



The Autobiography of Stanley Fried

1918-1945

As told to Albert Fried-Cassorla

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About my Parents, Otto Fried and Bessie Yarfitz

My dad, whose name was Otto, was a trolley car conductor in times when there were two men on a trolley car. When it changed to one, he became an operator. He was one of very few Jews, if any others at all, in the Third Avenue Railway System. This was a private company that owned and operated streetcars in New York City at that time.

During my youth, he worked six days a week, ten hours a day. Consequently, I rarely saw him. The fact of that matter is, I hardly saw him at all. It is possible that he worked seven days a week.

My father would come home at night about six p.m., and he'd go to bed at eight p.m., so he could wake up at four a.m. Relations between my mother and my father were difficult. My Mom, Bessy, often complained about her life, the emptiness and ordinariness of it, and the fact that he did not make much money. They had some very bitter verbal arguments.

My father was the only child of his mother's first marriage, in Hungary. I know little if anything about my father's father, my grandfather, since he apparently died before they emigrated to the U.S. in the 1890s.

My father's mother remarried and she had five more children by her second husband. They lived in Huntington, Long Island in the early 1890s.

I was told by one of my father's step-sisters that my father had been evicted from the house by his step-father at age 6. This step-father was apparently a horrible man in just about every other respect as well.

I hardly know anything about my father from the time when he was thrown out until I knew him. All I know is what my aunt told me - that at one time he and another boy were rowing out to the immigrant ships parked outside Ellis Island, and selling things to the occupants of the rowboats.

Often, the step-children fed Otto from the back door. My dad got about a year of public schooling. However, he was able to read and write reasonably well, so he must have picked up these skills on his own.

I have no idea when he started working. One thing that really stands out was that my dad's life became much easier after the Transport Workers Union won a representation election. His hours were reduced significantly. He was around more, but I was out of the house by that time. This all happened in the 1930s. My dad retired about two years after the union came in.

My mother's parents were Sam and Mary Yarfitz. I know that they came from the village of Smorgon in Poland, which was then part of Russia. Once, I tried to find it on a map of Poland, but I was unable to locate it.

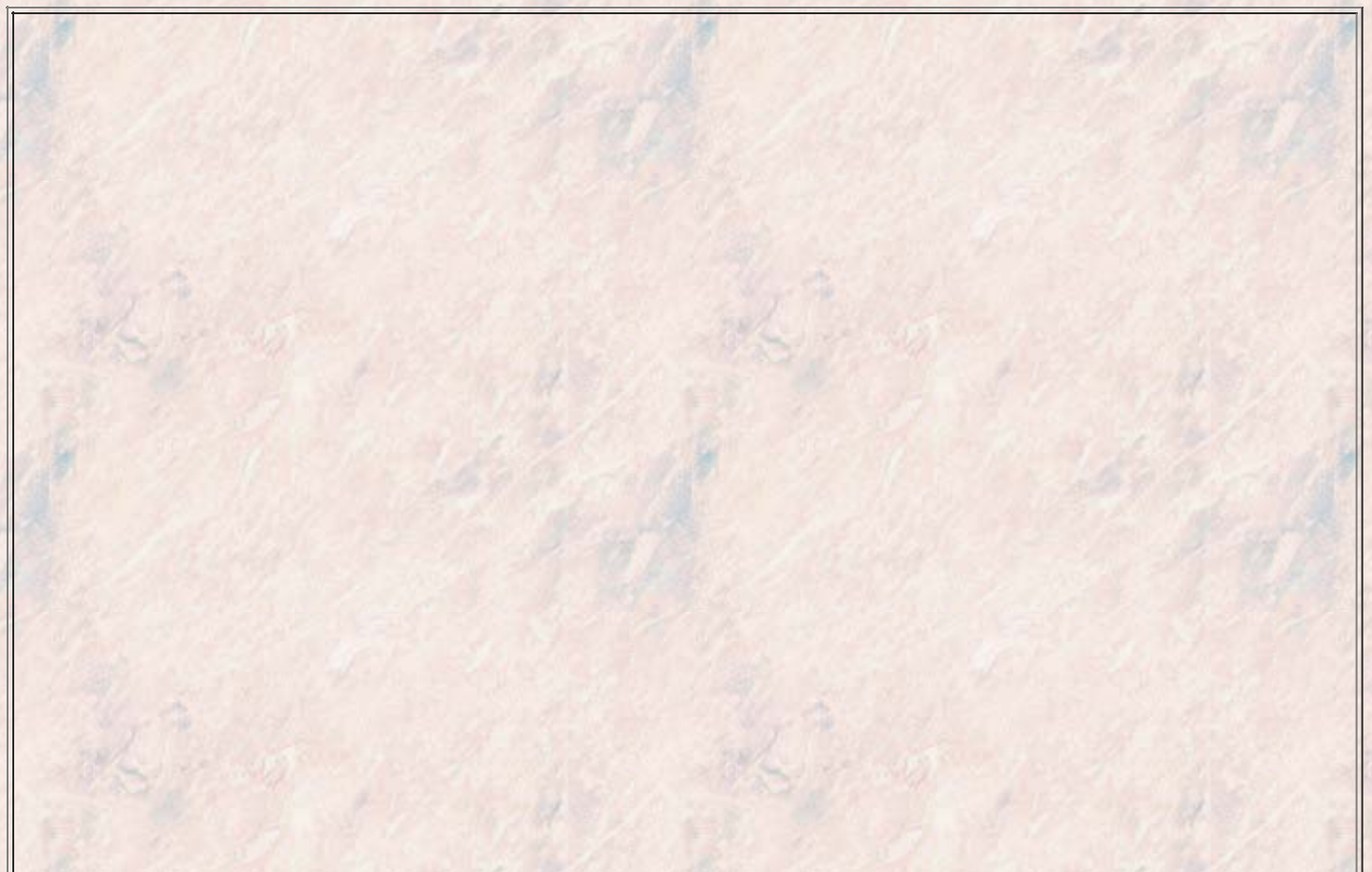
My mother's mother had about thirteen children, of which about nine lived. Three were born in Russia, and the rest in the United States. The youngest was the only one who went on to college. The girls received a minimal elementary school education and were then sent to work, generally in the needle trades.

I understand that my maternal grandfather was a clothing contractor, perhaps a sweatshop operator! They lived in the lower east side, and my mother used to speak proudly of the fact that they possessed the first bathtub on Hester Street! It was located in their living room, and neighbors and friends would come over to use it.

This bathtub can be considered a status symbol and would indicate that my grandfather was relatively wealthy for that era.

My parents got married in 1911, and to my knowledge, they lived on Southern Boulevard. They had three children, one of whom died of diphtheria when I was about a year old. The two scourges were diphtheria and pneumonia.

My sole remaining sibling is Josephine (Josie), who was born in 1912.





A remembrance of my sister

Josephine Krieger, born Josephine Fried

Born June 15, 1911, died December 5, 2001

by her brother, Stanley Fried

Josie was seven years old when I was born. We lived initially in the East Bronx on Southern Boulevard and moved to thre West Bronx. She attended public school until about 8th grade, then went to a four-year business school. This was a city-run school. She got along very well with my parents.



Josie at age 12, in 1923

Josie always had an equitable temperament, and didn't fight. I fought with my parents. My mother, Bessy, was ill a good part of Josie's life and my life, so we both spent a good deal of times with my mother's sister, Aunt Bea. Bea lived about a half-mile away in the East Bronx. Bessy had a continuous infection in her sinuses and was often too ill to attend to us.



Josie had a club foot, which was a social hindrance. Maybe these days it would have been corrected by surgery, but not then. Still, Josie was a good-looking woman.

Unfortunately, we were separated by almost a generation.

After business school, she went to work. Her primary skills were as a legal secretary. She worked in a law office. Secretaries then had to be able to take dictation and be able to fill in forms and such. She was fast at dictation and typing. Her hearing only failed her later in life. She worked for several different law firms in mid-town Manhattan and commuted on the subway from the Bronx on the Lexington Avenue line, probably the 4 or 6.

Marrying Artie

At about age 22 or 23, she married Artie. We don't know how they met. During World War II, he worked on shipbuilding. But before that he was a shipping clerk. He was a kind of a quiet guy. They wanted children but could not have any. Josie was terribly disappointed about that. She would have made a great mother!

She was very affectionate. She never said a harsh word against anyone in her life, as Elsie says. And she was loved by the family. Josie was close to her cousin Helen, who was about the same age.



Otto, my father, on the left. Helen on the right was Josie's cousin and a great friend of hers. Circa 1955.

Josie and Artie did take some trips, mainly within the U.S. and Canada. They lived in the West Bronx on Decatur Avenue. Albert adds: "Martha did enjoy lunch with Josie in mid-town Manhattan at least once. They had a great time. Josie was also scrupulous about being back to work on time and taking her responsibilities at the office seriously."

Albert and Martha remember that they got a present from her just about every year. I asked her about that and she said, "I like to give presents!"



Josie on far right, circa 1973

Artie suffered a burst artery and died in about 1970. Sally was Artie's sister and was very lively. Josie was closest to Helen after Artie's passing. Josie retired maybe in 1980 or so. She lived in the Bronx and then moved to Boca Raton, Florida in about 1990. She liked life there very well. Helen lived in the same development as her. Leo Yarfitz (my cousin and Josie's) lived nearby and other members of Bessy Yarfitz's family. Josie liked movies, restaurants and reading. She loved reading, mainly fiction. I visited her about once a year, and was doing well.



Josie with my mother, Bessy Fried (born Yarfitz) circa 1973.

Then she could not longer take care of her apartment and moved to Heritage Park and lived there for about five years. At that point she became ill. She was ill for about a year or so, moving from the hospital back to rehab and back to her apartment. In the last stages she was in a hospice. After just one day in the hospice, she passed away.

She was relatively happy even though she had no mate for a relatively long period of time.



Josie was a loving person, who was loved by others. Elsie and I will miss her greatly.

My dad, Otto Fried

My mother went into the needle trades before she got married. My mother was ill often, having had very bad sinusitis. I used to stay at relatives' houses because my Mom was so ill.

My mother was the only one who was kind to the second wife of her oldest brother, because this second wife was not accepted by the family.

My mother's side did have a family organization, the Yaron Clan, standing for Yarfitz and Aronowitz. The clan was in existence until just recently, when Leo distributed the funds.

My sister Josie graduated from New York Technical School, and went on to become a legal secretary. But more about Josie later.

I do remember my parents but it is like looking at them through a fog, since we thought differently and did very different things almost from high school onwards.

This is not unusual since my parents and I were like people trying to talk to each other in two different languages. They were both born in Europe, they both had little education. My father left school at in the second grade and my mother left in ninth grade to work full-time sewing in the garment district.

My mother was a housewife and my father was a trolley car engineer or motorman. My parents did not get along well with each other - my sister and I remember numerous loud arguments.

I now know that they did not get along because they had different ways of wanting things done. Their respective childhoods were very different and they had little education to help them understand one another.

In the same way, I differed from my parents. I was brought up in a Jewish-American neighborhood, attended American public schools and college, and lived during a time of great freedom to say what I wanted to during the Great Depression which lasted from 1930 to 1940.

Although we all spoke English, the same words often had a meaning to them that was different than the meaning to me. Also, I used more and longer words. But it must be understood that they were honest and believed in the rights of other people.

My Mom, Bessy (Yarfitz) Fried, circa 1928.

Age 1 - 8: The East Bronx

1918- 1926

I was born on September 9, 1918, in a tenement house underneath the El at 1555 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, NY.

I have no idea what happened to me between ages one and eight. I was in various public schools, such as P.S. 46 in the Southern Boulevard neighborhood of the East Bronx.

Stan's family, circa 1928., Left to right are: Otto Fried, Bess (nee Yarfitz) Fried, and Stanley, age 10. Josie is barely visible on the right-hand side.

We lived in one apartment during those years -- the four of us: Josie, my parents, and me. Our apartment was right below the El. It was the Lexington Avenue IRT at 159th Street and Southern Boulevard. We'd hear the roar of subway trains at all times of day and night, but we got used to it. Now the neighborhood has evolved into Spanish ghetto.

There was a candy store at the entrance to the apartment building. It figures that that's one of the things a kid would remember! They'd sell penny candies, and once in awhile my parents would give us a few cents for some treats.

Josie was seven years older than me, and we didn't play together much. We'd fight over small little things!

Ours was an exclusively Jewish neighborhood. My parents were both Jewish, but my father's half-brother somehow used to get toys around Christmas. Perhaps he was a salesman. We'd go over to his house for Christmas presents. My father's half-brothers and sisters were never very religious. One was an executive for the Collins-Akeman Corporation, a large fabric house. He couldn't be known as Jewish or else he would be persecuted and be forced to leave his job.

My mother used to go to schul regularly, but my father only went occasionally. He wasn't brought up in any religion at all.

My most memorable Jewish event was a Passover Seder in my grandfather's house. It was attended by an enormous number of relatives who sat, talking, while about twenty of us kids played under a Passover table that seemed to be half a mile long. We fought over finding the afikomen, the finder of which was rewarded the magnificent amount of one dime by my grandfather.

I have no friends alive now from that period in my life, and no one whom I stayed in contact with.

Not far from where we lived was an amusement park called Starlight Park, bounded on one side by the Bronx River: it was really a creek with fairly steep banks. There was an admission fee, and it had a fence on three sides -- but not down by the river!

One day, this gang I was with said, "Let's sneak into the park by climbing along the banks!" We didn't have the admission fee.

It had fairly steep banks, maybe ten or twenty feet. We walked along the inclined part, which was mainly mud and weeds, and found our way in. We had fun there. Then the leader of the gang insisted that we had to sneak our way out! This was a stupid thing, since we were caught by the police. All we had to do to begin with was go out the exit.

The police took us to the station house. They conveniently left the stationhouse window open, and we all conveniently left. That was my life of crime.

Ages 9 - 25, The West Bronx

1928 - 1945

At age 9, my family moved from East Bronx to 2600 Briggs Ave. in the West Bronx. I went to elementary school in the West Bronx until age 12 or so, when I entered high school.

The West Bronx was sociologically a step up for us... maybe a quarter-step up from East Bronx.

Was my life hard or easy? I find that a hard question to ponder. I don't recall that I was ever hungry, even though there were times when we had very little money in my family.

I never felt deprived of anything. That may be because my friends and relatives (mostly on my mother's side of the family) were living under the same conditions: very little money and a small demand for things.

For example, we couldn't afford a baseball glove and baseball, so we played a game in the streets with a broomstick as a bat and a tightly rolled, twined newspaper as a ball.

High School Ages 12 - 16, 1931 - 1935

I went to DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx for my first two years of high school. It was brand new at that time, and I used to walk there -- about one mile.

When I first attempted to join a gang of kids whom I would consider my friends at DeWitt High School, I was challenged to see how good a fighter I was. My order in the gang was determined by which kid I could beat up. I had to do that to have friends. Later, I found my position to the gang was sort of a counselor.

Other kids were more athletic and had more prominent places in the gang. We weren't vicious, just a neighborhood group. We did our share of petty pilfering from vegetable stores and 5 & 10's. We'd steal oranges and apples from the fruit stand, and jackknives from Woolworth's.

When the DeWitt administrators had trouble with the tough kids, the kids were invited down to have a "boxing lesson" by the athletic department. They literally put gloves on the kids, and the coaches pummeled them. Suffice it to say they didn't have real trouble with them afterwards!

I was always interested in chemistry, and I used to perform experiments in my house. Of course, I didn't know much about what I was doing. I burned the hell out of my clothing! As soon as my mother left the house, I'd take off the standard burner and put a Bunsen Burner hose onto the gas pipe, and lead the gas pipe to the kitchen table. There I set up my Bunsen Burner and my beakers.

I'd heat up various chemicals that I'd get either from a chemistry set or from other sources. I'd work with sulfur, hydrochloric acid, metals like aluminum and who knows what! Thank god I didn't have magnesium available or I would've burned down the house.

My mom would come home and yell, "What the hell are you doing!" She'd swat me with an open palm. I had to stay and take it. There was an apparatus supply house called Eimer and Ammend, that had specials in order to get rid of various surplus apparatus, mainly glass. My friends and I would go downtown and get the equipment.

I started to work after school when I was in high school (or maybe even earlier). But each job I had was, in my recollection, an adventure. School was, too. I can't say that life was hard, though there were hard aspects.

For instance, I had to get up very early in the morning to be a food and magazine salesman on the B & O railroad, which went to Pittsburgh and Washington. Also, the Reading lines, which went to coal areas, such as Scranton and Mawchunk. Also the Central Railroad of New Jersey which went to Asbury Park, and the Jersey Shore. That run was more frequent. Sometimes, I'd go to the beach at Asbury Park. I'd bring along a change of clothes. I'd start out at five or six in the morning, to go from the Bronx to Jersey City. We'd arrive at about ten a.m. My return train was in the evening. These were excursions. We had a group of five or six of us, all earning money the same way. Some kids did it just for the chance to get a gal on the beach or boardwalk.

Asbury Park was a summer resort for the NJ area. There weren't any rides -- it was rather sedate. As a matter of fact, it was right next to another town which was a Blue Law town.

On the boardwalk they had pitchmen. They took some of my friends for money. They presumably sold kitchen utensils. They'd give some away till they got to the expensive ones. Then you had a useless utensil, and they had your \$5, which was a lot of money. Also, some of the regular hawkers on the train were characters,

For instance, there was "Red," who was picked up by the police when he was so-called lapping. That means placing bars of chocolate on the seats. He literally threw them in the laps of women and picked them up from their laps and grope them.

The police picked him up for that. He was a short, red-faced big nosed man with a cigar in his mouth, in his 30's or 40's. He introduced some of the kids to the red light district of Asbury Park which was literally on the wrong side of the railroad tracks.

On the longer runs, say to Pittsburgh, you would have to be up at about 2 am. The reason being that you worked on a commission basis, and consequently, any money which was skimmed off was taken off your profit. We had a group take.

To prevent this, your pockets were emptied before you boarded the train. All cash was taken out of ones pockets and put in a central gathering place. Everybody watched it at the same time. Therefore you were awake 14 hours one way with an overnight stay, and 14 hours back.

One time the 8th Avenue subway had just been opened. I got on the train, fell asleep, and ended up in a terminus in the Bronx, fell asleep again and ended up in another terminus in Brooklyn, until I ultimately got home.

Maybe I was shy, because I didn't go to the red light district. None of the kids drank. These were mainly Jewish boys, except for Larry Neary.

One of the recurring incidents was the so-called Donoghoe Specials. Donoghoe was the mayor of Hoboken. Once a year he rented several trains and took most of the poor population on Hoboken, which was all poor, out to Asbury Park. They arrived sober, but on the way back they had many, many combative drunks.

The epithets thrown at us as we tried to sell them saltwater taffy, etc., was scurrilous to say the least. The fights between the passengers and candy-sellers landed many in the hospital or jail. Specifically I remember one case of someone being thrown through a window of the train, while it was standing still. The Asbury park police were out in force that weekend, and they were scared. The population was mainly Irish.

I traveled to cities and villages in Pennsylvania and to the New Jersey coast on the train, sometimes working together with friends.

I was often tired (several times I worked for 60 hours without sleep), but it was exciting. The places we visited were exotic to a kid, and I learned a lot about how other people lived.

You had choices about which high schools you could go to then -- some of my friends went to vocational high schools like Haaren High School in Manhattan. My friend Billy Loman went there. Billy learned aviation trades. So my friends were from various schools, but we'd all get together after school.

One of my friends was Larry Neary. He was a maverick Irishman -- he associated with us Jewish boys in a neighborhood group, and he had a natural charm and loquacity and humor, which was very attractive to everybody.

I met Larry before high school, when he was a member of our street group. We used to get beat up regularly. We played games together, we had a football game. A guy on the other team used to eat raw garlic and breathe on us -- that was part of his technique. We used to call him Matzohs. It was mainly an all-Jewish team. He was from the Valentine Avenue gang, and I was part of the Briggs Avenue group.

We were all "supers" (a term which derived from supernumeraries, or extras) at the Metropolitan Opera. That meant extras -- people who filled the stage in a lot of operas that required a lot of people. Of course they wouldn't let us sing! We were in Aida, Carmen, Die Meistersinger, and others. They paid us \$1 a day, and if you were not available, they used to drag in homeless people off the streets. This was maybe in 1937-38, when I was in college.

I did have a Bar Mitzvah. I attended synagogue mainly on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur until I was Bar Mitzvahed. But, remember, I was brought up in an all Jewish neighborhood. I did attend Hebrew School in the Jacob H. Schiff Center in the Bronx.

2645 Morris Avenue in The Bronx: Ages 15 & 16

Later, the Fried family moved several blocks west to 2645 Morris Avenue where I remained until marriage removed Elsie and I to Greenwich Village in 1943. The address there was 270 (?) West 11th Street, near the intersection with West 4th St.

Looking pensive! Stan and friends. circa 1933. The location is the Bronx, probably in the Kingsbridge area. Front row, left to right: ages about 15, front: me (Stan), age 15; Milton Berg (present location unknown): rear, left to right: Julius Spector, now of Los Angeles; Joe Weinrauch, probably deceased, and Herman Cohen (deceased very young).

We spent much time at St. James Park, on Grand Concourse in The Bronx. The Grand Concourse was famous as the widest road in the Bronx, and the abode of the wealthier in the Bronx, except for Riverdale.

From 161st St. to 207th St. was 100% Jewish. This shows how homogeneous the area was. Hanging out in Poe Park, home of Edgar Allen Poe. You met the fellas and the girls. They were gang girls, a hard-to-explain society. We were early adolescents learning about girls and sex. You had to find out your own way.

My answer about sex is "You go out with girls, and you fiddle around." If you were lucky, you got hold of Psychopathia Sexualis by Krafft-Ebbing in the library! There was a book called, The Scented Garden, about sexual life in the Near East. That book went like wildfire in City College, it described various practices in the Far East -- with pictures!

I went to DeWitt Clinton for 2 years, then transferred to Stuyvesant H.S.

Ellis Island, 1933 - 34, Age 17 or 18

One of my summer jobs was working under the sponsorship of the National Youth Administration at Ellis Island, where I validated the illegal entry of immigrants.

That meant that I made their entry legal. The law in 1923 authorized that all those who entered prior to 1923 could apply for citizenship, if they could show they came in prior to then.

One of the major ways of validating was to show that they arrived at the Island by means of the ship's manifests, which were lists of what happened aboard the ship, or perhaps only a listing of crew and passengers.

Those who went to school on a regular basis had Ph.D.'s in sciences. They were terrorized by a Chief Clerk. There were no other jobs available, if they were fired. This ignorant Clerk dissuaded me, too, from going further into the sciences. It had been my interest or inclination. This whole episode might have actually happened during college -- I can't recall. I switched from Chemistry to English, so I got out with a B.S. in English.

We were given maybe 5 or 10 applications a day. We were in one of the wings of the Ellis Island buildings. They were entirely filled with manifests. These were kept in shelves maybe 3 or 4 manifests high. Manifests were big books, about 2 feet high by 1 foot wide, and maybe 4" thick. One manifest would be written up on each individual ship.

These boats came over with a couple thousand immigrants at those times.

If we found out that someone came from Russia and was 4 years old and it was cold then, we knew that those from Russia generally went from Hamburg. A name was given to us, and we'd research all the manifests, using an exercise in deduction.

We might presume the year of crossage was say, Winter, 1892. If they went from Hamburg, we knew it was the Hamburg-American line. We'd check listings during that period. The listings of each manifest were alphabetical by last name of passenger.

This was in a long dingy corridor with big towering shelves. They had a width of maybe 30 feet, and the length a couple of football fields. Manifests went maybe 6 feet high. It was lit by electric bulbs and windows. There was ample room, with tables between the shelves, where we'd do the research.

I never saw anyone else while I was there! (Hardly ever, except for the ferry on the way back.) I haven't the slightest idea how I found out about this. The immigrants were in a different section, and they were only the people being returned to their country for various violations -- deportees.

By this period, Ellis Island was not being used for incoming immigrants. In World War I, there were few immigrants if any.

Stuyvesant High School, 1933 - 1935, Ages 15 - 18

I changed to Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan, which was then and still is now known as a science high school. As I mentioned, I liked to fool around with chemicals and chemistry, and Stuyvesant offered more courses in chemistry than did Clinton. I graduated from Stuyvesant in 1935.

Since my late childhood and adolescence happened during the Great Depression of the 30's, things were tough all around me. Many people did not have enough to eat. One of the reasons I went into engineering later was that there were no jobs for English majors. You had to prove yourself qualified through tests including an Oral Exam, and then wait ten years on a list to get a job as a teacher those days. For some reason, you had to pronounce the test as the "O-ral exam" phonetically during the exam, or they'd flunk you!

My college years: CCNY, 1935 - 1940, Ages 18 - 22

Immediately after graduating high school, I started attending the City College of New York at night, while I worked at various jobs during the day. After 2 1/2 years of night school, I transferred to City College day school. I graduated there in January, 1940, with the degree of Bachelor of Science in English, with a major in Creative Writing.

My minor was in chemistry (Stan says with a laugh -- "No one else ever had that combination!") What happened was that I always was interested in chemistry -- ever since I was a kid. But while in City College, I had a course in writing the short story, and the instructor thought I had talent.

Also at that time, I was working during the day, temporarily, for the Department of Immigration and naturalization at Ellis Island. There, the permanent employees, who were doing clerical duties, had PhD's in the sciences. That sort of dissuaded me from going ahead in the science field. This was in 1937 or so.

Just to be a teacher back then, you had to wait on a waiting list for ten years, and that was only after passing a very stiff test.

I had an English teacher who required short stories to be written during the semester. The stories I produced impressed him, and he suggested I continue along those lines. I had started in chemistry and switched to English major, in creative writing, partly at this fellow's urging. There were no jobs for undergraduate chemists. I can't really tell what my motivation was for switching.

Then I went on to do advanced writing with professor Theodore Goodman (Teddy), who was well-known to everyone at City College. We did advanced work in the novelette. Teddy used to say, "Write about what you know" and "The end is in the beginning." That means that everything that you do in a story is related to the theme, from the first sentence onward. At the very end is the revelation.

In his mind, he always believed in the creative imagination, which is a synthesis of your experience. Teddy was a real task-master, but he was good.

There was one guy who was in our class whom Goodman really praised -- though he never praised anyone. After the first month, he disappeared. Goodman discovered he had cribbed from early Edith Wharton! (In fact, we're reading *The House of Mirth* by Wharton today, in our book club.)

We had a spastic man in our class, and Goodman was terribly hard on him. I saw this fellow afterward, after graduation, and he said, "That was the best thing that ever happened to me. It prepared me for the outside world. In college, everyone else made things easy for me."

Once I saw him after I'd graduated, and he asked me, "How are the girls?" I said, "A dime a dozen." He said, gesturing, "Here's a dime!"

The people I met, who became my friends, were either in my fraternity or in my classes. It was only in my last two years, when I went to day school, that I made friends whom I still have.

These friends include: Danny Stevens, now a developmental administrator. Danny is the essence of charm and a very capable person.

Danny was a sergeant in the Personnel Section of the Signal Corps in Joplin, MO. He was able to designate inductees' functions. So anybody we knew who went to the Signal Corps, we referred to Danny. Also, he kept every letter that written to him, from all his friends. He distributed them about a year or so ago. I got back some of mine.

I don't know how Danny stayed in the U.S., but he did as THE Signal Corps man. In fact, there was one instance of a man whom I worked with in the Navy who was active in labor relations for the employees. He had many conflicts over labor activities with the officers.

This guy was inducted and sent to see Danny. Years afterwards, when I asked Danny what happened to him, Danny said that this fellow was "loaded with instructions from the higher-ups in the Signal Corps that prevented me from assigning him to anything other than the most menial task." Which means that the navy got in touch with the army and passed on its blacklist information.

I also met Teddy Nurick, since passed away, who was in the wallpaper business. Teddy was the last of the gentlemen. This was exemplified by his manners and his solicitude towards people.

Phil Leeds, who was a Harvard law school graduate who was indicted for fraud in the 1960's. He established a corporation that had no foundation, accepted funds, and might have pocketed them. He might have been involved with some other people who conned him.

He was the kind of guy who borrowed from us for his friends for law school -- maybe \$100. He never paid us back. But that's how he got through law school. He lived with women, who supported him. He was to be tried, but he must have lost his law practice. He moved to Arizona, but I lost track of him. Phil was an absolute character!

He swaggered. He walked and talked with absolute confidence. When he got out of Harvard Law School, he got connected with a prestigious law firm that specialized in trusts. Why he got involved with these other things I have no idea.

He used women, and they used him. He married a woman who used him, meaning his money, and emotionally.

I also met Max Eisenstein there, but I didn't get really friendly with him until later on. The onset of World War II postponed many relationships, since we all went in many directions.

1936

I had one job right after high school, where I was a packer of dresses for shops outside New York. I would make night school at 6:30. They moved the hours up, to 10:30, so I couldn't make night school. They wanted me to quit school and offered me a job as a salesman. I refused, probably the worst mistake of my life!

I also worked with Larry Neary for awhile for a fur designer called Greenstein Fur Modes. There, I was a gopher. They custom made fur coats. Customers came to them, picked out a style, then a paper pattern was made corresponding the pattern and the size. Then this was used by a furrier, who cut and made the coat.

That place was full of characters! We had a tailor, a Jewish man who spoke with a heavy accent, a cutter who was Italian, and Larry -- I forget what he did. Then there was the Chief Designer, Abe, who was a pompous man, who, whenever he got a well-known customer, such as Eleanor Roosevelt, he'd take the customer to his drafting board.

The shop was laid out in a square doughnut. One day, Larry told Phillip, the cutter, to tell Mr. Weiss, the tailor, that Abe wanted the fire bucket -- as sand bucket -- in his office. Abe had a prominent customer at that time. Weiss came in to Abe and said, "Here's the bucket." Abe, very annoyed, shrugged off Weiss, at which point Weiss realized that a practical joke was being played on both of them. Weiss grabbed his shears and started chasing Phillip! At the same time, Weiss was still carrying the fire bucket. There was only one way to run, which was through Abe's Office!

So you get the picture of all of this mayhem running through all of the offices, including Abe's. Finally, someone subdued Weiss. But it was that kind of a place.

That whole clothing market at that time was a series of small businesses, and the people who succeeded in these small businesses usually people who were somewhat out of the ordinary.

I worked there at the time that the fur workers union was on strike. The employers hired one gangster group, and the union hired another. They were literally throwing people out of the windows. It was no fun. It was in the newspapers, but I never saw it. What I did see was that I'd go into a place, find out that a gang had been there a little while ago, and had wrecked the place. This was 1936-37.

I also took a course at Columbia with Helen Hull on writing for slicks. But that was at night.

After that, I did some freelance advertising, in about 1940. The Depression was from about 1932 to 1940.

In 1939 or so, I went around to different places and solicited work. It was really primitive: direct mail postcards such as "GUNS OF WAR ARE SHOOTING CARPET PRICES TO SKIES -- BUT YOU CAN SAVE AT JOE'S CARPETS!"

I would write it, and take it to a printer. I got it mailed, but I don't know how. The customers had mailing lists, but I have no recollection of details as to how it got done. This whole period lasted about 6 months or so.

Nobody could pay me! These guys were broke and couldn't afford to pay me. I only had a B.S. in English.





Stan as an extra in Aida in 1939, age 21. This scene was taken backstage at the Metropolitan Opera. That's him in the center wearing an undershirt.

Stan on Aida, 1939

A bunch of us would go down to the Metropolitan Opera, maybe four of us at a time.

The old Met was on 49th Street, between 6th and 7th Avenues. I was in City College at the time. The costumes were dirty and old.

I used to climb up on the wings to see other operas, such as *Carmen* and *Der Meistersinger*. Larry Neary and Teddy Nurick would do it too.

This picture originally appeared in *Look Magazine*. In the shot, people were trying on hats and costumes. We were extras, and they called us supernumeraries. There were no rehearsals at all, by the way -- they just sent you on stage!

1940

In 1940, I got an offer from the U.S. government to work in the Department of Agriculture's Marketing Service, in response to an exam I had forgotten that I had taking!

Since I had no other source of income, I took it. It was a temporary job. They were willing to send me to Columbia for work in agricultural marketing. Part of the course was vegetable reporting, livestock receipts. This was conditioned upon my getting a permanent position, but the opening would occur because of a promotion exam that another man might take.

I lost the job, but I transferred to a job in the Navy Department as a clerk. The office was at 11 Broadway, near the Battery, in the Office of Supervisor of Shipbuilding.

They knew that I had the degree of a "B.S. of Eng." I was probably the only one in the U.S. who had that particular degree -- so they thought it was in Engineering!

So I became Naval Architect. And I did take courses in night, fast ones, in naval architecture. That means the construction of ships, including the hull and superstructure. There was the hull, marine engineering and electrical.

Primarily, my work was in estimating changes in design of ships under construction, estimating the cost to shipbuilders of these changes. This helped arrive at the reasonableness of the estimates made by the contractors.

There was a contractor who claimed to have revised a ship's hull, and I said, "But you never did it!" He said, "OK, you got me. Let's go on to the next thing."

There were always these launching parties. Every time a ship was started, the date of the keel laying was transmitted to Washington by telegram. We had one of the commanding officers of the time, C. O. Kell. A misprinted telegram went out one day saying "Kell laid at 11 a.m."

We were in the office at that time, with maybe 500 people working at drafting boards, cubicles, desks, and other arrangements. This office also supervised the design and procurement of destroyers, destroyer escorts, LST's. This was not in D.C., because the firm that did the design and procurement was Gibbs and Cox, located in lower Manhattan.

They got about 1/4 of 1% or more or less, of the cost of the ships built... which came to millions and millions! You can imagine how much money we're talking about. We went out to lunch with these contractors, but there was no attempt to buy me off.

I was in charge of the Changes Department. I was there from before the war until late 1942. I had a deferment because of my job. I had a professional appointment.

1941

When Pearl Harbor was bombed, I was in a cafeteria at Fordham Road. All of my friends from CCNY were there, and we all shook hands and said "Good bye" to each other. The draft was in effect at that time.

When Danny went into the service, he went into the Signal Corp and went to camp Crowder, MO, the initiation point for that group. Danny was the sergeant in charge of placement in the Signal Corps. So as people I knew got drafted, I told them to get in touch with Danny, to help them get the work that they most wanted.

We had a union in the office of Supervisor of Shipbuilding. One of the men who was most active and outspoken, Cy Rudner, ultimately was drafted and went into the Signal Corps I told him to get in touch with Danny as soon as he got there. I didn't hear anything further about it until several years after the war.

I asked Danny what happened with Cy. Danny said he could do nothing for him, since there was statements in the jacket saying that he (Cy) should have the worst assignments, such as stringing poles during battle.

I never knew what happened to Cy.

I had a deferment until the end of 1942 because I was at the Office of Supervisor of Shipbuilding in New York.

More on dating Elsie in 1941

After the date with Elsie (see her bio), I guess the initial attraction was still there. During that period, she was still in the recovery phase from Rod. She had many friends in the entertainment business, from her NYU class. After that date in 1941, we didn't see each other for 6 months. She was different from the crowd.

I could see that from the way she talked and the way she acted. She was more intelligent. "She exuded a pheromone."

Elsie: Unintentional. I assure you!"

We started to date 6 months later.

I knew I was going to get drafted, so I enlisted.

Marrying Elsie: November 1943

Some strangers who were going to be married right after us served as our best man, etc - witnesses, really.

Stan: "She took me out several times." We probably went out a lot. We went to parties at Mickey Rogow's house. We got married in City Hall, near Wall Street, where we worked. No one knew we were getting married. One of the guys in the office said, "You could have had a lot of presents from people in the office! You jerks!"

We didn't tell our parents. I called my Dad, says Elsie: "Dad, you sitting down?"

Nathan: "Yeah, why?"

Elsie: "I married Stanley Fried." I can't recall how he reacted, but he was surprised. I don't remember why we didn't invite anyone.

Benched! Stan and friends, circa 1937. Location Bronx, other location data unknown, front to rear; Sanford Schrank, now of Florida; Larry Neary, now of Brooklyn and Chatham, NY; Julius Spector, LA; Julie's brother deceased: Me (Stan); Teddy Nurick, deceased.

World War II: 1943 to 1946

Trying to describe what World War II was like in a few words is just not possible. After training, I spent more than a year aboard a small ship as one of five officers. We patrolled in the Mediterranean Ocean. I'll bet that every soldier or sailor during that time could write a long and interesting book about his experiences and what he learned.

I knew I would be drafted, so I volunteered in the Navy. I took the EDDY test. This determined capability for doing electronics work. I was sent to Great Lakes Naval Training Station in Chicago for boot camp.

If I had stayed there as an enlisted man, I would have gone through several colleges, being trained for a position where I would learn how to design and maintain radar. However, as I was finishing boot camp, I was notified I had received my commission that I had applied for.

It was a direct commission and I was sent to another camp, an officer's training camp in Plattsburgh, NY. This was the equivalent of a second boot camp, which I hated!

Food was miserable in Plattsburgh. After the war, I was in a subway talking with a guy in uniform. It turned out he had worked in the kitchens of Plattsburgh. As I was about to throttle him, I was told the reason the food was so terrible was that the men worked 2 days on and had 2 days off in Montreal. All went up there, a rip-roaring town. They came back again to work without sleep from the carousing, and had no idea what they were doing in the dining room!

I lost one friend in World War II, Georgie Weinstein, who was one of the meekest people I ever met. He got killed in Italy during the war. He was an infantryman. Most of my other friends were too wily to get sent to the front. They were either lucky or wily, and became indispensable at something else. For instance, Julie did the art work for Stars and Strips. He was at a base in the south, just before getting shipped over, and they came to him and asked, "Would you care to work on Air Force Magazine in new York?"

He washed out -- he had something wrong with him and was told he could never become a pilot.

Larry was in the merchant marine, selling mattress covers to Arabs. They wore them!

After World War II, I attended Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn at night for seven years and obtained the degree of Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering in 1953. I lived in my parents' house while I attended City College. I lived in our apartments in Scarsdale for about a year, then East 65th Street near Madison for about a year; then I moved into Stuyvesant Town back in 1947, when I went to Brooklyn Polytechnic, since we were married at that time.

City College at night and Brooklyn Poly at night, I was constantly on the run. The City College days were a lot more fun. I made many friends there that I have to this day.

Late 1943: Boot Camp in Chicago

I went from civilian life to Chicago for boot camp, actually in Milwaukee. It was rough. I was training to be a regular seaman. This consisted of training, sleeping, walking, hiking, etc. I had applied to be an officer before I went in to camp.

Early 1944 - Plattsburg: Naval Training Center

I trained to be an officer there. We were required to go swimming in Lake Champlain in winter and to eat horrible food!

June - October, 1944: Miami - Submarine Chaser Training Center with Elsie

Elise invited all her sisters down to the center. I was in uniform, but all of the other services took the places to stay. We were staying with someone in Miami. Stanley had his naval uniform on. We came to this apartment right on the beach an apartment house.

A woman named Mrs. Nellenbogan took us in before we found the apartment, She was a friend of a friend. While we were there, there was a hurricane outside. Everything had to be boarded up boarded up.

We walked into the apartment after staying with Mrs. Nellenbogan and said "Do you have any places to rent?" They said, "Are you the couple?" We said, "Yes." (Elsie says with a laugh!) It turned out that they had had to reserve some space for naval people. The OPA stated that they had to reserve spaces. The Navy had said they'd send over a couple. So we showed up(by accident)! It had maid service. It had a special entrance to the beach. Down there it was very pretty at that time, and fully equipped with linens.

Lincoln Road was there, Elsie adds -- the posh shopping area. I (Elsie) went with Helen Haft and played tennis with Don Budge -- just batted the ball around with him.

Helen saw a suit in a window that she wanted to try on. As a result, she bought one in every color - 4 or 5 of them, and I was absolutely astounded.

1943 - Beautiful apartment in Hollywood, FL

I was in electronics training school for the Navy. We asked about an apartment, and they told us where to go.

I (Stan) appeared at the door and hey said, "Are you the couple'?" I said yes. Elsie was with me.

We had a beautiful apartment with a beach entrance.

Nathan, Marcia and Carole all visited us there.

We were in Florida for three months or so. Elsie had a friend, Helen Haft who was at the Roman Plaza Hotel. Since we had additional space, Carol and Marcia came to visit us. Incidentally, once of Elsie's friends, Lee Rogow, had an ex-girlfriend, Helen Haft who was the same woman.

Helen was very wealthy, and a warm and beautiful woman. She was getting over a love affair and getting into an arrangement with a naval officer who was the son of a wealthy junk man. His name was Pebe.

Helen asked me, Stanley, to "stand up" for her, during the wedding which was held at the Jacksonville Air Force Base. Standing up meant me being a witness as the wedding. A rabbi presided.

I personally did not care for Pebe, who was a crude, unfeeling man. This was evidence right in the car departing from the air base. Helen remembered that she hadn't picked up the certificate from the rabbi, and it was important to her.

Pebe said, "What do you want it for? It's not important." She started crying. I offered to go back and get it, and I did.

The marriage lasted only a few months.

Sub-chasing school in 1944

We learned how to operate the ship and the equipment on it. They had depth charges, light guns and machine guns. Our training consisted of operating that equipment plus navigation and other routine matters aboard ships.

The main thing I recall was that it was very hot. There was no AC in that period. There was little work aboard the ship -- it was mainly theoretical. Our ship was 173 feet, with a crew of about 70. This ship was about 1/4 the size of a destroyer, but capable of crossing the ocean.

I didn't go out on excursions on the ship. I spent time learning Morse Code and blinkers and such. Between 1941 and 1943, I was working for the navy and thus exempt.

After that, I got orders to go the 8th Fleet. At that time, all Navy action was in the Pacific - the time of Midway and Iwo Jima, and such. Their location was a secret, but I found out it was in the Mediterranean.

I was one of the few people who had orders to go to the Medeterranean -- everyone else was going to the Pacific. There was still war going on in the area, though. D-Day hadn't happened yet. The Allies were moving up the boot of Italy, in places like Monte Casino, a convent atop a mountain that became a German fortress.

The Nazis still had U-boats at that time. Most activity was explosive boats, sent by remote control to sink allied ships. Also, they had underwater swimmers and mines.

I got my orders to go to the PC1594 (Patrol Craft).

Me: Was this a tearful farewell for you and Elsie?

Stan with a laugh: I don't know. All I know was we went to Norfolk first, were I picked up my ship. I spent a week in Norfolk, which to this day left a bad taste in my mouth. It had signs up: SAILORS AND DOGS KEEP OUT.

We found a place to stay in an attic, and they charged us \$50 per week. If there was housing for married men it was unavailable to me. I was just waiting.

Elsie went back to Forest Hills at this point, and went to her parents' apartment.

Aboard ship in the Mediterranean, 1944 - late 1945

I was transported on a transformed high-speed German ship, a ship that was in port and taken over. I was one of the few Navy officers aboard that ship - the rest were Army men. I found a room around the boiler room which was very warm. Maybe it was January.

There was a crap game going on there during the entire voyage of the ship - it was a 24 hour game! No one cracked down on that because it was considered harmless entertainment. When we arrived in Naples, Italy, it was my first taste of war, when I came ashore the first time and saw starving children trying to steal everything they could from me.

They would come up to my truck, and grab at me in the streets. I was unarmed, because I was assigned aboard ship. Navy people only carried sidearms when they were assigned deck duty, or gangplank duty -- piping somebody aboard, such as a high ranking officer. Gangplank means entry of the ship. You had to salute.

Back to the kids - sure they were nasty. They were the enemy. They weren't at peace with us then. All of Italy wasn't conquered yet. The line of the Allies was halted at the North of Florence at the Gothic Line. The Nazis

killed a lot of our soldiers there.

I then flew to Palermo and Sicily and came aboard my ship. Arriving there was strange! I was welcomed aboard the ship, and I found out later why I had such a hearty welcome.

When I came aboard, the captain was relieved and returned to the U.S. Apparently, the captain was partially insane (he was kind of Captain Queeg type). The two stories that were told to me were...

He would go ashore, get drunk, and wake up the entire ship to go through a white glove inspection.

Another story told was that during gunnery exercises, a shell jammed in a 3" gun on the ship. The ship's complement was a 3" 50mm gun and two rapid-fire 40 mm anti-aircraft guns, plus depth charges, plus Browning machine guns. We were supposed to have the Brownings, but we found that they were very useful in shooting floating mines, so they were bolted to the deck.

When one shell jammed, he insisted on keeping the jammed shell, which was extremely dangerous and contrary to Navy regulations. Of course, the crew dropped the shell overboard once the captain's back was turned. But this was an indication of the captain's madness.

The captain who took his place was a school teacher from Nebraska who was night-blind. That meant he couldn't see anything at night, that was unfortunate, to say the least!

It should be noted that the ship had the distinction of having the highest ratio of Jewish officers in the US Navy. Three out of six officers were Jewish: Bronstein, Goldfarb and Fried. The other two were Midwestern Jews. In my opinion, it was probably a coincidence.

By my coming in, the seniority changed. The captain was moved up and he left. Those who came from Annapolis were the most privileged. Aboard my ship, positions were rotated. All had to stand watch, except the captain. The captain is responsible for all personnel aboard the ship. I was an ensign when he arrived.

Our job was to patrol the Palermo harbor to look for any enemy ships. It was rather dull for a few months. As an example, when the fleet commander comes in, all officers salute and you render "honors." One time they were lounging around in shorts and shoulder boards. The ship's cook was the only one dressed properly and he was made to stand on deck.

On shore the officers clubs were available to all naval officers. They were frequented by Italian aristocracy. They were expecting to be given guns to defend themselves against a revolution. The currency at that time was cigarettes. Palermo was a fairly large base for the Navy and they supplied us with our necessities.

One of our jobs was to find floating mines. We would shoot the mines and try to penetrate the buoyancy chambers, sinking them. The ship came back to Palermo. The mine sweepers would cut the mines loose. They would shoot the floating mines so they would sink to the bottom.

Fistfight with the commissary officer, 1945

When we got back to Palermo we found that all of the cigarettes that had been donated by companies, had been given out to shore personnel. A carton of cigarettes were worth \$50-75.

When I went to find out where our own cigarettes were, I was told that they were no longer available. This resulted in an altercation with the superior officer in charge of the commissary. The argument was between me and this guy.

This guy was part of the group that kept the cigarettes to themselves. They gave some away, and they kept some. They couldn't keep close to 1,000 cartons to themselves.

I probably called the guy a son-of-a-bitch and a crook, but I can't remember. I hit this superior officer, which was capital offense. When I got back to the ship and told the captain of the circumstance, he said, "Let him come to complain to me, and I'll turn the guns on him!" P.S. They never came!

Of course, they wouldn't. These men wanted to have the cigarettes to sell. The situation was so bad that in order to stop the corruption, the army issued a special scrip, which was the only currency of any value. It could not be used except in the military Mediterranean area.

The result was that instead of the corrupt ones sending money home, they converted it to valuables such as diamond rings, which they wore on their fingers. Other valuables could be stolen. So you'd see cooks and other who were selling food to the locals.

Another incident I recall was a time when we were sent to convoy a group of landing craft from Palermo to Marseilles. These were small amphibious craft, LCM's -- the kind where ramps came down and the men went out on the beach. On the way, a type of storm came up. A violent storm. The Mediterranean, being relatively shallow compared to the Atlantic, blew up high waves in a short period.

Incident near Ajaccio

An example I remember was the ship climbing the wave and coming down so hard on the other side that men below thought we had been torpedoed. The ship was 173 feet long. I recalled being in the pilot house at that time with the water-master whose mouth went agape as we climbed this wave. This was near the town of Ajaccio (pronounced A-JASS-ee-yo), the largest town in Corsica an island in the Mediterranean that is part of France.

We got a radio message from the LCM that they were foundering - water was coming in through the hatches and the sides were caving in. We then tried to shoot towing wires across to them, but the ramp would cut like butter on the towing lines.

Me: "Did the sailors drown? "

Stan: No, no. Shortly after that, the LCM started up its motors, and we started up for Corsica in a following sea, which pushes the ship ahead. We were unattached. We ended up in the port of Ajaccio, the birthplace of Napoleon. We tied up in the docks and immediately went aboard the LCM, not understanding how they were suddenly able to start up again.

We found that the crew had panicked. The so-called water coming in was someone moving about from one hatch to another and letting water come in. The so-called caving in was portable bulwarks, which were banging around. A bulwark is a kind of wall, a wall of a ship. This was one you could raise and lower, the kind you see landing in Normandy.

That LCM's ramp came up and put a hole in our ship, in the bow. We were lucky enough to stuff it with mattresses. That's standard for stopping up relatively small holes. Fortunately it was above the water line. We were in and out of the water all of the time.

While in Ajaccio, it was VE Day. I think we were in more danger from the Corsicans shooting off every armament in celebration than we were any other time!

Raiding a whorehouse!

I raided a whorehouse in Ajaccio. I was the only one who spoke French. Most Italians understood French. So they put me in charge of finding a sailor who had overstayed his leave. I came to the port guard, and I was told that a sailor had just then gone into the local brothel.

I said, "Sailor Marin Etats Unis." meaning: "We are navy from the United States." She said, "We're closed for the night." I said: "Open up so we can search for him." That was my undoing, because I had more trouble with my search group and the women.

One of the rooms we came across was a little clinic used to examine the girls, so it must have been a rather substantial house. They were more sensible about the sexual needs of soldiers.

Anyway, there was one room that the Madam refused to open. I threatened to break the door down. In bed was a little Frenchman with a nightcap. It was her husband, and she didn't want him disturbed. Later as we went through the town, I heard singing in American English. There was our sailor, drunk as a lord. We had a lot of respect for this man, who was an old hand with a lot of know-how.

He had been instrumental in shooting the tow lines across the LCM earlier, even though it didn't work. I'm sure we would have screwed it up.

Raiding that whorehouse was my undoing! I couldn't control my men with those girls. I had maybe a party of 6 or 7 soldiers. They would disappear into rooms with girls, and I was constantly searching for them.

Normally, we wouldn't have gone out after that guy. We did so because Corsicans had a feudal idea of revenge. When Corsica was in German hands, they were bombed by the American air force. After Germans departed, many US Soldiers were killed by Corsicans in retaliation for those Corsicans killed by the U.S. Air Force.

V.E. Day - April, 1945

On VE Day we gave leave to all of the members of the crew with the understanding that they had to be back that evening because they had to go to sea the next day. Many men were plied by wine by the Corsicans.

After several days, people were still drunk. We searched the ship for a source of liquor and never found it. Several years later, when I saw a former member of the crew in the subway and I asked him, "Where was the liquor" He said, "Do you know the upright 3-inch gun? We poured it into the barrel of the gun, and whenever wanted a drink, we'd open the breach!"

After VE Day, we had orders to return to the states. One the way, we stopped at Oran in Algeria. We were accompanying a bunch of small craft on the way to Oran. I had the deck that night, and I saw the port and starboard lights of a commercial ship approaching.

I sent a message by light flashes to them in English and French telling them to stay clear of us, because we were a convoy. The skipper who was night blind came up on deck, and while I'm looking at the ship approaching us, all I could see was his port light. It was red. The skipper came up on deck yawning, and told us to turn on all the search lights.

There in front of us was a large vessel, maybe 100 yards away, right in front of us. We were heading into that ship! We got out of the way somehow and did not hit him, but it was close. It was probably a French ship.

Later, I sent him a message and cursed him out. I asked him why he didn't stay away from us. I didn't understand this till I found that 3 lights one above another is a signal for fishing. We had only one light, but when I looked behind me, I saw that the lights of the smaller vessels behind me gave the impression of 3 lights in a row.

One time, we had to go past the mine sweepers north of the Gothic line, which was German territory. We had guns shooting at us from the German shore, but I guess that was the closest. You could hear them, but we were so far at sea, it wasn't a danger.

Also, we got radar signals which were probably E-boats, but we didn't know. The greatest enemy of ships of our size was the sea.

Returning to the U.S.: January, 1945

We had something the matter with our shaft, so when we went faster than 6 knots, our ship shook. That's 6 mph to cross the ocean. That was 500 hours, or 20 days or so. It was a rough crossing, and everybody was sick. VJ Day hadn't happened yet. We were going to get refitted and go back to Japan. We were in Jacksonville, Florida to get refitted.

VJ Day

I was made skipper of the ship, because everyone else was detached - they were ordered out someplace else. I was the captain of the ship while it was being decommissioned in dock after the war.

Stanley shows that it's hard to keep a good woman down! Here are Elsie and Stanley at Lonelyville Beach, Fire Island, 1947.