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Steensma, Juliana Oral History Interview: Parents of Baby Boomer Generation

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Parents of the Baby Boomers, 1941-2001
Interviewee: Juliana Steensma
Interviewer: Geoffrey Reynolds
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GR: Juliana, tell me about what you were doing at the start of the war, and how you learned of it happening in Pearl Harbor.

JS: When the war started I was a student at Calvin College, and I was working for my room and board in the home of a doctor in Grand Rapids. I remember him sitting by the radio when the news came in. He suddenly called his wife; I was going up the stairs at the time and I stopped on the stairs. He said, "It's war, that's going to change our lives. I'm going to have to go as a doctor." She came in and they started talking about it. I went on upstairs and thought, "I don't know what that means, 'it's war." For me, I kept on going to school. In fact, I finished out that year with that family, and then they told me I couldn't come back next year because the doctor was going to enlist. I didn't want to go back there anyway, but it didn't change my life at all that first year. But the next year, when I went back to Calvin as a sophomore, there were only half of the class there because many of the young men in my class had enlisted and others were in the navy program and the seminary students, pre-seminary students, were put on an accelerated program so they went into the next class. That whole year was a year of changes. People leaving, professors getting drafted, people going into war plants because they didn't want to be drafted. By the time we went into our junior year, we had a very small, not only class, but whole Calvin College had just been decimated. So that changed a lot. Then people started planting victory gardens, and we heard a lot about that. And, of course, we got rationing. I boarded with a lady and we had to have coupons for clothes and coupons

for sugar. So she got all my ration books. It still didn't bother me too much, it was her problem. I was just a student. The change it made for me was that I started writing letters. And instead of studying, I wrote long letters. I wrote to the boys that I knew from Calvin, I wrote to my ex-professors, I wrote to names that were printed in the paper. And I did this, seriously. I illustrated my letters, and I tried to make them interesting because I really felt that these fellows were out there a long ways from home and they needed contact with home. That was the extent of my war effort while I was at school.

GR: What was your maiden name?

JS: Flietstra.

GR: So as the letters were being written did you ever receive responses?

JS: Oh yes, we got v-mail, you know. And you couldn't do a lot with v-mail. It wasn't very big, and I liked to write long letters. So what happened with the v-mail was that we would send three at a time and number them one, two, and three. Sometimes they'd get them three weeks apart. But, they appreciated them. I got into trouble writing letters to my cousin who was in the Navy. I liked to draw, and I don't know if you remember an artist who used to make pictures, airbrushed pictures, Petty. He had Petty girls. Then there was Varga who had Varga girls. These were airbrushed, voluptuous ladies who were covered in the right places but who were really pin-ups. I would copy these and draw them and then send them to my cousin. One day I went over to visit my aunt, and she scolded me. She said, "My daughter was over here and she said she had a letter from Louie and he said you send him naked women, pictures of naked women. Do you think that's right?" I didn't send him picture of naked women, I just sent him drawings, but then I realize that although the boys might appreciate pin-ups, their mothers didn't.

GR: So did all of those men return from the war?

JS: No, not all returned. Some of my good friends did not return. There was one young man in particular, a very fine young man, who was a pre-seminary student. He volunteered and became a medical corps man. He went out to rescue somebody and was killed. I felt very bad about that. Not all of them came back. At Calvin they had a bulletin board with pictures of men who got promotions, and they had a list of men who were killed. Every day we spent time in front of that board. We were quite involved, but we were at home and they were out there.

GR: What was it like for you, other than writing the letters to the GIs? What were some of the things you were thinking about?

JS: I was thinking about enlisting as a WAC. I wanted to get into the Army, but I had already met John in 1942. John had started Calvin, and I promised John that if he went to Calvin I would help him with his schoolwork and his typing and so forth. So John was not happy about my idea of enlisting. And I felt I had a commitment, so I didn't do it. But to this day, I regret…that's the one thing in my life that I regret, that I did not join the armed services. I think I would have liked to do that.

GR: So did you and John marry during the war?

JS: We married right after V-E Day. We married as soon as I graduated, and I graduated in 1945, and the war ended with Japan right after that.

GR: Why did you decide to wait?

JS: Because we didn't have any money, we were very, very poor, and I was determined to graduate from Calvin. So we waited until I graduated, and we needed something to live on. So I was going to graduate and get a job teaching. John was going to continue—John

was also a pre-seminary student at that time—and he was going to go on into seminary and have his wife support him through seminary.

GR: How did you two support your college education at this time?

JS: It wasn't easy. John got money from the state—vocational rehabilitation—and I worked my own way. Just before I started Calvin, about a year after my mother died...I had not been raised to do the housework. So when my mother died, my father thought that I would step into her shoes and take care of the family, but I wasn't equipped to do that. And I didn't feel it was fair that I had to wash the dishes and prepare the meals and do the housework and my four siblings were playing. So, I rebelled, and it didn't make for a very happy home. My father realized—we were living in mid-Iowa at that time—that if he didn't do something about this I would end up embarrassing him by getting pregnant with some farmer boy. So he took me to Grand Rapids, and he took me to Keeler Brass, and I was hired by Keeler Brass. He found me a place to live, and he said good-bye, be a good girl, and if you have any extra money please help me pay mother's hospital bills. So I went to Keeler Brass, and there I met a whole bunch of Calvin College students who worked there in the summer. And because they were only temporary and because I was new, we got together and we figured out how I could enter college in the fall. If I saved every cent I made over board and room, which I did, and they helped me by steering babysitting my way, and in the fall I started Calvin. Well that first year as I said I worked for my room and board, which is not an easy thing to do. You feel like an alien in the house. And you're there to do twenty hours of work a week, but you don't eat with the family; you sit in the kitchen to eat your meals. I was all alone, and I was very lonely. Then a boy that I had met when I was in high school, and who was in the navy, started

writing me letters. He was a very handsome young man and he was crazy about me, but he hadn't gone to high school and I really wasn't too interested in him. But, I was very lonesome and so I wrote him, and the letters got more and more affectionate and finally he asked me to marry him, and I said okay. So, the first summer after I went to Calvin he sent me a railway ticket to go back to Iowa, and he was going to meet me at my father's house. My father was a preacher so we were going to have my father marry us. So I did that, I went out to Iowa. When I got there, there was a telegram waiting for me. He had been transferred to New London, Connecticut. He was in the submarine corps and he couldn't get any leave, so he was sorry but he couldn't make it—which was probably the best thing that ever happened in my life, because that would not have been a good marriage. So, I went back to Calvin College. In the second year of my Calvin career, I got a letter from New London, Connecticut, and it was from this man's wife. He had gone out on his first trip in the submarine and never come back. But before he left, he had married this girl and she was pregnant, which I supposed is why he married her. It was nice letter telling me how much Dick thought about me, and if this baby was a girl they were going to name it Juliana, after me. I wasn't heartbroken as much as suffering from wounded pride to think that he had done this without saying anything to me. But I was already pretty involved with John. I had met John accidentally when I went over to visit my relatives on the West Side of Grand Rapids. I didn't have any money, so when John saw me standing on the corner waiting for the bus, he took his car and drove over there and said, "Where are you going? Can I give you a ride?" I knew who he was because I had seen him in church and, of course, I was curious about him because he looked different than other people. And I had asked people, "How did this guy get this

way?" They said, "He had been electrocuted in an accident and he had these artificial hands, but he was a nice fellow and he could do anything." So I was curious about what went on in this nice fellow's head. So all the way across town in this car I talked to him, "What are you doing?" He was working in a war plant. "That's good, but what are your plans for the future?" Well, he didn't know. I said, "You know, the war is going to end some day. Why don't you go to college?" So that is how we got interested in each other. I was in college and I promised to help him go to college and spent more and more time with him as he was preparing to do this, encouraging him. By the time he got to college, we were engaged. From then on, college was different. And also my own situation was different because now I had somebody to encourage me and to support me. I worked one year at Eerdmans Publishing Company, and the next year I worked at Zondervan Publishing Company, part-time. I just barely kept my nose out of water. I could pay my rent, and I probably had three dollars a week left over. I would get my shoes dyed and resoled and reheeled, and I would sneak my roommates' clothing when they were gone because I didn't have anything to wear. It didn't make too much difference because nobody had too much during the war, everybody was living. But finally I obtained my goal and graduated.

GR: So during the war, what was John doing in addition to going to school? Was he strictly a student?

JS: John was trying to make up for a very poor high school record, so he had to study exceedingly hard. John was taking, instead of the usual fifteen hours, he was taking seventeen or eighteen or twenty-one hours a semester. He was studying Latin and Greek and Dutch the same year. So he was pretty busy. He didn't do anything but study. And

John lived with his mother, who fed him and took care of him, and the state paid his tuition. So he didn't have that problem. Before I graduated, I got John interested in what Calvin then called the Broedman Oratorical Contest. I thought because of John's disability, he needed to get out into the public a little bit more and this public speaking would be a good thing. So I wrote a speech for him because I was better at writing than he was. I was inspired by an article I saw in The Saturday Evening Post written by a man named McGonagel who had lost both arms in World War One. He wrote this article about how veterans would be coming back from this war with amputations and we better get ready for them. John memorized this speech and the speech coach at Calvin saw the opportunity here and coached him. And the emotional atmosphere was just right. John stood up with his two hooks and gave this poignant speech about, "Does it matter losing a leg?" He went through the contest at Calvin with first place, he got first place at the state contest, and then he went on to the inter-state contest and got first place there. Then he was invited all over Grand Rapids to men societies and ladies societies and Lions Clubs and stuff like that, and every time he spoke they'd give him twenty dollars, ten dollars. He finally had saved up about two hundred dollars and that's what we used to pay for our wedding. One day I saw in the paper an announcement that this McGonagel was going to be the guest at the Lions Club in Grand Rapids. It was V-E Day, and I said to John, "Let's cut school, everybody is cutting at V-E Day, and let's crash that Lions Club luncheon." So we went downtown to the Pantlind Hotel, we went inside and the Lions were meeting. I said, "We just came here to meet McGonagel." They noticed that John had two hooks, and said, "Come in, be our guest." Sat us at the head table, introduced us to McGonagel. We won the door prize of ten silver dollars. McGonagel said, "I have to

go to Battle Creek right after this meeting. Are you folks busy? Could you go with me?" Well there was one of the Lions who was going to drive him, but he was too busy. He said, "Would you drive my car and take him to Battle Creek?" which sounded like a great adventure. So that's what we did. On the way to Battle Creek, McGonagel said, "What are your plans for the future?" "I'm going to seminary, and my wife has got a contract to teach at Lee High School." "Well, would you consider working at Percy Jones Army Hospital? We need people to train these amputees who are coming back, and there aren't very many amputees before the war." So we talked that over, and by the time we got to Battle Creek, we interviewed the major in charge and we were both hired to teach on the wards in the Army hospital. On the way home we talked it over. I said, "You know, we're going to get married in August, but then I have to get fingerprinted all over again and change my name, so why don't we just get married right away?" By the time we got home, we decided we'd get married as soon as we could. We walked into John's mother's house, and we said, "Ma, we're going to get married." She says, "Yeah, I know that." "I mean right away!" "Why?" "Oh, no, it's not that Ma!" And so we told her the whole story. I didn't have time to send out wedding invitations, so we got on the telephone, and the first person I called was my cousin. "Can you come to our wedding, two weeks from Friday?" "No, I have choir practice that day." "Well, how about Thursday?" So that's how we fixed our wedding date.

GR: Because it wasn't a choir night?

JS: It wasn't a choir night. (laughs) We had about a hundred people together and two hundred dollars, and we had a little wedding. One of my cousins borrowed a wedding

dress and a veil and a Bible and shoes and some pearls, and I got all dolled up and got married.

GR: Was your father able to make it?

JS: My father had remarried and my stepmother was very jealous of his children, so we didn't have too much to do with my father. Besides that, he had moved to the state of Washington. So he wasn't part of the wedding. My two brothers were there, but my sister had gone to visit my father in Washington, and my other brother was still in service, I believe. So, it was a war wedding. But it was alright, it worked.

GR: So how did your time at the medical hospital…can you talk a little bit about what it was like when these men were returning?

JS: The first thing that happened was that after the wedding…I guess we got married on Friday night not Thursday night…we slept together that night and on Saturday morning John brought me to Battle Creek. I found a boarding house, and he went back to Grand Rapids to go to summer school. So that ended my honeymoon. I came to Battle Creek by myself, got up on the wards, and it was an interesting job. It was new to me. I had been trained as a teacher, but this wasn't really teaching, this was really more morale building. The thing I remember about that first week at Percy Jones was that I went home on Friday by bus to Grand Rapids to see my new husband. I had been telling these guys on the ward that I had been married a whole week and I was still a virgin. They thought that was so funny. So when I came in on Monday morning, I didn't give it a thought, I just walked into that ward, and the minute they saw my face all the guys on the ward said, "Teach, are you still a virgin?" (laughs)

GR: So you got a pretty good relationship with these men?

JS: Oh, very good. It was a lot of fun. I taught them what they wanted to learn. We actually got to the place where we had Percy Jones High School and Percy Jones Junior College, state accredited. We taught all the high school subjects, mostly GED, and we taught junior college, which they could use to go on. But they also learned things like knitting, flower arrangement and making corsages, and auto mechanics. They had little kits they would bring up on the ward. Well, the flower man…every week they brought up flowers and the guys made corsages. So every weekend when I went back to Grand Rapids, I went with a big corsage. And there were other nice benefits like that. I collected a whole bag full of little balls of leftover yarn, and I learned to knit. The guys on the ward taught me how to knit, and then I made an afghan at home. Well, I got pregnant very soon, so I started knitting baby sweaters and the men on the ward started knitting baby sweaters. You know, it was all a very close, very loving relationship. But I only worked there seven months, and then I had to quit because I was going to have this baby. John worked for eighteen months, I think. But the war ended, and the jobs ended with the war.

GR: I'm surprised by that because there were probably veterans still coming home, but once the fighting started the injuries probably subsided.

JS: Well, the injuries were coming back. See the war ended right after we started working. We started working in June, and I think V-J Day was in July?

GR: August.

JS: August. So it was a whole year after the war we stayed there.

GR: What were some of the emotions that you witnessed from these seemingly young men that had been grossly debilitated?

JS: I was on an amputee ward, so most of my fellows were amputees. One of the things that I remember acutely was this young fellow about eighteen years old. He had a body cast and his arm was coming out of the body cast. One day he rolled over and a whole bunch of maggots rolled out of that cast. You know, they had put those in on the battlefield to take care of the dead flesh but he didn't know about that. And so this was horrible for him. And it was horrible for me because I was with him when that happened. The nurse rushed over and told him why they had done that. She said, "Don't worry about it, we'll clean it all up for you, but this is good for you, because otherwise you would have gangrene." I remember all the camp followers—young girls that came in from Alabama and Georgia. They would come in every day and hang out in these wards. We'd have to watch, sometimes they'd be in the beds, and then we'd have to report them, and sometimes they'd be on the stairwells…this was a bad thing. You know, I had lived a sheltered life, and I didn't know about stuff like that. And to find these eighteen, nineteen-year-old girls doing this…of course, some of the boys liked it. And then there was a matter of smuggling in liquor. They would have it mailed to them. I would be in the office on the ward and the girl in the office would say this package is for Mr. so and so. "Shake it, I know what's in it." But she said, "I'm not going to tell, and don't you tell either because he needs it." He had both legs off above the knee and so she would bring him his package and say, "Take good care of this, Jack. Don't anybody see that you got a package." And that's what we did.

GR: These men, as they're becoming more confident that they have something to do, useful, with their lives after they leave the hospital, were they all buying into that, or were there some depression cases that just never went away?

JS: I don't know because I was busy going from bed to bed. If a man was depressed, I didn't really know if he was depressed or sick, because if he wasn't in the mood for studying, I had plenty of others to go to. So I didn't deal too much with that.

GR: Was there a steady turnover, were the men leaving and going on?

JS: No, they actually stayed there a long, long time.

GR: Did you think that was a healthy thing?

JS: Yeah, because they were all together, and they supported each other. As they recovered, the ones who got out of the hospital were…it was a very close buddy-type of thing. They were supportive of each other. Of course, John did more work on the outside. His job was in the community.

GR: Did you have men that were dealing with, for instance, a pre-war girlfriend or were there some family members that just didn't do well with the injuries?

JS: There were lots of "Dear John" things. And that was one reason that I was hired because I was young, I was twenty-two at the time, and reasonably good-looking. And had married a man who had both arms off, and had never known him any other way. This was the big morale thing as far as I was concerned. I would bring John on the ward often and introduce him to these men, and for them that was a great thing, you know, see, "If you can do it, I can do it too." Especially when the girlfriends disappeared.

[End of side one]

GR: After you had left the hospital to have your first child, what was life like as practically a newlywed and having a child? What was that like for you as a woman, after working?

JS: Looking back, I guess it was tough. I can only guess, but I would guess having the first baby is always difficult, but if you have a supportive family and a grandma and aunts and

uncles, it makes it a lot easier. But, we were pretty much on our own, and I learned everything from reading magazines. I did learn it, and our first baby was a nice baby, didn't have any physical problems or any colic—she was a good child. We learned as we went along and we enjoyed it. But the hard part was, of course, was the rationing at that time. The neighborhood grocery, we went to the same grocer in Grand Rapids and also in Battle Creek, and these people put stuff in the back room for their steady customers because people all over town would hear there was pineapple at this grocery and then they would rush it. So they would hide the things that were hard to get, and then when we came in to buy our weekly supply of groceries, they'd say, "We have a little pineapple." Or whatever else was scarce.

GR: To the regular customers?

JS: To the regular customers. So that helped. And I wasn't a very good cook anyway, so we didn't need much. But the hardest thing for us was when we left Battle Creek and moved to Grand Rapids, there was no housing available. The veterans were coming back and they had the first chance at any apartments. We had a family, we had to have a place to live. So John's mother, who didn't have a very big house—I think it was three bedroom—decided that she would remodel her upstairs and her attic and make a place for us to live, but that took time. So his aunt said, "I'll go visit my relatives in Wisconsin, and you can live in my apartment while this is being remodeled." So, we moved into the aunt's apartment, which was another remodeled upstairs, and it took more time than expected to remodel this place. So the aunt came back and moved in with us. And that was not a comfortable situation. It was her house and we were intruders and we knew she wanted to get us out of there. But we had no place to go. So finally we moved into

the remodeled upstairs. We were grateful to get it, but it was not a good place to live. It was heated by a little gas heater, which stood in a long hallway, and there were two tiny bedrooms, one of which we made into a living room, and the other one contained a double bed and a crib. The crib was so close to the double bed, that I hardly had to get out of bed to tend to the baby. There was one closet, I think, that we put our clothes in, and the other closet John's mother kept her clothes in from downstairs because her boys came back from service and she had to remodel her bathroom. She had a big bathroom downstairs and she cut a piece off it which was just big enough to put a single cot in it. One of the boys slept in that little room connected to the bathroom. But that's the way we had to do because there wasn't any other place to live. We lived in that upstairs for five years—right under the roof—and it was hot as blazes in the summer. In the winter we had this gas stove with a fan behind it to push the heat into the front room. After five years we were able to put a down payment on a house and buy our own house. So then we started on our own road.

GR: Why did you, as a couple, leave Battle Creek?

JS: Because our jobs were discontinued.

GR: Then what did John do while you were raising the child?

JS: Why don't you let John tell you that. I'm going to take all his steam here.

GR: So, you have one child. Did you have any more children?

JS: We had another one when the first one was two and half years old. We had to put him in the crib and move the older one to a cot, which we got between our bed and the window. So, the only room we had left in that bedroom then was room to open the door. That's

the only thing we could do. Everything else touched. She played in the hallway. That was her playroom.

GR: After you moved, things became a lot easier, I assume?

JS: Yeah, after we moved then we began improving our life. That was when our youngest was two and a half years old. Then we built a house. And from there on we lived like normal people.

GR: Did you find yourselves, after that experience, wanting to improve your housing throughout the rest of your life?

JS: Actually we built a brick house, a ranch house, and we had about a $20,000 debt on that. Which, the way that we had been brought up, was too much debt. We were uncomfortable with it. So we lived in it nine months, and we sold it and made about $9,000 on the sale. Then we bought a twenty-five year old bungalow and cut our debt in half. So we really, in style, went down. But in terms of economy, we went up.

GR: Did you ever return to work while the children were in high school?

JS: No, I never worked for wages again until I was fifty years old.

GR: Was that a decision that you and John made as a couple, or did you have a desire to go back to work at all?

JS: Actually, it was the mores we lived in. We'd been brought up that way and most of the people in our crowd, the wives didn't work. I was busy—I had four children, and I had John, and that keeps you pretty busy.

GR: Did you ever feel the need to have just a small part-time job for your own sanity?

JS: I did get frustrated.

GR: Why were you frustrated?

JS: Because I had a college education, I had a teaching certificate, and I liked to learn. I was not getting a lot of satisfaction out of drinking coffee and tea and baking pies for PTA, and talking about recipes and formulas—it didn't satisfy me. I did get frustrated, and I did get depressed. But I didn't realize what the problem was at that time.

GR: So how long did this go on? These feelings.

JS: It went on until we decided to leave United States and go to Korea in 1958. Then when I got to Korea, I finally discovered who I was.

GR: Why was that? What happened?

JS: I was called upon, all my resources were needed. In the first place, I got a cook, so I didn't have to cook. So I was free to do other things. And there was a lot things I could do, there just was no end to things that were needed.

GR: What was going on in your life at that point that you moved to Korea?

JS: Why don't you talk to John first, and then we'll get to that. That's another phase of our lives.

GR: Okay. What did you do, as a women in Korea, with this move? You said you had more time to do other things.

JS: The first thing that happens when you get to Korea as an American, is that somebody asks you to teach them English. And especially that was post-war, see we went there for post-war rehabilitation. The only way to get a job for a Korean was to know some English because there was a U.S. Army and there was all kinds of foreigners who were there. Everybody wanted to learn English. So that was the first thing. The second thing was that I wanted to learn Korean, so I had a study language. The third thing was that it

was very hard to live. We had to scrounge to get things to eat. We would go down to the black market every day, and we had a garden of our own. We were busy.

GR: Was it hard raising children in a foreign country?

JS: No, it was much easier.

GR: Why was that?

JS: Because the children were much more content, they had a wide area to play in, we lived outside the city, and they had American playmates. We didn't have a house in Korea, we rented houses. Every year we would sniff the air to find out which missionary was going home on furlough, and then we would rent that missionary's house.

GR: What city were you in?

JS: We lived first in Taejon, in the middle of Korea, and then we moved to Seoul. We lived on these missionary compounds and we got to know a lot of different kind of people. We had a lot of different adventures and different outlets—had a wonderful time.

GR: You talked about the fact that your father had found another wife and the relationship there wasn't as strong as you thought, and you had moved. As the children got older, did you wish you had some backup when it came to asking questions about raising teenagers? How did you react to your children? Where did you learn how to raise them?

JS: When my children were teenagers we were in Korea. And it's a whole different situation. We didn't have the same problems that people in America had. We sent them to what had formerly been a missionary school and was now called the Seoul Foreign School, and it was an exclusive bunch of people. They were all children of dedicated, educated people. High level of education, and everybody looking out for everybody else's children. So we were very fortunate in that respect with our teenagers.

GR: So you were glad that your children were able to enjoy that experience?

JS: And so were they. They look back on that with thankfulness.

GR: They've mentioned that to you verbally then?

JS: They mention it to everybody. It's an advantage for them in so many ways because we don't have any problems of prejudice and racism and all that because they grew up with children from all different countries. There were businessmen and there were international workers in Korea. So we had children from India and from Hong Kong and Japan, China. We had refugee children from Russia. All kinds there. And they all grew together.

GR: After your children left the house, did you and John have to reevaluate your relationship as a couple, or had it been pretty strong throughout the child rearing years?

JS: We raised our children on a rope that we just let out as they grew, and finally we just let go of the string. So we didn't have any traumatic parting with our children. We had trained them to be pretty independent. We had to send the first one off to college when she was just seventeen. She went off on a ship to Japan and then took the ship across the Ocean, and then had to make her way by bus all the way across the United States with very little money. She ate peanut butter sandwiches on the bus, she and her friend. And so they learned self-reliance very quickly.

GR: So once all the children were gone, you and John as a couple did what?

JS: I went back to school and got a master's degree. And then I got a job in a veterans hospital. It was the same job, ironically, that I had Percy Jones.

GR: Where was this hospital located?

JS: In Miami. It was delightful because the job was called educational therapy and one of the requirements for the job was that you had to have a year of experience. But there wasn't any way to get a year of experience unless you got the job. So I walked in there and I said I have a year of experience, and I had my papers from 1945.

GR: Did they look at that as being, well this is a different type of veteran?

JS: No.

GR: What war brought men and women into that hospital?

JS: No war. This was a strange time during the 70s, and the veterans hospital is full of veterans who are long-term. In fact, it was disgusting because people would come from New York and New Jersey and spend their winters in the Miami Veterans Hospital. It was a nice winter vacation, you know. They would get free entertainment and free board and room and new limbs, and then they would go back to New York for their summer again.

GR: So it was a different type of veteran than you had first seen?

JS: Yeah, but while I worked there they tightened up a bit and gradually the stay was shortened. Finally, by the time I retired, my job had almost been eliminated because they could only stay in the hospitals…this new medical plan where so many days for a stroke and so many for a heart attack. I think you better talk to John.

[End of interview]