mall in the drapery department. My wife went in and wanted to get some curtains or

blinds or something. I gave her the credit card and she saw my name. She said, oh you're Mr. Naum! I love your pictures, she said. I cut them out and I put them on my refrigerator. I said well, that's nice. Mrs. Kula, I think her name was. K-U-L-A. Her son was Jim. You can't put a price tag on that. It's so nice to have this nice little old lady say gee, I love your pictures. If it's one I like, I cut it out and put it on the refrigerator.

My legacy? I don't know. I guess it's kind of nice when people say they missed you. That's one thing I like about volunteering here at City Hall. People come in. A former police chief came in just maybe a half an hour before you came in the building. I haven't seen him for a long time. He said how's it going? I said not bad. He said why don't you take up golf? I said it's too frustrating. I said I was a caddy, I was a caddy master. He said ah, you're too fussy. I like to go out fly-fishing. I find it more relaxing. If I play golf, I get mad at myself because I feel I should do better.

MR: In a sense, now that you're volunteering here at City Hall, you're still in the center of things. You were at the center of things at the newspaper and you still see people coming and going and see what's going on in the city.

GN: Yes. I went to a banquet Sunday. The paper picks out an athlete of the month. Then they pick out two awards. One for the best female athlete and one for the best male athlete. I happened to go this year because they honored some coaches. They honored one of those guys that coaches, who was a guy I'd worked with. I didn't realize that he coached so many sports. He must be involved in about five different sports. They also had a football coach of the year, so I knew him and figured I go to it. I had a great time because people are so glad to see you. They say you're looking great! You look like you didn't change. I said, well yeah, I'm falling apart inside, really. [Laughs]

I enjoyed the people. I worked forty-five years at the paper. I had people that say gee, how come you worked so long? I would say, you know there wasn't a day I went to work that I felt bad about going in. The only thing I really ever disliked about the job was having to go to court and cover something at court, because you never really saw anybody happy there. Whether they won or they lost, you didn't have that nice feeling about the job. Plus, they'd get mad at you sometimes. I got thrown down once. But I mean, that was the only thing. I never felt bad about going into work. Never felt bad. Not too many people can say that. And there's not too many people in this day that can stay at a place that long, because it's come and go. The worst thing is the television. All of a sudden you see some guy and next thing you know, boom, he's gone. Sayonara. Where is that guy? Oh he went to another station somewhere. It's like a stepping stone. I think quite a few have gone to Boston TV over the years. That's kind of a shame.

The paper's almost the same way, in a way. They might stay a little longer. Of course, the pay is good at the paper. It's a guild paper. It's a union paper. But papers, they're dropping off a lot. They've got to really fight to get that customer. The nice thing is you can put the paper down and come back to it.

MR: Your forty-five years at the paper? Where are your photographs? Are they archived at the paper or are they in other collections?

GN: Here's the thing and it's kind of my fault because I really haven't tried to do anything with it. Back a few years ago, they needed room in the basement of the paper because they were storing rows of paper and they needed space. One editor came around and he said I want you to get those negatives out of here. We need the space to put some rolls of paper. We were trying to figure what can we go through and save. We were really working on that; certain events that we said we have to pull those [negatives] out.

They came back and said, listen, we told you to get those things out of here because we need that space. So one of the lab room guys, the chief in the lab room, says I got an idea. So he called the historic[al society] and said we got to get rid of our negatives. They're going to throw them out. If you want them, come down. So they came right down and packed them all on the truck.

MR: Is that the New Hampshire Historical Society?

GN: Manchester Historical. They have everything from, I want to say, 1971 back. And from 1970 or '71 forward to this date, they're all at the paper. I had some sad news a couple of weeks ago. I went to the office for something and they said they just hauled out this machinery that was the developing machine. They'd put the film in and develop it. Now it's all digital. When I went back to work to help out, they had just barely started some digital, and they only had one camera so I couldn't get my hands on it, because I was only working there like maybe two hours one day and three hours the next day, along with that Primary 2000 thing. So I never really got to do anything with digital, and now everything is digital.

The Institute of Arts would have liked to have had a retrospective show, but I just haven't got to a point where I've got to dig up those old negatives. It's hard to remember some of the stuff. Stuff that I have shot on my own that I kept my hands on. I had the negatives so they wouldn't get lost. One of them is Jimmy Hoffa. Jimmy Hoffa came here to settle a trucking dispute and Mr. Loeb was also a good friend of his. I got a great picture of him.

And I've got a great picture of Senator Styles Bridges with Nixon, when Nixon was running. That is my own negative. That was a free-lance job, so I have that negative. I had a great picture of Bob Hope down at Fenway Park. Those are on display at the Union-Leader. They kept those on the wall. It's awful because you say, geez, why don't you do it? It seems like

I had more time when I was working than since [I retired]. I don't know what it is; I can't describe it.

I lost my wife five years ago May. We were married 49 years and seven months. I tell people I married her and then I left her. That's when I got called back. I have two daughters and I have a son. I suppose I should have got started on it when I got through work and I just didn't get moving. But maybe some day.

The negatives are at the Union-Leader. They're their property, not mine. I should go and volunteer because some of those negatives, they really don't know what they are. Now Mrs. Loeb, when she took over the paper, came around one time and said listen, any of you people who want to take a day and volunteer for some organization, take a day. So I took a day and went to Historic and I went through some negatives there and I found a lot of stuff. I found Mayor John Mongan's inaugural and they didn't know what it was. I found some other stuff too. I spent the day and I really should have done that again. I really should go and do it some more because they still don't know what all those negatives are. They're logged like five people: three seated, two standing. You know?

MR: Let me put in a plug for people who do the work that I do and the work that Sally [Fellows, city archivist] does. Please do it, because we come behind you. The project I was doing for UNH a couple years ago in the Boston Globe archives [photo research for the Encyclopedia of New England]- Thank goodness back to the turn of the twentieth century, somebody had the presence of mind to scribble some name—you couldn't always figure it out—but at least there was a date and there was some information there. We don't know who those people are anymore.

GN: When I came to work at the paper, they had all these bound editions. People would get a bound edition, they'd look up something and tear the paper. The paper was turning color. I

said to the librarian at the time-- I'd just started working there and I said don't you have microfilm? She said what's that? I said they copy the paper a page at a time and then you put it on this machine and just look up stuff. It went for years before they finally started microfilming. They were sending the editions to Boston and some company down there was microfilming and then they would send back the microfilms. They were doing the morning edition, they were doing the afternoon edition, and they were doing the Sunday news. Of course, now there's only one daily edition and the Sunday news. At that early times, they were microfilming all that stuff. When I finally got to them and they said what is microfilming? Well, we were doing it in the Army. Do it, huh? George got to do it. [laughs about archiving photos]

MR: I think that might be a good way to tie up and say thank you and give you time to go off and do it.

GN: Yes. I really should.

MR: On behalf of the city, I want to say thank you very much. This has been wonderful.

GN: Not too boring?

MR: No way! Do I look bored?

GN: I didn't give you too much on ethnics, but--

MR: But you gave us a lot of social history and as I was saying earlier—

GN: One thing I want to say about growing up, I wrote it down here so I wouldn't forget. When we were growing up, if you got hurt, you never went home. You went right to Marshall's Drug Store. There were two pharmacists there: Walter Chatfield and Eddie Breck. Those two guys would patch you up. Especially Breck. In later years, he went into the service during the war and he was a pharmacist in the Navy and came back and eventually took over the drugstore. I can remember one time a kid threw a brick at me. I was next door to where I lived. I didn't run

home; I ran around the block to Marshall's and I said, Bobby Schessee threw a rock at me and they patched me up.

MR: That was on the West Side?

GN: Yes. Granite Square. Marshall's Drug Store. It was run by a lady named Janet Moore, I think it was. Mrs. Moore ran it. She had Walter Chatfield, C-H-A-T-F-I-E-L-D and Ed Breck, B-R-E-C-K. Those were the two pharmacists.

I covered two World Series while I was at the paper. They were back in '67 and I think the other one was '78. I gave you the snow plows? A milk company, Blake's Creamery, they used to deliver their milk with a horse-drawn wagon. The wagon had like high rubber wheels so they wouldn't be too noisy, but of course, you had the clop, clop, clop. During the high school years, I was in the shop class and they came along and said we've got to do a project for the military, for the Navy. I think we made the model planes. We spray-painted them black. We said what is this for and they said these are for the trained spotters. This is a Messerschmitt. This is a Spitfire. This is a DeHaviland; British. They would train spotters by the silhouettes, what the different planes were. We got a certificate from the Navy Department. That took away from pattern-making in the shop.

I had no guidance in the freshman year. I was in an English class and they moved some of us out and they created a special English class. Yet I had no guidance, so I was in the shop—the Industrial Arts program--where I probably could have gone into something a little higher level. I tell people I can do something around the house. I took Shop 101.

The Flood? You had that [question], right? The flood was something. I walked across the Granite Street Bridge. I think we had to come over town, here. My grandmother was visiting somebody and I think I came over with my cousin and we walked her back over to the West

Side. The water was under the sidewalk of the bridge. When the hurricane came, I think it was '38.

MR: Right. The flood was '36.

GN: Yes. The flood washed out a couple of big tanks up here in the river. I think they were storage tanks for oil or something. They came down the river and one of them got stuck on the bridge abutment of the Granite Street Bridge and it was there for quite a while. Also, a big tree got wedged against the thing. The tree was there for the longest time. I think they got the tank out.

But the hurricane. It was something. You could see these elm trees. Granite Street had a whole line of elm trees. They were going down like tenpins. Boom! Boom! My grandfather, he was there. [He said] I hope the tree falls across the street and not across our house. It did. It fell across the street. When we were walking to school, after the hurricane, there were trucks that came here from other parts [of the country] like the South to do telephone repairs and services. We were walking and these guys would call to us, you know? They'd talk to us and we'd say you sound different. They were from Missouri, places like that. They were coming up here to help with the damages. We thought it was pretty neat to stop and talk with these guys. It was like a foreign language, you know?

MR: I've asked about that to people when they've been in the service, because it was so different then, before television and national radio. I asked if people could understand each other. Somebody from the West and somebody from the South and somebody from New England.

GN: Down South, that was an era, let me tell you.

MR: It must've been different on your ear, too, especially Louisiana.

GN: You know we've been having some get-togethers with the 167<sup>th</sup> guys. We started out and had one in Virginia Beach. My wife went to that one with me. Then we had a break of a couple years and then they had another one back in Virginia Beach. I went to that one alone. I went to Laughlin, Nevada. They must've had seventeen [guys] that showed up. These guys, we hadn't seen each other for fifty years. That was kind of neat. Then we went to Branson, Missouri, and went back to Virginia Beach last year. Now they want to go to Biloxi, Mississippi.

We had a guy from New Mexico. He stayed in the Army and he finds all the guys on the internet. He'll call me or he'll email me and he'll say I found so-and-so. Here's his telephone number and his email address and here's his address. That was something to see these guys after all these years. There was a kid from South Portland, Maine. He was a movie guy. I saw him in Korea. Never saw him after. Know what he tells me? I was in Manchester taking some presidential primaries. I said, no kidding! How come I remember you came from South Portland, and you didn't remember I came from Manchester, New Hampshire?

The guy who had you sign for your bedding? He stayed in the Army. He's down in Maryland. Still talks like he did in Tennessee. He'll say George, do you know that you and I came into the 167<sup>th</sup> on the same day? I said, we did? He said yup, but I didn't pass the photo course. I guess I wasn't smart enough. But he said you know what saved me? I said no. He said, I took three years of typing. My sister told me to take that typing course. He says I typed three years, he says. One day, he says, I was actually going to leave the 167<sup>th</sup>, and I told them gee, I'd love to stay in this outfit. The first sergeant Mensing said Mr. Philbrick, the supply officer, was looking for somebody that could type because he had a lot of typing. That's when they found out they were going to move up to Maryland and he had to type all these bills of lading stuff for the equipment to be shipped on the train and all that. That's how he got into the supply and he stayed

all the time. Then he got out. He stayed in the Army for thirty years, I think. He said that's how come I got in the supply room.

MR: We'll do more of this one day I hope. [Both laugh] I'll say thank you and turn this off. [End of complete interview]