

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Life in the 1930s and 1940s

Personal Experience

O.H. 1279

HENRY R. TESTA

Interviewed

by

Richard R. Testa

on

July 10, 1989

HENRY R. TESTA

Mr. Henry R. Testa was born on September 23, 1921. He was delivered by midwife at the family home, at 367 Penhale Avenue, Campbell, Ohio. His parents were Ross and Laura Flasck Testa.

Ross Testa emigrated to the U.S. in the early 1900s. Laura was born in Cardvilli, Italy.

Henry was the youngest of five surviving children. Two brothers and a sister are still living.

Mr. Testa attended Penhale grade school and Campbell Memorial High School, graduating in 1940. For a short time, he worked at a variety of jobs before being drafted in June of 1942.

In February, 1944, Henry returned to Youngstown from Camp Hahn, Lumpoc, California, to marry Ellen Mantini. She then went with him to California. In March of 1944, Sgt. Testa was unexpectedly sent overseas and his wife returned to Youngstown. In December of 1944, their son, Richard, was born.

During his time in Europe, Sgt. Testa saw action in England, France, Luxembourg and Germany, while serving in the advance artillery range section. Most notably, he was involved in the Battle of the Bulge. Sgt. Testa was awarded four Bronze Stars during the war.

After returning from the war in 1945, Henry Testa went to work at the Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company. Over a period of 38 years, he held a variety of jobs, retiring in 1983.

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Life in the 1930s and 1940s

INTERVIEWEE: HENRY R. TESTA

INTERVIEWER: Richard R. Testa

SUBJECT: happy times in the 1930s and 1940s, good war experience, big bands, marriage, the Depression

DATE: July 10, 1989

RT: This is an interview with Henry R. Testa for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Life in the 1930s and 1940s, by Richard R. Testa, at Henry R. Testa's home, on July 10, 1989, at 1.33 p.m.

Dad, where are you're parents from?

HT: [They are] from Italy.

RT: Whereabouts?

HT: My mother and dad both came from Cardvilli, Italy.

RT: Both of them?

HT: Yeah, my mother was one year old when she came over and my dad was 21.

RT: Really? There was 20 years difference between them?

HT: No. They just came at different times.

RT: Oh, okay. They didn't come over at the same time?

HT: No.

RT: Okay. Do you happen to know when they came over?

HT: My dad . . . it was in the 1800s, I know. My dad came to Campbell, Ohio, and my mother went to Warren with her parents.

RT: Why Warren?

HT: That's where my grandfather settled, in Warren. I don't know what for, but that's where he went.

RT: Okay. What was your grandfather's name?

HT: My grandfather's name was Anthony Flasck.

RT: And your grandmother?

HT: Lucy Flasck.

RT: Okay. When was your dad born? Do you know?

HT: No. I have no idea.

RT: They were both from Cardvilli, Italy?

HT: Yeah.

RT: Okay. When were you born?

HT: I was born in Campbell, Ohio

RT: What year?

HT: September 23, 1921.

RT: How big a town was Campbell at the time? Do you know?

HT: It was . . . they just changed it from East Youngstown to Campbell and there was about 45,000 people, I believe, when I was there. We lived at 367 Penhale Avenue.

RT: You stayed there until you got married?

HT: I stayed there until I got married, yes.

RT: So you were. . . .

HT: [In] 1944.

RT: 1944, okay. Alright. Where did you go to school?

HT: I went to Penhale School through the eighth grade. Then, I went to Memorial High School through the twelfth grade.

RT: Tell me about Penhale School.

HT: Penhale School was a nice school, a very nice school. It had good teachers. We had one teacher there, I mean, she was born in the school. She was 90 years old and she was still teaching when I was there, Miss Savage.

RT: Ninety?

HT: Ninety years old. She was a very good teacher. She taught the first grade only.

RT: How long had she been there?

HT: Well, she was there when the school opened. Some of the parents that lived on our street went to that school when they were kids. Like the (?Caranos?) and the Richs, their parents went to [Penhale] school, then their children went to school, and their grandchildren went to Penhale School. In fact, the school is still there. It's still going.

RT: She taught them?

HT: She taught most of them. I think she taught three generations of kids.

RT: Wow! That's amazing! How many kids [are] in your family?

HT: My mother's family?

RT: Yeah.

HT: Well my mother had 15 kids, but only five of us survived. I have three brothers and a sister. I'm the youngest.

RT: What happened? Any idea why 10 of them passed away?

HT: Well, there was that one time . . . my oldest brother, on graduation night from high school, he fell off the bleachers and he got killed. Then two of the kids were playing around a fire and they got burned. A couple of them died from diphtheria. That dwindled the family down.

RT: Wow! When was your oldest . . . that was Steve?

HT: My oldest brother was named Steve, yeah.

RT: He fell out of the bleachers?

HT: Yeah. They had them temporary bleachers in graduation. They didn't have many kids in the class, but he was on the top row, and he fell off.

RT: How old were you at the time?

HT: I wasn't even born.

RT: You weren't even born?

HT: I wasn't even born then.

RT: You don't know anything about your grandparents or do you?

HT: Oh yeah.

RT: Oh, that's right. I'm sorry. That's right. They settled in Warren.

HT: Yeah. My grandfather lived to be 95. My grandmother was 92 when she died. She had 15 children. In fact, I still have five aunts . . . five of my aunts are still living in Warren. All their husbands are gone, though.

RT: And they would be what, in their 80's?

HT: Oh, they're all in their 80's, yeah.

RT: What are their names?

HT: Oh, they're my . . . Aunt Alice, my Aunt Margaret, my Aunt Vera, my Aunt Ollie and my Aunt Annie.

RT: What are some of the things you did when you were a kid?

HT: When I was a kid, [I did] what every boy does. We made our own toys. We walked a lot. We traveled . . . there's four of us who were real close friends and we were always together.

RT: Who?

RT: Me and Danny Vlad, Adam Kelb and Bill Danalchak. Everywhere we went, we went together. We walked and walked. Nobody had a car in them days. In fact, to see a car was a rarity. We thought nothing of walking from here to Niles or from here to Girard and back to kill the day. We spent a lot of time in the woods behind Memorial High School. In fact, we used to swim down there at the B.A.B.. And we had a good childhood, a very good childhood. And my house was the meeting place for everybody. We would sit on our porch and

think of ways to make a couple of dollars. Every other week, or so, we held some kind of a raffle. We sold tickets for a nickel a piece and gave away a 25 cent gift.

RT: What would you raffle?

HT: We'd go to the gas station, you know, and they'd give these glasses and stuff away. We'd get a set of glasses. [We'd] ask the guy, and he'd give us a set of the glasses and we'd raffle them off. Anything we could get our hands on, a toy or whatever, we'd make something. [We'd] make a scooter or something, and then we'd raffle it off.

RT: You actually had people that bought tickets?

HT: Oh yeah, they bought tickets. We'd go house to house and sell tickets for a nickel a piece.

RT: That's something! That's amazing!

HT: Oh yeah. We had a good time!

RT: How about as far as games?

HT: Games?

RT: What kind of games?

HT: We played a lot of football and baseball. We had some rugged kids on our street. We had teams all over the city. We used to go up to the neighborhood house up on Reed Avenue and play basketball. In fact, we used to play against other neighborhood houses, like the Settlement House down in Hazelton. . . . We used to play against them guys. And we'd go to Girard and play a gang up there. We had a good time. Mr. McBride up there . . . the only thing is, I was Catholic and he was trying to teach me to be Protestant.

RT: Didn't go over too well back then?

HT: No. That didn't go over too well.

RT: How about Buck-Buck? What was that?

HT: Oh Buck-Buck was a game where we'd all line up, bent over and one guy would be against the wall, and he'd hold the head of the first man. Then everybody would bend over with their head between the other guys legs. Then, one guy would come running and jump as far up as he could. The more people you got on the backs of the

men that were bent over, the more points you scored until you fell down. We'd take turns. That was a hell of a game.

RT: Did you ever hurt anybody doing that?

HT: Oh no. We were too tough for that.

RT: Oh, too tough?

HT: We played a lot of marbles. That was the big thing in them days, marbles. The only playground we had was down in Struthers, Yellow Creek Park. [We'd] play horseshoes. We had no park around in Campbell. Roosevelt Park wasn't opened yet. That didn't open until I was already out of Campbell. Yellow Creek Park was really nice. We'd go down there and have a good time.

RT: Now, where did your mother grow up?

HT: She grew up in Warren. When she got married, she lived in Niles for awhile. My two brothers were born in Niles. The rest of us were born in Campbell. In fact, I didn't even have a birth certificate. I was delivered by one of the neighbors. When I went to go on a trip to Europe, I was almost not able to go because I didn't have a birth certificate. I was never recorded at the City Hall. Luckily, the lady was in her 90's when I was ready to go and I had to go and get her X. She didn't know how to write, and she put an X on the paper, and I got my birth certificate.

RT: How old was Grandma when she had her first child? She had 15 kids.

HT: Oh Grandma, I think, she was 13.

RT: Married at 13?

HT: They were married at 13. My dad was 21, I think, when they got married. And she had . . . oh, she just kept dropping them. In fact, she was still outside playing with the kids when the baby was in the house crying. She never had a baby doll, she had babies.

RT: She'd play with her own babies while the other kids were playing with baby dolls.

HT: Yes.

RT: That's something. Where did she go to school? Did she go to school?

HT: She went to Elm Street School in Warren. In fact, every once in awhile she would start singing "Jolly

Little Maid From The Elm Street School." That was one of her favorite songs.

RT: What do you remember about the Depression?

HT: About the Depression? I was seven years old when the Depression started. My dad didn't get hardly any work. Maybe he worked one or two days a month. The Sheet & Tube had the company store down on Short Street in Campbell. Once a week, we used to go down with the wagon. My father and I would go down. He'd pull me down. I didn't do anything. We'd go down and we'd get a sack of flour, some rice, potatoes and whatever they would sell. Then they would mark it down and take it out of his pay, whatever he spent. That's how we lived. In fact, most of the time, we lived on bread and milk. We had one of the dairies bring the milk to the house, and half the time, he didn't charge us for it. My mother made bread. In the evenings, we'd break up the bread and throw it in the milk. And that was our supper.

RT: That was it?

HT: My dad had a big garden. He always had a good garden. We lived on dandelions, celery, tomatoes, and whatever he could grow. In the summer we ate good, but in the winter, it was kind of skimpy.

RT: Very little meat?

HT: Very little meat. After a awhile, in the 1930s, my dad started raising rabbits. We had about 52 rabbits. One morning we got up, and all the rabbits were dead. Old Matt Gogash's dog killed them all.

RT: I thought maybe your father butchered them.

HT: No. They killed them. My dad sat up one night with the gun. He got even. He shot the dog.

RT: Your neighbor didn't get mad about this?

HT: No. He couldn't get mad. My dad said, "You say something, and I'll shoot you too!"

RT: Oh! Okay!

HT: So Matt Gogash just walked away. And my dad said, "Take your dog with you!"

RT: What did your father do back in Italy?

HT: My dad was a sheepherder.

RT: Yeah?

HT: Yeah, he was a shepherd. He lived in the mountains up there. See, Cardvilli is up in the mountains. He tended sheep, and he also played the bagpipe up there. I never saw the bagpipe. He never brought it with him. He used to play bagpipes and watch the sheep.

RT: Not much call for shepherds here?

HT: No.

RT: What did he do in Campbell?

HT: Campbell? He got a job when he first came to Campbell. He got a job in the Sheet & Tube. He worked 49 years in the socket shop. Then when he retired, he was in his 70's, but he couldn't sit still. So, he got a job at the Dollar Bank down in Campbell. He was a maintenance man down there. He worked in the evenings after the bank closed. He would go down and clean it up.

He never owned a car. He walked everywhere he went. And he walked from my house, which is the top of the hill, in Campbell, all the way down to the Sheet & Tube and back every day. Then, he would walk all the way down to Wilson Avenue, to the bank and back every day. He was in his 80's. And he was something like 84 when he retired. But he didn't last long after that. He couldn't go without working.

RT: The inactivity killed him?

HT: Yeah. Inactivity killed him.

RT: That's something, because I remember him always as a very big, very strong guy.

HT: Oh yeah. My dad was a big, strong man.

RT: How about Grandma? What did she do during the Depression? How did she make ends meet?

HT: Well, she would make ends meet.

RT: Or, did she make ends meet?

HT: Oh yeah. What we got out of the garden. . . . She would can a lot. She made bread all the time. We always had good bread. We had an oven outside. My dad used to get up at 4 o'clock on Monday morning and light the fire underneath the oven. He'd start the oven. Then, he'd go to work at 6 o'clock. Then, my

mother would be making the dough. She'd make about two dozen loaves of bread every Monday. That would last us all week.

RT: What about the inside of the house? What was that like? Your kitchen?

HT: Oh, we had a big kitchen. We had a beautiful kitchen. We had a modern stove. We had a gas stove. Of course, there were no microwaves or anything then. It had a stove, a sink and a table, and an icebox. We had an icebox. Then eventually, we got the refrigerator. But, my mother was a good housekeeper.

RT: Indoor plumbing?

HT: Oh yeah. We had indoor plumbing. We always did. In fact, our house was one of the first homes built in Campbell. I don't know how we paid for it, but we almost lost it a couple of times. But we managed to hold on. Then, my brothers got a little bigger and they pitched in.

RT: No outhouse?

HT: No, no. I never remember an outhouse.

RT: No? Okay. Who were your brothers?

HT: My oldest brother was Anthony. He died when he was 75 years old. My brother, Charlie, is now 82 years old. He's retired from the Sheet & Tube. My sister, Jenny, is 74. My brother, Louis, is 72. Myself, I'll be 68 in September.

RT: What were some of the things you did for entertainment as far as the family?

HT: Entertainment was just like everybody else. We'd hang around my dad Sunday morning. We'd hang around my dad all morning in the garden and watch. [We'd] hang around until he gave us a nickel to go to the show. He knew what we wanted, but he would tease us, you know, and make like he wasn't going to give us anything. Then, we'd go to the show and we'd stay and see it, maybe two or three times. That was our whole day Sunday.

RT: What would you see? What were some of the things that they played?

HT: Oh man, I used to like to watch Wheeler and Woolsey. [They were] my favorite comedy act. Then, they had the serials, Buck Rogers, and all of that. We use to go down and see them cliff hangers. They were nice. We

had a good theater down there--The Palace Theater. Then, later on, they put another one up. They had two theaters in Campbell: The Palace and The Bell. If we could sneak in, we'd save money, but that was hard to do.

RT: Why?

HT: Why? Because after they caught on, they had somebody watching the back door.

RT: Oh!

HT: They knew they had more people than they sold tickets.

RT: They'd sell 10 tickets and they'd have 50 people in the show!

HT: Oh yeah!

RT: How about your neighbors? The neighborhood?

HT: Oh, our neighborhood was just like one big family. We were almost all related to each other. We had one good thing going. Every family on the street bought a pig in the spring, a small porker. In November, we would go down the line. Every week, we would butcher at each house. My dad would kill them and the ladies would cut it up. [They] rendered the lard, cut up the meat, and cut the bacon. Every week we'd have a big feast at each house until every house had their pig cut up. Then, that was our meat for the winter, as little as it was. I can still remember my mother when she used to render the lard. She used to get them little . . . cracklings, they call them. She'd sit there and eat them like popcorn. Used to make me sick just watching her eat them!

RT: They were like pork rinds?

HT: Yeah. But they weren't dry. They were the fat.

RT: Oh yeah?

HT: Did you ever see a piece of lard? She'd cut that up and then fry them. It was just nothing but fat. She'd eat that.

RT: I'm surprised they even . . . were you allowed to keep pigs in Campbell?

HT: Oh yeah. Everybody had them back then.

RT: Was it like farms?

HT: No, it wasn't a farm. It was just a backyard. They had them penned in. They would make their own slop and everything. Potato peels and whatever they want, egg shells and throw them in. They'd heat them up and throw them to the pig. The pig was happy.

RT: Yeah, I guess. He was well fed.

HT: Yeah.

RT: How about high school?

HT: I had a very, very nice high school. I mean, I went to high school at Memorial. We had a very good class. We were very close, everybody in our class. We had a lot of parties and picnics. We just got along real good. In fact, we still have a class reunion every five years. Next year will be our 50th year class reunion. The live ones still show up every time.

RT: How many are left?

HT: Oh man! I'll tell you about . . . we had about 120 in our class, and we still got about 90.

RT: Really?

HT: Oh yeah.

RT: What were some of the clubs you had?

HT: Clubs?

RT: Yeah. So, what did you do in high school? What did you study?

HT: I belonged to the Four Square Club. I belonged to the booster club. I belonged to the Red and Black Masqueraders, which was a dramatic club. In fact, I was president of that. I was treasurer of the Four Square Club.

RT: What was the Four Square Club?

HT: That was an honor club. You had to have an above average grade. You had to be above average to be in it. It was like the Key Clubs of today, I guess.

RT: [Did you] participate in any sports?

HT: No. I went out for football, but I only weighed about 127 pounds. The coach told me, "Go home, your mother's calling you."

RT: Who was the coach?

HT: Johnny Napick.

RT: How long was he there?

HT: Oh, he was there quite awhile. After Dick Barrett left, John Napick came in. He was there long after I left. I left there in 1940. We learned to dance in school. In fact, I still know how to dance.

RT: Well, that was the big band era, too.

HT: Yeah. That was the big band era.

RT: Well that was the 1940s, the big band. Who were some of the bands of the 1940s?

HT: Guy Lombardo used to come down. Harry James, Horace Height, all of them. Wayne King, and Woody Herman was there a couple of times.

RT: Where did they come?

HT: Huh?

RT: Where did they come? Stambaugh [Auditorium]?

HT: No, Idora Park. They'd come to Idora Park and some of them came to the Elm's Ballroom. The Elm's Ballroom was a nice place we used to go to. Of course, I didn't have much time for that, because I was only home one year when I got drafted out of high school.

RT: So, you got drafted in what [year]?

HT: [In] 1942.

RT: Do you remember approximately what month?

HT: In June, and I didn't get home until October of 1945.

RT: And you married?

HT: In the meantime, while I was in the Army, I got married on Valentine's day of 1944. That was it. In fact, you were 10 months old before I got to see you.

RT: Yeah. I was born in December of 1944. Were people counting the months?

HT: Yeah, boy, were they!

RT: Really?

HT: When it came to 10, they were disappointed.

RT: They thought they had something, huh?

HT: Yeah.

RT: What about the war? What do you want to tell me about it?

HT: About the War? It was a very nice experience. I had a lot of hard times, and I had a lot of good times. [I] met a lot of nice people. We got to be very good friends. [I had] been shot at and missed. [I] never killed anybody, though. Indirectly, I might have. I was in the Anti-Aircraft. We went over to England in 1944. From England we went to France. From France, to Germany, Luxembourg, and then, back to Germany. After the war, when the treaty was signed and the War ended, I didn't. . . . I had enough points to come home. They had a point system. Sixty-five points. I didn't come straight home. They sent me to the little town of Neiderbraun, France. I was with graves registration. I was honor guard of the cemetery of American soldiers. I was in charge of eight men. We did honor guard night and day. And it was quite an experience. I came home in October of 1945.

RT: What were some of the other. . . . You said you had a good experience?

HT: I mean, I learned a lot of things . . . different things to do. I enjoyed the USO, and we had a lot of good shows come over. I learned to cook in the Army. Not in the kitchen, though, out on my own. When we were on convoy going from one place to another, if we saw a chicken or a pig somewhere or a small little porker, we'd jump off the truck, grab it, bring it back, kill it, and eat it.

RT: What would you eat otherwise, K-rations, C-rations?

HT: C-rations. We had a kitchen sometimes. We got chickens and stuff, but there were times when we had nothing to eat for weeks. I lived on dandelions; we ate dandelions. One Easter Sunday, all I had to eat was dandelions. I went into the kitchen. All we had was the condiments, you know, vinegar, oil and stuff. I would eat dandelions.

RT: Where was this?

HT: In France.

RT: Yeah? How about French champagne?

HT: Oh man! Champagne! We were in Epernay, France, and when the town was captured, we broke into one of the distilleries over there. Epernay was one of the big champagne cities. We brought that stuff out by the case. We all drank and had a good time.

RT: How about your brothers? What were they doing at the time?

HT: Well, my brother, Louis, was drafted right after I was. He was older than me, but he got drafted after me.

RT: Why was that?

HT: Because my number came up first. In the draft, they pulled numbers out, and my number came up first. My brother, Chuck, he was too old to go at the time.

RT: Was he working here?

HT: He was working at [the] Sheet & Tube.

RT: Uncle Anthony did the same thing?

HT: The same thing. My brother, Anthony, was too old.

RT: Did you and your brother, Louis, ever see each other?

HT: Yeah. It was funny, though. I came home [and] I got married then I went back. They sent me to Camp Cook, California. We were assigned barracks. When I went to this barracks, I saw a stack of papers from the group that was there before me. I'm going through the papers, and I came across my brothers name on one of the papers. So, I went inquiring. I went down to the headquarters. I asked, "Where did these people go?" He says, "Oh they're down at the other end of the camp. They moved down below." I went down and looked for my brother. I couldn't find him the first time I was there, because. They sent him to Iowa to pick up a prisoner. They said he'd be back in a couple of days. Then, he came back and I went down and saw him. We spent about two weeks together. We had a lot of fun. We went bowling and talked over old times. And I enjoyed that.

RT: That's the only time you saw him?

HT: That's the only time I saw him. While we were overseas and going through France, our outfit was right behind theirs. He was in the infantry, in the tanks. They converted our battery, I mean, our company, from anti-aircraft to field artillery. We would supply the cover for his outfit. We would shoot ahead of them. [We would] blast everything ahead of them and then,

they would move up in the infantry. I didn't know that until we came home. He was telling me where he was on what day, and I would tell him, we were right behind him all the way.

RT: You were like one or two days behind him?

HT: Yeah. We would fire ahead of them. When they moved up, we'd move up. We'd fire ahead of them, then they'd move up and we'd move up. I was right behind him all the time and I didn't know it.

RT: How long a range did your guns have?

HT: Ninety millimeters. We had 90 millimeter guns that was good for at least three miles. They were silent guns. The gun was noisy, but the projectile was silent. You couldn't hear it.

RT: Oh, you didn't hear it?

HT: You didn't hear no whiz or whistle. It was real quiet. [It was a] beautiful gun.

RT: So them people, the Germans or whoever, had no idea that the territory was covered?

HT: They didn't know we were coming. But we could hear them. I was the Sergeant. When things were quiet, you know, when the fighting was done, I was made permanent sergeant of the Guard. I had run of the whole place. After dark, I was the only one that was allowed to leave the area to go check my guard walk around, and pull vegetables out of the garden and stuff.

RT: How about decorations? What kind of medals, decorations, honors?

HT: I got four bronze stars, a good conduct medal. Thank God, I wasn't wounded. I didn't want a purple heart. I was in the Battle of the Bulge.

RT: When was that?

HT: That was in 1944.

RT: What was your function?

HT: Well, I was in the range section. My job was to determine how high and how far the projectile was supposed to go. I would go up ahead of the company and sight the enemy on my scope. I'd take a reading on how far the enemy was ahead of us. I could actually see them down there running around. I'd send the information

back, and then, they would fire and clear the way for the infantry.

RT: Wasn't that one of the great tank battles of the war?

HT: Oh yeah. But, we didn't . . . like I said, we had to stay behind them, because our outfit couldn't do anything about it. All we could do was just fire ahead and try and knock the tanks out before they come up any further.

RT: What did you do after the war?

HT: After the war, I worked. I came home around October 25. On October 27, I got a job in the Sheet & Tube. I got a job in the pipe shop. I worked there for two years. Then, I went to the cold strip mill. I worked there until 1948, only a year or two. Then, I got a job up in Seamless, where I ran crane for many years. Then, I left there and I went to apprentice school. I went to apprentice school in 1970. I learned to be a motor builder. I worked in an electric shop until my retirement in 1983. But for four years, after I got out of the service, I worked two jobs. I worked at the Sheet & Tube and I worked at the Campbell Sash. I would work day turn in the mill, then I would work from 4:00 until 12:00 down at Campbell Sash. I did that for four years.

RT: Campbell Sash, that Callex right now.

HT: The Callex Corporation.

RT: What were they making at that time?

HT: We were making wooden storm windows. They hadn't gotten into aluminum yet.

RT: And you did this for, what, four years?

HT: Yes.

RT: Let's get back to the war. Did the war have any effect on you?

HT: Well, when I first came home, I couldn't sleep. Every time an airplane would go over, I would wake up and shiver and crawl under the bed. I actually got so scared. Because they were bombing us over there. When I came home, I couldn't lay out in the yard. I couldn't sit out in the yard. I was afraid.

RT: How long did this go on?

HT: Oh, that went on about five years before I got over it.

RT: Really?

HT: Oh, yeah. I really had the shakes. But then, that went away. Now, I love to ride in airplanes.

RT: You're not scared of them anymore?

HT: No.

RT: How about prior to the war? Let's go back prior to the war.

HT: Prior to the war?

RT: Yeah, well, I know at one time or another, you owned a pool hall down in Campbell. You were part owner.

HT: Yeah, when I was a kid. My brother managed a pool hall on the corner of Devitt Avenue and Twelfth Street. I was in high school then. I was in about the tenth grade. I would help him, and we managed it together. And I got to be a pretty good pool player. I made a few dollars. When I graduated, I couldn't get a job. I ended up downtown at the Star Oyster House. I worked. . . .

RT: Where was that located?

HT: On Front Street and between Market and Phelps. It was one of the best restaurants in town. I worked 11 hours a night for 25 cents an hour. I started at six in the evening, quit at five in the morning.

RT: Why so long?

HT: They were open all night.

RT: They closed at five in the morning?

HT: No, that was my shift.

RT: They were opened all night?

HT: All night and all day. Twenty four hours a day.

RT: They had customers?

HT: Oh, yeah. They had big banquets upstairs that would last almost all night.

RT: [Would] any prominent people come in there?

HT: Oh, yeah. I didn't know them, but there was a lot of dress up affairs. That was an expensive place to eat

then. Of course, they had oysters, turtle soup, and seafood.

RT: All the delicacies?

HT: All the real delicacies. Then, I left there and I got a job in a fish market. I worked for Manny's Fish Market down on East Federal Street. I think I made something like eight dollars a week.

RT: Now, what time period was this?

HT: Well, from 1940 to 1941. Right after high school.

RT: Oh, it was before you went overseas then?

HT: Then I left there. I went to Moyers. I worked until I got drafted. I worked there for a year at Moyer Manufacturing. I made men's pants. Then, I got drafted.

RT: Where did you go originally? You didn't go overseas right away, or did you?

HT: No, I was in the States for one year.

RT: Where?

HT: I was in Camp Wallace, Texas. Then, they sent me to school in Wilmington, North Carolina. Then, I was sent to Camp Hahn, California.

RT: Where was that?

HT: Right outside of Riverside, California. I was there until I got sent overseas in 1944.

RT: Okay, and Mom went with you then?

HT: No. She was with me in California for one month.

RT: That's it?

HT: That's it. When I got married, I went back and she stayed with me one month. Then, I got sent overseas. She had to come back home.

RT: Did you know you were being sent overseas?

HT: No, no it was a big surprise. Before I came home to get married, the colonel told us, "All right boys, this is it. This is where we're going to stay for the rest of the war. Right on the coast." So, I came home, got married, went back, brought my wife. One month later, the colonel says, "Well boys, this is it."

We're shipping out." And that was it. I went over-seas, very surprised.

RT: I could imagine. And so then, Mom had to come home?

HT: She had to come home. Then, you were born.

RT: What was pay like in the Army?

HT: Pay: \$21 a month.

RT: What could you do with that?

HT: I sent it home.

RT: That's it?

HT: Yeah. She didn't like it.

RT: What are your hobbies?

HT: You want to know what my hobbies are? I actually have no hobbies, but I enjoy dancing, and I love to travel. We have been all over Europe. [We've] been to Bermuda. We've been to Jamaica. You name it, we've been there. We've been all over the United States.

RT: How did you feel going back to Europe? You went back to Europe in the 1960s.

HT: Oh, yeah. We went back to Europe in 1969. We went back to retrace where I'd been during the war. It was so built up, I didn't hardly recognize it. It was a whole new country. [It was] so modern. [The] United States put a lot of money into making them people happy. And I couldn't believe it when I saw it. When I was down in Bonn, Germany, one of the cathedrals was almost demolished. When I went back, it was like it had never been touched. The same with France. Everything was demolished when I left. When I went back, it was all modern and new. I couldn't believe when I went to Italy. They have what they call the Old Rome and the New Rome. The New Rome was beautiful, the buildings looked like our Howard Johnson Motels. They were their apartment houses. Everything was just fantastic, [I] couldn't believe it. Just too bad we had to pay for all that.

RT: Well, what was that, the Marshall Plan?

HT: Yeah, I guess that was what that was, the Marshall Plan.

RT: Okay, well, that concludes the interview with Mr. Testa.

HT: Thank you.

RT: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW