

HAROLD SCHIFFMAN ARCHIVE
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Harold Schiffman

INTERVIEWER: Hermann Trojanowski

DATE: June 1, 2010

HT: Today is Tuesday, June 1, 2010, and my name is Hermann Trojanowski. I'm at the O. Henry Hotel in Greensboro, North Carolina, with Dr. Harold Schiffman. We're here to conduct an oral history interview for the Harold Schiffman Archive at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Harold, if you would tell me your full name. We'll use that as a test to see how we both sound on this machine.

HS: Okay. My full name is Harold Anthony Schiffman.

HT: It's a great pleasure to finally meet you after e-mails.

HS: Yes. Thank goodness for e-mail.

HT: That's so true. If you could tell me something about your background such as when and where you were born, and that sort of thing.

HS: Well, I was born right here in Greensboro, actually in Wesley Long Hospital. At the time, though, Wesley Long Hospital was on North Elm Street. It wasn't at its present location. And I was born August 4, 1928.

HT: Can you tell me something about your childhood growing up here in Greensboro?

HS: Well, it was a great place to live. I had a lot of fun, and we lived in the Fisher Park area, and I really enjoyed the park, had a lot of friends there, broke my shoulder playing touch football in Fisher Park and all that sort of thing. And we moved between my junior and senior years in high school. We moved to Irving Park and lived out on Granville Road just off Cornwallis [Drive], and at the time Cornwallis was a dirt road.

HT: Is the house still in existence?

HS: Both.

HT: In Fisher Park?

HS: Both houses are still in existence. The Fisher Park house that is on Carolina Street. And the one on Granville Road is still there, too.

HT: And what did your parents do when you were a child?

HS: Well, my father was trained as an optometrist, and he studied physical optics at Columbia University and went in the army during World War I. And after he got out of the army he practiced optometry for awhile in Greensboro. Then my grandfather, who had founded Schiffman Jewelry Company, had a heart problem, and he asked my father to take over the business along with my father's younger brother, Arnold Schiffman. They ran the business starting in about, I think, 1919, somewhere along in there, and my dad worked in the store until he died in 1948.

HT: Did you ever think about joining the family firm so to speak?

HS: I never wanted to do it. My father wanted me to, but I never wanted to do it, although everyone in the family worked in the store during Christmas, or during the month of December, because that was the busiest time.

HT: Sure.

HS: So, I worked down in the shipping room, wrapping packages, and eventually upon the sales floor.

HT: Did you have any siblings growing up?

HS: No siblings. No siblings at all. I was an only child.

HT: Only child. And I assume you went to high school here in Greensboro?

HS: I went to — it was called Greensboro High School at the time. It's now Grimsley.

HT: Right.

HS: And, yes, that was — in those days we had an eleven-year system. So, I graduated in 1945 at age seventeen.

HT: And, then, what was next for you?

HS: Well, I went immediately to Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina. World War II was still on, still going at that time, and I wanted to get in as much college as I could before being drafted. And, of course, the war was over that summer, 1945. So, I was able to go ahead and finish my degree, graduating from Carolina in 1948. First person I met when I got there — I lived in Battle Dormitory, which faces right out on Franklin Street in Chapel Hill. It's right across from the Post Office. And the first person I met when I got to the dormitory in June of '45 was Andy Griffith.

HT: Oh, my gosh.

HS: And he lived right across the hall from me the whole time I lived in that dormitory.

HT: And that was Battle —

HS: Battle Dormitory. It was — it's not a dormitory any more. They're using it for something else. But it was called BVP. There were three residence halls there: Battle [Dormitory], Vance [Dormitory] and Pettigrew [Dormitory], and I lived in Battle, Number 10 Battle.

HT: And what were your favorite — if we could back track just a minute to high school. What were your favorite subjects in high school?

HS: Well, by far English was my favorite, and I didn't do any actual music in high school, except that I did do some choral arrangements for the chorus.

HT: Right. Did you know Herbert Hazelman?

HS: Oh, yes, and I think he's still living if I'm not mistaken. I'm not sure.

HT: I'm not sure.

HS: He was last year anyhow. But he was the band director at the time I was in high school.

HT: Well, I went to Grimsley.

HS: Oh, you went to Grimsley.

HT: He was there when I was there.

HS: Yeah.

HT: He was an institution almost.

HS: Oh, yes, absolutely.

HT: So, when did you first become interested in music?

HS: Well, I can't remember when I wasn't. I remember at age three I would try to play the piano. I didn't have piano lessons until I was seven, but I did try to pick out things on the piano when I was very young. At one point I had a *World Book Encyclopedia*. And I looked up musical notation in that before I ever went to first grade and learned how to write musical notation from the encyclopedia.

HT: So, was the family musical?

HS: My mother was. Well, actually, my father was, too, but he wouldn't admit it. He used to say he took piano for eight years but it didn't take. But my mother was a very good pianist, and she and my father had the same piano teacher that I eventually had, Miss Florence Hunt here in Greensboro. I studied with Miss Hunt, whom we all called "Huntie," until I graduated from high school.

HT: And what — I know you played the piano. Were you interested in other kinds of music instruments, as well as the piano?

HS: I tried to learn to play clarinet. I didn't do very well with that. Then when I was in Chapel Hill I took an instrumental methods course, and I learned to play French horn a little bit and a little bit of viola. Later took — well, I did have a year of 'cello lessons, too, when I was at Chapel Hill — not a year, a term, (a quarter) of 'cello lessons with Emily Porter who was a UNCG [University of North Carolina at Greensboro] grad — and, then, she was doing graduate work at Carolina, and she was a 'cello teacher. So, I studied with her. I always wanted to be a 'cellist, but I never became one. And my mother wanted me to be a pianist. And, so, I — 'cello had to wait till later. And I did learn to play 'cello some.

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HT: Interesting. Learning how to play the ‘cello. We were interrupted.

HS: Yes, I did take ‘cello lessons for one quarter at Chapel Hill. Then when I was a doctoral student at Florida State, I studied ‘cello with a ‘cello teacher, [Owen Sellers,] there for a year, and that’s where I learned basically to play the instrument. I played a little bit in the orchestra when I was there. But I did — I still have the ‘cello that I got at that time. I play it occasionally. But, then, I got hooked on playing the banjo. So, I spend more time playing the banjo than anything else now.

HT: So, banjo is your favorite instrument these days?

HS: Well, I still love to play piano, too. But I’m not a terribly good pianist. My wife is an excellent pianist. And — but I love to play the banjo. I pick a couple of hours every day.

HT: Wow.

HS: It’s fun.

HT: I think banjo is actually an instrument that was sort of born here in the United States, is that not correct?

HS: Well, yes, although it had roots in Africa.

HT: Oh, did it?

HS: There's an African instrument called ekonting which is like a three-string banjo, and the technique of playing the ekonting is very much like what's called clawhammer banjo playing which is the down-stroking method.

HT: I'm going to skip back over to the academic life. What made you decide to go to Chapel Hill at that time?

HS: Well, my dad had started at Chapel Hill and he was a gung-ho Tar Heel fan, and I was, too, growing up. I always rooted for the Heels football. I had originally hoped to go to the University of Virginia to study with Randall Thompson, who was teaching there. But, then, he left and went to Princeton, and I didn't want to go north. So, I ended up going to Chapel Hill, and I actually got wonderful training at Carolina. They had some very good teachers there in music and other subjects.

HT: I wasn't aware that Chapel Hill had a music program at that time, but I guess they did.

HS: Yes, they did. They had a music department, and they did have applied music instruction. I studied piano with two people when I was there: Jan [Philip] Schinhan who was — actually he was an organist, but I studied piano with him as well as some harmony courses. And, then, also there was a graduate assistant who was a piano teacher, Virginia Haire, and I studied with her at Carolina. So, I took piano lessons all the way through my undergraduate career.

HT: Well, what was Chapel Hill like? You were there in the 1940s?

HS: I was there — yes, and it was — there were very few men on campus then. They were all off — the only men that were there were freshmen. And Navy pre-flight schools were there. So, the student population was rather small at the time. Women couldn't go till they were juniors. So, it was almost a deserted place in some ways. But I had a very good time there, and, of course, the war was over in August of that summer — and, so, then the GIs began to come back and so forth, and the place began to fill up.

HT: What were some of your favorite subjects while you were at Chapel Hill?

HS: Well, English for one.

HT: English again?

HS: Yes, English for one thing. And I always liked to read both fiction and poetry. So, English was a natural for me. Although I took some philosophy courses, too, and I was interested in those as well.

HT: Well, tell me something about the professors and administrators that you remember from your Chapel Hill days.

HS: Well, of course, the president of the whole university system was Frank Porter Graham at the time, and he lived there in Chapel Hill — and he had been a class-mate of my father's at Columbia [University]. So, they were pretty good friends. And the only other administrator — well, I remember two, Dean Mackey, who I think was dean — dean of men, I believe, and I took trigonometry with him, but I didn't do very well. And I took it later with another teacher and made an "A" in it. And, then, but the English teacher that I had was Dr. William Wells, who was also the dean of arts and sciences at the time, and he was a wonderful teacher; and he kind of reinforced my love of poetry, writing poetry as well as reading it. And then, of course, in the music department, Jan Schinhan, I just absolutely adored the man. And Earl Slocum, who was band director, I studied counterpoint with him, orchestration and conducting. I learned a lot from him. Paul Young was the choral director, and I sang in the Glee Club, and that was a very good experience for me. And then Glen Haydon was the chair of the department, and he was a musicologist. And he really developed that whole program of musicology in Chapel Hill. And these were outstanding teachers that

I remember very well.

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HT: Glen Haydon, and some of the other instructors at Chapel Hill?

HS: They were the main ones. And I saw Earl Slocum from time to time. After he retired, he went to Stetson University just to live down in Deland, Florida, and I went down and had a piece performed down there and ran into Earl. He was a wonderful guy. I teased him because he told me — “You know,” I said, “You look so young still.” He said, “The secret is you keep your hair. It doesn’t matter what color it is. Keep your hair.” And I said, “Well, Earl, you did a better job teaching me counterpoint than keeping my hair, because I’m getting pretty bald.”

HT: Well, it sounds like you really enjoyed your days at Chapel Hill.

HS: I did. I had a great time. I went to all the football games. We had wonderful football. That was the [Charlie] “Choo-Choo” Justice era. And, so, it was terrific football. And I played tennis with various people down there. I wasn’t good enough to make the tennis team or anything like that, but I did play tennis.

HT: Well, what part did music play in your life during those Chapel Hill days other than attending classes and learning?

HS: Oh, it was very important, because I was composing all the time.

HT: Oh, Okay.

HS: And that little piece that I brought down here today I wrote while I was at Chapel Hill, some early piece to go in the archive. And I wrote music for the radio station. The university radio station would have little dramas and things, I did background music for them. And I wrote a chamber opera with a graduate student in theater who wrote the libretto as his master's thesis — and they wouldn't accept it as libretto unless he could find somebody to set it to music to see if it worked as a libretto. And, so, I was the only composer around, and he came and asked me to write an opera on this thing, which I did, and the Play-Makers — well, a bunch of music students performed it, but in Play-Maker Theatre at Chapel Hill. So, I had all kinds of extracurricular musical things going on.

HT: Did you actually work at the radio station, or compose for them?

HS: Well, I just composed for them. They would have some little show, and they needed some music, and they would call me and ask me to write something for it. And I would either play it on the piano, or they had some kind of little organ I would play sometimes. And one time we had a sort of big production, and we needed some string players for an orchestra. And I called Dean [H. Hugh]

Altwater, who was the dean at UNCG, or WCUNC (Woman's College of the University of North Carolina) at the time. And he sent us some string players. So, there was a lot of cooperation between the two, because Chapel Hill, or Carolina, didn't have a big applied music program at the time. There weren't very many string players around. So, we sort of reinforced the orchestra for that one broadcast with people from UNC Greensboro.

HT: Who do you think influenced your musical interests during that time the most?

HS: Well, probably the person who was most influential was Schinhan, and Slocum, because they were the two really hands-on performance people that I was working with. Although, singing in the Glee Club was a big thing, too. Paul Young was great. I sang at his church choir, too. He had a church choir, Presbyterian Church Choir, and I sang in his church choir one year.

HT: On the social life on campus, what was that like? I know that you said earlier that most of the men were gone.

HS: Well, when I first got there. But, then, by the time of my second year, there were plenty of co-eds.

HT: Right.

HS: And, so, I normally dated and had fun in that respect. But, also, I was involved in — Okay, I was on the first soccer team that Carolina had. It was not really a varsity sport. It was a club. But it was started by one of the phys-ed instructors. And, also, I played soccer during my high school and junior high school time, because there was a lot of soccer in Greensboro.

HT: I did not know that.

HS: There was in the public schools. So, I was not a great player, but I had experience. And this professor, I don't remember his name now, who wanted to start this soccer team, came down [to my phys-ed class]. I was in a phys-ed class that was playing soccer, and he looked around and saw people who could play and recruited for the team. He got me out of phys-ed, and I played on the team instead. We didn't win a game that year.

HT: Who were your rivals in soccer in those days?

HS: Well, we played at Duke [University].

HT: Oh.

HS: I remember Duke beat us badly. And we played — I guess we played some of the other schools as well.

HT: Did NC State [University] have a soccer team?

HS: I don't remember playing NC State. I do remember playing Duke. That was the main one. And they had a lot of good players that came from South America, and, so, we didn't have a chance. But it was fun. We had a lot of fun playing. Then, also, you asked about fraternities and that sort of thing. I didn't join any social fraternities, but I joined Phi Mu Alpha Symphonia which is the men's music fraternity. And I'm a life member of that. I joined Alpha Rho chapter at Chapel Hill at the time. I still hear from them from time to time.

HT: Well, I think you mentioned earlier about various residence halls where you lived. What were the residence halls like in those days?

HS: They were rather primitive. They were not luxury.

HT: Today the kids have living rooms and private baths and all that sort of thing.

HS: No, we had bath down the hall. We had a suite. We had one room where there were four double-decker — no, two double-decker bunk beds [to] sleep four guys. And, then, the other room had four desks. We each had a desk where we would study. And that was basically it. Bath down the hall. And as I recall it was a shower. That's all.

HT: You said it was kind of on the primitive side, what about the dining hall, food, what was that like?

HS: Well, I don't remember much about it. I ate mostly in the local restaurants and stuff like that then. There was a wonderful establishment there, Danziger's [Vienna Café] which was a Vienna coffee shop. And I would eat breakfast there often and, also, dinner. And other places, sandwich shop, and there was a cafeteria. I must have eaten once or twice in dining halls, occasionally over at Carolina Inn.

HT: Carolina is certainly of a beautiful place.

HS: Yes, it is. It's very different now. It's become such a big retirement community. But when I left in 1948, I graduated in '48, I think there was a total student body of about 7,500. And, of course, I don't know how many thousands there are now.

HT: I guess Carolina has close to 30,000.

HS: Something like that.

HT: It's not the biggest school, because NC State is a larger school, but it's huge.

HS: But when I left Carolina we were about 7,500 students. And I went to [University of California at] Berkeley, which had 50,000 students.

HT: Oh, my gosh.

HS: It was real culture shock.

HT: Well, you already talked about extracurricular activities that you participated in soccer and that sort of thing. And, so, what did you do for fun other than play music and play a little bit of soccer?

HS: Went to football games.

HT: Football games.

HS: Well, occasionally, I was dating one girl or another, you know, that sort of thing. We would go to a dance or something like that. And that was about all that I recall. But generally speaking music majors don't have much time for that sort of thing. And I was working hard. And I graduated in three years, because I wanted to — I had gotten, because they had an accelerated program at the end of the war, I was able to get two years' work in one,

HT: Wow.

HS: the first year I was there. So, I graduated at age twenty. And went on out to Berkeley in the fall of '48.

HT: You graduated in three; did you have to go to summer school?

HS: I went to summer school two summers. The first summer and the last summer that I was there. Now, I went the last summer because I saw I was going to be able to graduate if I took just a few courses in the summer and get on out and go to graduate school. By this time I knew what I wanted to do.

HT: So, you had planned to go to Berkeley all along?

HS: Well, I planned — I decided during my senior year at Carolina to go to Berkeley. And I went to Berkeley primarily to study composition with Roger Sessions who was the big teacher there. And Edward Cone, from Greensboro, who was ten or eleven years older than me, but he and I had the same piano teacher; and he encouraged me to go to study with Sessions. He had studied with Sessions both at Princeton [University] and then after he got out of the military and went to study with him at Berkeley. And, so, that's — what encouraged me to go to Berkeley was to study with Sessions.

HT: And do you recall your trip out?

HS: I drove cross country.

HT: Drove?

HS: And I had — my dad was quite ill at the time, and he couldn't drive any more. So, he — I had a car. But he thought my car was too old. So, he gave me his newer car which turned out to be a lemon. But, anyhow, I drove across country all by — well, I had somebody with me as far as Kansas City. And, then, I went the rest of the way by myself. And I lived in a boarding house in Berkeley for about the first two weeks. And I happened — I needed to have some pictures made, and I went to a department store. And the photographer said she had a room to rent out, would I be interested? And, so, I rented a room in the basement of her house. For \$45 a month. And so, I lived in that room the whole time I was at Berkeley. But my father died that first fall that I was there. And I had to go back home, and I had to help wind up some stuff. And, so, I just withdrew from Berkeley that semester. And, then, I re-entered after Christmas, after New Years, second semester of what was January of '49. So, that's when I really started. I didn't get any credit for the fall that I was there.

HT: Well, what was the trip like driving out to California? It must have taken quite a few days.

HS: It took I think eight or nine days. I didn't try to rush it. I was sightseeing at the same time a little bit. And it was great. I enjoyed it. And I remember a funny thing happened. I stayed at a place in Nevada called The Ranch Inn, and it was actually a gambling place. And I didn't realize it at the time. But it just looked like a motel. And, of course, they wouldn't let me in the casino because I was under age. I was only twenty, but they couldn't stop me from playing the slot machines. And I hit the jackpot on a slot machine. So, I did pretty well. And, then, when I got out to Berkeley, as I say, I stayed in the boarding house until I found this little basement apartment that worked out fine.

HT: Well, what kind of courses did you take while you were at Berkeley?

HS: Well, they were all music courses. I didn't take anything — I was not required to take anything outside of music. So, I took composition seminar with Sessions, and some analysis courses, and orchestration seminar, choral scoring seminar, and some music history courses. And things like that with people who — the big musicologist there at time was Manfred Bukofzer. And so, I had a course with him, and I had a course with David Boyden, who was a musicologist. And, then, there was a man named Edward Lawton, who taught the choral scoring, and I learned a lot from that class. And I had an orchestration seminar with Charles Cushing. And I got my master's degree. Well, in the summer of 1950 the Korean War broke out. And so, I went immediately to my draft board which was in Berkeley, and asked for a deferment to finish my master's, and they gave me a

year's deferment for that. And I actually finished all of the coursework and everything the first semester. Then the second semester I did my thesis work, passed my exams and all. And at the same time that whole year I studied, in addition to the seminar, privately with Sessions.

HT: Wow.

HS: And he put me through the rigors of a European-type musical training which was very, very good for me.

HT: Was Mr. Sessions American, or?

HS: He was American, yes, but he was in a sense European trained. Because his main teacher was Ernst Bloch who was Swiss. He studied with Bloch in the United States in Cleveland, but the training was European style. And so, then, that was very good. Very few people get that kind of thing anymore in this country at least. And I got it twice. I got it once from Sessions. And, then, when I went to Florida State I studied with Ernst von Dohnányi, who was a Hungarian composer. And he put me back through it again, through all the European-style training, writing lots of fugue and counterpoint, and variations and things like that. It was just wonderful training.

HT: Let's see. Well, what was Berkeley like in those days?

HS: Well, this was before it was such a radical place, before the hippies, before Berkeley rebels and all that sort of thing. It was a beautiful, beautiful site. And I had a very good time.

HT: Berkeley is sort of adjacent to Oakland?

HS: Yes, it's in the East Bay. And I loved it. Berkeley. I had a very good time, and had a lot of friends; and I still played some tennis and some golf and so forth. But I got my work done.

And, yes, it was next to Oakland; and, of course, at Oakland was Mills College. And Darius Milhaud, a prominent French composer was teaching at Mills, and he was very, very cordial and friendly to the Berkeley students. . . and there was nothing going on at Berkeley musically in the summer. And so we would all go out to Mills, because they had the Budapest Quartet in residence, and the Paganini Quartet in residence... and a friend of mine in Berkeley was a — he was basically a printer, but he was a whiz at electronics. And Milhaud had a tape machine that was always going on the fritz. So, he would call my friend, Roger Levinson, and say, “Roger, my tape recorder is not working. Can you come fix it?” Roger didn't have a car. So, I would drive him out there, and I would sit there and talk to Milhaud while Roger worked on the tape recorder. Milhaud was a big influence on me. I loved the man. I loved the music. And I had known his music since I was a child, because my mother and I used to play the *Scaramouche Suite*

on two pianos. I was a big admirer of Milhaud. So, it was just a real privilege to not only have the chance to work with Sessions, but to at least have some contact with Milhaud, who was a very different kind of person than Sessions.

HT: What was Milhaud's last name?

HS: Well, Milhaud was his last name.

HT: Really?

HS: Yes.

HT: M-i-o?

HS: M-i-l-h-a-u-d. And a lot of people mispronounce it and call it Milo, but it's actually Milhaud. His first name was Darius. . . he was Jewish. He was French, but he was Jewish. And he had written two string quartets that could be played simultaneously as an octet, or they could be played separately as two string quartets. I was there for the first performance of that. And they also did the Mendelssohn Octet on the same program. They had the Paganini Quartet and the Budapest Quartet playing this. And Milhaud said, "You know, it's a nice Jewish evening. I think I'll invite the rabbi."

HT: Well, you mentioned earlier that you had got a deferment because the Korean War had started.

HS: That's right.

HT: And, so, you were able to finish?

HS: I was able to finish the master's degree, and I graduated in 1951, June of '51. And we had a month's grace period before we would be drafted, the guys who had deferments, in order to shop around to decide if they wanted to enlist then, and what branch, and so on. So, I went to the air force, and I went to the navy, and I thought the army was the best deal. And, so, I enlisted in the army. I enlisted for two years. And then, after I was already in, they offered me a chance to go into signal intelligence, and I placed high, because musicians are trained to listen — and I placed high on the Morse Code test and stuff like that. Also they said to go into this program I would have to enlist for three years rather than two, but I wouldn't have to be in reserves when I got out. So, I did that. I enlisted for three years. And instead of being sent to Korea I was sent to Germany. Which was great. And I worked as a chaplain's assistant for awhile, because I could play the organ. Then, after I had done that for about a year the major came and said, "You know, you are an embarrassment. You are the senior corporal in the outfit. We need to promote you, but your job doesn't require anything higher than corporal. So, if you can find some other job with the company, we'll promote you

to sergeant.” And ten minutes later the first sergeant came up and said, “So and so is rotating home. I need a replacement for him, a field first sergeant for the casual detachment. And so I said, “I’ll take it.” And the chaplain agreed to release me as long as I’d still play for services until he found a replacement, which he did in about a month. So, the last year I was working as a sergeant. And, basically, I was also in charge of the troop information and education program. And, then, I had to take the casual troops out on the march once a week, hike in the woods. It was fun. It was nice. We were in south Germany. It was beautiful weather in the summertime.

HT: Where were you stationed in Germany?

HS: In Heilbronn.

HT: Heilbronn?

HS: Heilbronn am Neckar. And by this time I was married, and my wife was Swiss, someone I had met at Berkeley. And so, when I was sent to Germany she went back to Switzerland to visit her family, and she came up to Heilbronn, and I got permission to live off post. So, we lived with a German family for two years while we were there in Heilbronn.

HT: And were you just stationed in one place in Germany?

HS: That's all. I traveled around a lot — because I had to go — especially when I was working for the chaplain, we'd have to go out to various — we were in a group headquarters. And we would have to go out to some of the companies that we had out in the field and do field services for them. So, I would take this little portable organ along and played for the field services. And, then, I had occasion to, for the company, go up to Darmstadt and to Frankfurt and down to Munich and various places to pick up equipment and whatnot. So, I got to travel around quite a bit. And, actually, I had a three-day pass and went to Bayreuth and heard some Wagner at Bayreuth: and heard *Tristan* and heard *Parsifal*. And I went to — the famous — it still exists, contemporary music festival in Donaueschingen, which is down in south Germany, almost in Switzerland. And I went to that festival in 1953, and came in contact with some rather prominent European composers including Karel Husa. I had supper with him one night while we were there, and we became, you know, acquaintances at least, if not friends. He lives in Cary [North Carolina] now, and he taught at Cornell [University] for a long time. At the time I met him he had never been to the States, but he was interested in coming to the States. And we conversed in French. He didn't have any English at the time, and my first wife was French-Swiss, so, we were able to carry on a good conversation in French. And I'm still in touch with him. He's, as I say, living in Cary, [North Carolina].

HT: So, you learned to speak French?

HS: Well, I learned French in school. And then, I had my French in high school, and another term of French at Carolina. And, so, I learned to speak French, but I got better being married to a French-Swiss. And, then, after I was out of the service I spent a couple of summers with her family in Switzerland. So, my French got to be fairly good.

HT: Well, tell me how you met your first wife?

HS: Well, she was musically trained. She was actually a registered nurse. And she had come over to do some post — not doctoral, but some advanced study, I think at NYU (New York University) in New York. And she got caught by the war and couldn't get back, and she really didn't want to go back. And she ended up staying in the States, and a friend of hers was in Berkeley. So, she went out to Berkeley. And she was hanging around music students, and that's how I met her.

HT: Oh, so, she was not musically inclined?

HS: Oh, no, she was a very good pianist. And she was an even better visual artist. She was a good painter. And I have a lot of her paintings and watercolors and stuff like that. She died in 1969 of cancer.

HT: Oh. Well, you say you did quite a bit traveling while you were in Europe while you were in the army.

HS: Yes.

HT: On weekends and passes, and things like that?

HS: Yeah, and I had a ten-day leave every four months.

HT: Oh, gosh.

HS: So, we'd get thirty days leave [per year]. And I'd take a ten-day leave every four months and went to Italy, went to Austria, all around that part of Germany at the time. They wouldn't allow us to go to the so-called East Zone at the time. They were afraid we would be caught, something would happen. So, I never got to East Germany or to any of the Eastern European countries.

HT: How about West Berlin, did you ever get a chance to go there?

HS: No, we didn't. Because you had to go through East Germany to get there. I have been there after I got out of the service. I've been to West Berlin three times. But that was all before the wall came down. I haven't been there since that time. But I spent a lot of time in Europe, both in Germany and Austria; and the last ten to twelve years, we spent a lot of time in Hungary, because I had opportunities to make recordings in Hungary through an outfit called KMN, the Király Music Network. It was run by a young composer by the name of David Zsolt Király.

And he formed this network which had the purpose of connecting foreign composers, that is foreign to Hungary — and they were mostly Americans — with Hungarian orchestras. And I took advantage of that situation. He sent me a mailing about something, and I looked into it. I had a Hungarian friend, Imre Rohmann, who teaches at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. I asked him about this group of people, and he said, “Well, I’ll look into it.” He had not heard of them. He wrote me back, and he said, “They’re fine. Plus, they’re legitimate. They’re honest. The important thing is to choose a conductor and good orchestra.” Well, they had several orchestras available, and I chose the Győr [Hungary] Philharmonic, and a conductor named Mátyás Antal, who was a friend of Imre Rohmann’s, and he recommended him. We’ve become good friends. So, I’ve been over there now seven times in the last ten to twelve years to record orchestral music. And they recorded my string quartets through Antal’s auspices — recorded all my string quartets. So, I spent a lot of time in Hungary. The last time was in 2008. I had a live performance of my cantata *Alma*. I had written it for Antal, because he had the Hungarian National Choir, and he was an associate conductor of the Hungarian National Orchestra — and he asked me for a piece for chorus and orchestra. So, I wrote this piece for him on texts of Kathryn Stripling Byer who has just finished her four-year-term as poet laureate of North Carolina, and I had some poems of hers that I absolutely loved. So, I set some of those and wrote this cantata *Alma*. Well, we recorded it in 2002. But, then, Antal arranged a performance with the Győr Philharmonic and his choir, the Hungarian National Choir, and a wonderful mezzo soprano soloist, Katalin Halmai. So, we

had a live performance in Győr, Hungary, which is a lovely town about halfway between Vienna and Budapest, and I loved that town, been there so much. So, I wrote a symphony and dedicated it to the City of Győr. So, while we were over there for the live performance of *Alma*, we recorded the symphony and four other pieces. And the manager — the then manager of the orchestra, who is not there anymore (he's gone to another orchestra) arranged for the City of Győr, the mayor of the City of Győr, to give me a silver medal and a certificate in recognition of my contributions to the cultural life of the City of Győr. So, we had a nice ceremony, and just a great time over there.

HT: Great.

HS: That's the last time I was in Hungary. That was a year and a half ago.

HT: After your three years of — [if we could] backtrack a minute to your army days. After your three years service was over, what did you decide to do next after the army?

HS: Well, I didn't know what I wanted to do. So, I went up to Princeton, [New Jersey]. I didn't enroll in Princeton University because I already had a master's degree, and I was not interested in pursuing a doctorate in musicology. But I studied privately with Sessions for another year in Princeton. But then I decided I needed to get a job, so I looked around and went to — and found that Florida

State University, I thought, offered a doctorate in composition. Sessions advised me... said, "If you insist on getting a doctorate, go somewhere you can get it in composition so you don't stop composing." And Florida State had a degree on the books, but they'd never offered it because they had not found a qualified applicant for it. And I had a friend who had gone there. He was a composer, and they didn't offer him the chance to study, to take the degree. But I sent in my résumé and everything, and the dean wrote me a letter that says, "Come on" — that says, "We'll get this degree started with you as the first applicant for it." So, I went to Florida State to get my doctorate. I was not the first to finish, because my friend who had done all the coursework [prior to my arrival], and a couple of other people finished ahead of me. When I finished my coursework, they offered me a job at Florida State, which I took. I got the degree finished in the summer of — actually I finished all the work in the summer of '61, but I couldn't graduate until '62, because I had to have a performance of the symphony that I had written. And I got that done in '62. And, then, they offered me incentives to stay on. I had gone there for what I felt was going to be two or three years, and I still have a house in Tallahassee — that's still my legal residence even though I spend about half the year in North Carolina now.

HT: So, how long did it take you to finish your doctorate?

HS: It took, actually it took about four years to get everything done, but I was teaching — the last two years I was teaching full-time. So, it took some time to get the

dissertation work done. But there, I had the opportunity to study with Ernst von Dohnányi at Florida State. And as I say he put me back through the rigors of a European-style training. He and I got along great. He was a wonderful man.

HT: Was he German, or?

HS: He was Hungarian.

HT: Hungarian?

HS: Yes. Actually, he was born in Bratislava, [Slovakia], which at that time was in Hungary. And it was called Pressburg at the time. That was the German name of it. It's now Bratislava.

HT: What was Florida like during those days?

HS: Hot. (Laughing) But the music building was the only building on campus that was air conditioned.

HT: Oh.

HS: The dean, Dean Kuersteiner, had persuaded the legislature to put up the money to air condition it because of musical instruments that were there, pianos and other

stringed instruments, and so forth. So, it was the envy of the whole campus. We had an air conditioned building! And the school was, I think, in some ways at its prime. Because they not only had Dohnányi, they had Edward Kilenyi, who was a Dohnányi pupil. He was American, but he had studied with Dohnányi in Budapest. And he was my wife, Jane's [Perry-Camp], principle piano teacher at Florida State. And she says he was the one who really taught her how to play the piano. The Hungarian style of playing is quite marvelous. And so, I was in contact with him. Then there was the musicologist there, named Lee Rigsby, who later became the dean of the School of Music at UNCG back in the '60s. And he was the best classroom teacher I ever had. He was absolutely marvelous. He got me interested in things I never thought I would be interested in such as medieval music and Machaut, and all sorts of things like that. He was an inspiration. And then as I mentioned before, I learned to play the 'cello while I was there, too.

HT: And you mentioned medieval music, do you have any interest in medieval music?

HS: I had not had much interest in it until I ran into Rigsby, and he opened it up for me. And so I love it now. It's just wonderful music. And not only medieval, but earlier than that, too. Renaissance music as well. Yes, I've become very much interested in now what's called old time music, music of the Appalachians, fiddle tunes, and that sort of thing. I don't play the fiddle, but I play the fiddle tunes on a banjo, and that sort of thing, so. But in connection with that, I've gotten interested in older traditional American music as well. And I think part of that

came about because of going back, and going to the older music in European traditions and so forth, too. So, music is quite a thing.

HT: Speaking of Appalachian music, does that come from Scotland and Ireland, basically?

HS: A lot of it is Celtic background.

HT: Celtic?

HS: Yes. It's both Irish and Scottish. Most of what I have run into, at least in North Carolina, seems to be Scottish in its roots. But I have a very good friend, banjo player, Ken Perlman, who was actually a New Yorker, but he came down and came to Galax, [Virginia] and learned how to play — he was a wonderful clawhammer banjo player to begin with, but he learned how to play the Appalachian style. And he and I have become very good friends. He's been to UNCG a couple of times for workshops, things like that. I've written him a banjo concerto. It hasn't been done yet, hasn't been performed yet, but I hope it will be. And. . . but he does research on Celtic music on Prince Edward Island in Canada, because that island is half Scottish and half French in terms of its cultural background. The island is divided. The western part of it is close to Quebec, and it's the French stuff. And there are all these old-time fiddlers up there. He goes up and documents all this stuff. And he's published some stuff on this. And, of

course, I've learned some of this from him. And, so, I love all that stuff. It's just great. It influences what I write now.

HT: Have you ever attended the fiddler's convention they have here in North Carolina?

HS: No, I haven't. There are several of them. There's one at Appalachian State [University]. And there's . . . of course, the famous one is the Galax [Old] Fiddlers' Convention which is actually in the Round Peak area between Galax, Virginia and Mt. Airy. Ken came down and studied with Tommy Jarrell. And he got into the old-time stuff, and especially Bob Carlin, who lives over here in Lexington is a very good friend. He worked a lot with those people, and he loved the area so much he moved from New York to Lexington so he could be closer to it.

HT: Tell me something about the founding of the Florida State University Festival of New Music.

HS: Okay. Well, what happened there was — well, back in the '60s I was president of the Florida Composer's League. We had a meeting and put on sort of like a mini-festival of music, contemporary music from Florida composers. And, then, in the '80s I was in both the Southeastern Composer's League and something called Society of Composers, Incorporated; and they both asked me to sponsor a meeting

of both organizations — and I put them both together about a month apart and considered it one festival. And this inspired the dean — then Dean of the School of Music Bob Glidden — to ask me to found a new music festival the next year. So, I did. We had the first one in 1981. I had a committee to help me (and, of course, Jane helped a lot in the organization of it). But in any case we set up a format for this thing that they still use there to this day at Florida State. And I got commitments from all the faculty performers and composers, and all performing groups, and everybody else — and we advertised who would be the performers, and we put out a call for scores. AND we were inundated with scores! But we did seven concerts. And had Karel Husa, my friend whom I had met in Donaueschingen, [come] down as the featured guest composer. And that was the founding of the first festival. And, then, I said I didn't want to do it anymore. Let somebody else do it after that. But that's how it got started.

HT: And you say it's still in existence today?

HS: It's still in existence today. They have it every other year. It's been going since 1981. So, it's held up pretty well.

HT: Thirty years.

HS: Yes.

HT: You've had some of your compositions performed at Alice Tully Hall?

HS: Yes.

HT: Tell me about that, please.

HS: Okay. I've read somewhere that Berlioz was having trouble getting his music played, so he just hired a hall, hired an orchestra, and put it on himself. I thought, "Well, I need to do that, too. I'd like to have some New York performances." And, so, I arranged with the school of music at FSU: they agreed to help me with this. We hired Alice Tully Hall for an evening and put on a concert. It was about a twenty five-year retrospective of my music — had one little piece premiered on it there, but had a lot of chamber music, there were some songs, Jane played some of the piano things, and Janice Harsanyi, the late Janice Harsanyi, sang some songs of mine. And there was a 'cellist, Roger Drinkall for whom I had written 'cello music, and a 'cello concerto. (We didn't do a concerto on that [program]: it was all chamber music.) And that's how that happened. That was in '81. But that led to other things, because then, in 1983 or '84, I came into contact with an organization in New York, North/South Consonance. Now that has nothing to do with the Civil War. The idea was that it promotes the music of composers from North and South America. And it included Central America, because the guy who started this, Max Lifchitz, was a native of Mexico City but came to the States and got a degree at Julliard [School] and another one at Harvard. And he started

this organization that has been going on for about thirty years now. And so, they performed some of my music. And in 1998 — not '88 but '98, I was seventy-five. No, I was seventy. I can't keep [track] — my math isn't that good. But by 1998 they did a seventieth birthday concert for me, and Jane played half of my *Spectrum*, for piano, in that concert. And then, I had a concert in Carnegie Hall for my seventy-fifth birthday. That was in 2003, and we did some chamber music and a chamber concerto, various things, in Carnegie Hall. And, then, March 9th, 2008, for my eightieth year, North/South Consonance sponsored a concert in the Gilder Lehrman Recital Hall in the Morgan Library & Museum in New York City. And so, I had that. Then, of course, at UNCG I had an eightieth birthday concert on March 1st of that same year, when they did *Alma* and several other pieces here at UNCG. But North/South Consonance has been a big, big help and influence to me, because they not only have a concert series, but they have a record company. So, almost all of my recordings, CDs, have come out on their label. What happened was, Max Lifchitz, who is a very good pianist himself, had been asked to do a CD of American piano music by a company in Vienna called Vienna Modern Masters, and Max asked me did I have something he could put on this CD. And I sent him two pieces. And he decided he ... I sent six bagatelles, which are very early pieces, and then a set of nine piano pieces. He wanted to do them both on the CD. But the head of the record company said, "No, we can't have more than one piece for any single composer." And Max said, "But I want to do them both." She said, "Well, then form your own company." He did. And, so, he did these pieces on the debut CD of North/South recordings. And then,

ever since then I've had a lot of stuff on there. My discography shows that on my website. Incidentally, my website URL is www.haroldschiffman-composer.com. It's important to get the dash composer [. . . schiffman-composer] in there because there are a couple of other Harold Schiffmans that have Web sites. One of them is a mathematician, and the other one is a linguist. So, we had to get "composer" in there so people could find me.

HT: When your compositions are performed at these various places like Carnegie Hall, do you perform as well, or do you have —

HS: I didn't on those occasions. As a matter of fact, I really haven't performed much since the mid '70s. I used to play my own stuff. But other people play it better (laughing) so I don't get out there. I'd rather let Jane do it, and then other instrumentalists and so forth.

HT: So, did you have a say so in who plays your music at these events?

HS: Well, usually I do. But every now and then I don't. Every now and then — well, North/South Consonance has its own chamber orchestra.

HT: Oh, I see.

HS: And they are wonderful players. As a matter of fact just this past month, May 18th, they did a new piece of mine in New York. They perform at Christ and St. Stephen's Church on 69th Street in New York. I didn't go up for it, but I'm hoping it went okay. The piece they did was called *Serenata Concertante*. The players are so good that I wrote a piece in which every player had sort of a concerto-like part, soloistic part. But, then, they were also a chamber orchestra. So, we'll see how it came out.

HT: Well, what was it like being in Carnegie Hall. I've never been there, so.

HS: Well, we were not in the big hall. We were in the Weill Recital Hall . . .

HT: I see.

HS: Which is a smaller hall. I mean . . . we would have been lost in a big hall, because it was all chamber music . . . but Weill was very nice. The piano was not great. But the hall itself is very nice. And Jane played a chamber concerto for piano, string quartet and wind quintet in memoriam of Edward Kilenyi because when I was writing that piece, Edward Kilenyi died. And I thought it would be appropriate to dedicate it to his memory. And that's what I did. And, then, I had a set of songs called *Four Songs from "Peacock Pie"* which was for soprano and flute and piano. And Jane played on that with Gayle Seaton from Florida State University, and North/South Consonance flutist, Lisa Hansen who is a wonderful

flutist. So, that's what we had on that program. Also had a couple of arias from an opera that I've never written — never finished. And these were based on text from James Branch Cabell who is a long-forgotten now, but wonderful writer, from Richmond, Virginia. And I was going to write an opera on his novel, *Jurgen*, [*A Comedy of Justice*], which I never got finished. There was an overture. I finished an overture and these two arias, and the overture is on one of my recordings; and the two arias we did in Carnegie at the time.

HT: Did you know Peter Paul Fuchs, did you know him?

HS: I knew him, yes. I didn't really know him, but I knew who he was, yes.

HT: I think he's died recently.

HS: I think he has, too. I'm not sure. Like I say, I was not personally acquainted with him.

HT: I think you mentioned earlier about the School of Music here at UNCG performing a retrospective of your works?

HS: Yes.

HT: Twenty-five years of your —

HS: No, more than twenty-five.

HT: More than twenty-five.

HS: Yes. This was in March 1, 2008, and I was eighty during that year. I was eighty in August of that year. And this was really sort of like a birthday concert. They did in addition to *Alma* . . . they did my *Concertino*, for eleven saxophones — because there is a wonderful saxophone ensemble here. Jane played some piano pieces; my flute concertino was done; with Deborah Egkvist, who is the flutist here; (I had known her at Florida State. Of course, she got her doctorate [there].) So, that was on that program.

HT: Was that held at the School of Music?

HS: Yes, in recital hall.

HT: In recital hall?

HS: Yes. We had to cut down the size of the orchestra and the chorus a little bit because Aycock [Auditorium] was under renovation at the time, so we couldn't use Aycock. So, they did it in the recital hall. But it worked out fine in the recital hall.

HT: And had good turnout?

HS: Had a very good turnout, yes. Of course, I've got a lot of family here (laughing).

HT: Oh, gosh. We've already talked a little bit about your experiences in Hungary.
What about your other experiences throughout Europe?

HS: Well, my music has been performed in various places in Europe. I haven't always been there. But every now and then I — I'm a member of ASCAP [American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers], and every now and then I get an ASCAP statement that a piece . . . I get occasional performance royalties from France and I get some from Japan. I have a percussion piece that I wrote way back when I was . . . oh, I guess it was 1961. I wrote this piece for the percussion ensemble at Florida State University. And it got published by [G.] Schirmer, [Inc.] or by Associated [Music Publishers], but eventually Schirmer bought Associated. And one day I got a phone call from one of my former students who lived in Nashville, [Tennessee]; he said, "I just ran across a recording of your *Musica Battuta* in a record store here. It was recorded in Japan. Did you know about that?" And I said, "No, I didn't know about that." It was a Japanese group, Makato Aruga Percussion Ensemble had picked this [publication] up, and they recorded it. It was on an LP. And they recorded it, and the guy told me . . . gave me the phone number of the music store. He said, "I didn't have enough money to buy it." But he gave me the phone number of the music store. And I phoned

them and asked them to send it to me and gave them a credit card, you know?

And then I found another copy of the recording in New York City. It's never been recorded in the United States, but, apparently, that piece is very popular in Japan because I get performance royalties every year from the Japanese performances of it. Plus, I get a statement from Schirmer that they sell "so many" copies in Japan every year. So, I think the recording that these guys did was wonderful — I mean, the precision of their performance was just absolutely fantastic.

HT: So, have you ever been to Japan?

HS: Never been to Japan. I probably ought to go sometime and see what it's like.

But, as far as I know, that's the only piece of mine that gets done there, but it gets done frequently. And it — percussion players are always looking for new stuff to do. I ran into — there's a wonderful percussion group called Nexus, and I ran into them at a convention one time. And the guy saw my name tag, and he said, "Are you the composer of *Musica Battuta*?" And I said, "Yes, I am guilty. How did you know about that?" He [added], "We've played that I don't know how many times." He said, "That's a classic of the percussion literature." And so it's amazing how that gets around. But I wrote that in 1961. [Yet] I still collect royalties on it every year.

HT: I guess I want to ask you about the self-publishing, Andres —

HS: Andres Editions. Yeah.

HT: Tell me about that.

HS: It's not really a company. It's what's called a fictitious name filing. I worked it out with my attorney in Florida. And so, I have the right to use that name, Andres Editions. The way it came about is I live on Don Andres Avenue in Tallahassee. And that's how we thought up the name. . . . on the website there's an address and so forth. It's PO Box 3477, Tallahassee, Florida 32315 where people can order the music. If they want something of mine, they can get it through Andres Editions. It's self publishing, and I sell it at the cost of reproduction and postage. The whole idea is to get the music out.

HT: Has that been a good success?

HS: Yes, more or less. Almost every year I get a request or two on my website for it: for the music. And that's the way it works. But at least it gets it out there. And I've gotten a few takers.

HT: Well, good. Speaking of your website, did you design your website yourself, or did you have a —

HS: I have a fantastic webmaster. I should say webmistress, because she's a young woman. Actually, she's a computer programmer who works for the State of Florida. Well, for the State University System of Florida Board of Governors. And she's a fantastic programmer. The way we got in touch with her was [this]: Jane, my wife, is not only a fine pianist, but she's a musicologist who does Mozart research. She was setting up a database of her Mozart research, and needed a computer person to help her with it, and that's how she got in touch with Elsa Leslie. Elsa and her husband, Drew, and Jane and I have become really good friends. Elsa designed my website and manages it. Whenever there is something to be added to it, on the news page or something like that, I just e-mail it to Elsa, and she gets it all up on the site. She does a wonderful job. It's really an elaborate website.

HT: A very nice website.

HS: Yes, and it has sound clips on it. Her husband, Drew, is very good at making MP3 files and that sort of thing. So, he takes care of all the sound clips and so on. And then, there are links with all sorts of other sites including the Suwannee Banjo Camp, and various things, and North/South Recordings. If anybody wanted to get recordings of mine, they could click on my website, click on the link to North/South Recordings, and they can get the recordings from North/South directly at wholesale price rather than the retail price. And that is helpful. So, you know, I've had some very good friends who really support what I'm doing.

And Max Lifchitz is one of them, and David Zsolt Király in Hungary is one. I have just been very fortunate to have these very good friends who have the organizational skills and so forth and get my music known.

HT: Well, it sounds like it's gone all over the world now.

HS: Yes.

HT: Japan, Europe.

HS: Yes, it is pretty much.

HT: How about South America?

HS: Well, I think, yes, I've had some performances in South America, yes. I don't know of any — I haven't gotten any royalties, but I know I've had performances down there, and I've got some programs to prove it. But I'm trying to think whether there have been any — in places like Russia. I know there have been performances in Hungary. I think also in the Czech Republic, and Italy, I've had some performances there that I've known about. And I'm sure with the published pieces like [the] percussion ensemble piece, I don't always know when there's a performance — like I didn't know about the recording until my student found it. It was kind of interesting, because it was not supposed to be available in the

United States, that Japanese recording. But I found two copies of it in the US, both of which I have (laughing).

HT: Oh, gosh. And, I'm sure LP recordings are probably on the way out because everything is on CD now.

HS: That's right. And forgotten. And none of my LPs have been redone on CD.

HT: On CD.

HS: Now, there was a recording of the 'cello concerto on LP, and there is a recording of it on CD, but it is a different performance, different 'cellist, different orchestra. The one that is on CD was done by a Hungarian 'cellist with the Győr Philharmonic. And the one that's on LP was done by the late Roger Drinkall, who was a colleague of mine at Florida State. It was for him that I had written the concerto. He did it with the Florida State University Philharmonia. There are a few things that are on LP that are available from me if anybody ever wanted them, because I have a stash of those LP recordings still. But the newer, especially in the case of the 'cello concerto, not only is the performance better, but the recording technology is better, too, yes.

HT: So, you think these CD, the quality of the recording on the CD is comparable to the LP quality?

HS: Oh, it's better.

HT: Was it that much better?

HS: It's better. The quality of both the recording and the performance is better. But also on that same LP, though, is a piece for solo cello that has not been recorded separately. So that's the only available recording of that. Then on LP also there's a chamber concertino for piano and double wind quintet. And that's on a . . . it was on a recording [made by and] for Florida State University. And I don't think they have any more copies of it. But I have a bunch.

HT: Well, tell me something about the Egon Wellesz collection.

HS: That's an interesting story.

HT: How did that come about?

HS: Well, the late Albi Rosenthal was a famous bookseller in Oxford [England] and London, and he was a big help to Jane in her Mozart research. He died a few years ago. But his daughter, Julia Rosenthal, whom we got to know on a trip to Oxford years ago, she took over the company [Otto Haas]. And she had in the [Otto Haas] catalog some things by [Egon] Wellesz. Jane knew that I was very interested in the Schoenberg School, and Wellesz was an early Schoenberg pupil,

who had to get out of Austria when the Nazis took power. So, he went to England where he already had an honorary doctorate or honorary position at Oxford, taught there the rest of his life. But, anyhow, Albi Rosenthal had quite a collection in his own library of Wellesz's own personal collection. Wellesz died some years ago before Albi Rosenthal did. [Jane was looking for something for a birthday present for me. And when she saw a particular piece in the Otto Haas catalog, she got in touch with Julia about that. So Jane gave me, from the Wellesz collection *Opus 22* orchestra songs of Schoenberg. It had Wellesz's nameplate in the — the Wellesz bookplate — in the publication. Then Julia said, "Well, you know, we have a whole collection of Wellesz's library, and I would like to get it into an American library, because if it went into a European library it would just be lost, because they have so many of these same sorts of things." [Thus] she indicated that she would like to get it into an American music library, an American university library, or something like that where it would have a prominent place, with the idea and the hope that eventually people will perform this music. Wellesz was very famous as a musicologist — he was a specialist in Byzantine music — but he was also a fine composer who wrote operas and all sorts of things — and he was a Schoenberg pupil. So, Julia approached us about this collection and wondered if we knew some appropriate university in which to place it. And the price was very reasonable for this collection — I mean considering the quality of the materials that were there. So, I said, "Let's just buy it and give it to UNCG." And we did. That's how that happened. We bought it, and Julia shipped it to us. And we brought it up here from Tallahassee. And that's

how that came about. The library people — well, you people over at the library are wonderful. They had a wonderful ceremony to set up the Wellesz collection, to establish that and my archive at the same time. And I wanted — Greensboro is my hometown, and I've known UNCG back when it was a woman's college. I used to come out here all the time. John Deal likes to tease me about it. But I really did come out to hear music and to study. I studied composition a little bit with a composer on the faculty at Woman's College, Elliot Weisgarber, who died a few years ago. So I spent a lot of time out here. And I thought, "Well, UNCG has been good to me. This is the place to do it." And the place for my archive, and it was the place for the Wellesz collection. And that's how it came about.

HT: Wellesz was German?

HS: He was Viennese.

HT: Viennese.

HS: Actually, it's a Hungarian name. So, he was Viennese, but of Hungarian descent. Of course, in his day Austria-Hungary was Austria-Hungary, [not Austria and Hungary.] So, it was all one country. It was one empire. But Wellesz is a Hungarian name. I met him once when I was at Princeton studying with Sessions. He came and gave a lecture on Byzantine music. And I went to the lecture, and it was the only time I ever met him. But he, along with Alban Berg, and Anton

Webern, were the early Schoenberg School, and what's called the Second Viennese School. But it was the early Schoenberg School. There are some wonderful things in that collection. For example, there's a proof copy of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* with Berg's notations in there about corrections to make. It was a proof copy. And, then, there are several Schoenberg things, including a Gurre-Lieder score with Schoenberg's signature on it. And various really —

HT: So, Wellesz was a publisher?

HS: He was a composer as well as a musicologist.

HT: Okay.

HS: He thought of himself, primarily, as a composer. And until he went to Oxford he was known in Vienna, had quite a bit of success as an opera composer. But wrote lots of other things, too. I think there are eight or nine symphonies. And a lot of other music. But, then, once he got to Oxford he sort of stopped composing for awhile and just concentrated on musicology. But, then, he got going again composing. And so, a good composer, solid, very solid composer. So, there are some marvelous items in that collection, some [Gustav] Mahler, and some [Claude] Debussy scores, a little bit of [Maurice] Ravel — only one or two pieces of Wellesz himself. And there was a string quartet. But it was mainly things that he had collected that are in there.

HT: And it was probably annotated and that sort of thing.

HS: Yes, some of them are annotated, yes.

HT: And what do you hope will come of this particular collection?

HS: Well, I hope it gets used and, especially, once it's digitized on the Web, it will be known. Julia Rosenthal was just ecstatic about the way the people in the archives section had just handled it. It's just beautiful. And I get updates occasionally, and I pass them on to Julia. She's very happy with the way this all turned out. Because this is what she really wanted. She's been saying — "I keep running across . . ." She had to sell the house in Oxford, because she moved entirely into London. She's been going through some of the stuff [from Oxford], and she's finding other pieces that she says she'll send eventually to go into that [UNCG] archive. And so, that's great. She [even] added a few things at no charge later on when she came. And she had a very good time here, too.

HT: So, she's been here?

HS: She came for the dedication ceremony. Yes, she came for three or four days. And she met the library people, went through the archives and saw how it was being set up and everything. She is trying to find something: Bill Finley had an item of which there were two volumes, and he could only get one volume. She

promised him she would hunt and search and see if she could find the other volume for him. I don't know if she ever did or not. But they were in contact quite a bit. So, that was good. I first met him — this is interesting, too.

HT: Mr. Wellesz?

HS: No, Mr. Bill Finley.

HT: Bill Finley.

HS: What happened was, my 'cello teacher at Chapel Hill ended up living in France. And she was a UNCG alum, well; actually it was when it was Woman's College. I think she graduated in 1944, or something like that. And she was living in France, and she got in touch with me and wanted me to write a piece for John Fadial and his wife. John was on the faculty here for awhile. And his wife was a 'cellist. He was a violinist. This was before they were here, but Emily Porter had got in touch with him through something in Nancy, France. And so, I wrote the piece, and they played it over there. And, then, Jane and I were going to Europe in 1996, and we thought we would go and visit Emily. Well, what happened was this: back in 1944 when she was a student here; she had some correspondence with Artur Rodzinski. At the time he was the conductor of the Cleveland Symphony. And Randal Thompson, whom I met here, and [with whom] I wanted to study at UVA (University of Virginia) . . . and she [Emily Porter] had a letter

from each of them that they had written her when she was a student here. She knew she was dying of cancer, and she wanted something — she wanted a safe haven for these letters. So, she gave them to me. And I thought, “Well, they really belong in the UNCG archives, or the Jackson Library somewhere.” Art Tollefson was the dean of the music school at the time. So, I called Art, and I said, “I’ve got these two letters, and I think they belong in the Jackson Library somewhere.” And, so, he got me in touch with Bill Finley. That’s how I first met Bill, and I gave Bill these two letters. One of them was very interesting, because in 1944 the Cleveland Symphony came and Emily was one of a number of students who wanted instead of the Beethoven *Fifth* on the program — [a Shostakovitch symphony.]

[Recorder turned off and back on again]

HT: You were talking about —

HS: Emily Porter. And, anyhow, she gave me these letters, and I gave them to Bill Finley, and they went into Jackson Library. Possibly, maybe in the ‘cello collection or somewhere like that. And, then, of course, Bill wrote her a letter, a very nice letter thanking her for them. That’s how I first met him.

HT: Okay.

HS: At that time. So, I've known him ever since.

HT: Well, tell me about the Harold Schiffman High School Composition Competition.

HS: Okay. That came about — I don't know if you remember Nancy Shane?

HT: Yes.

HS: She was the development officer for the School of Music at the time. She came up with that idea. And she found an anonymous donor who put up the money to get that started as an endowment. And, then, ever since then Jane and I have continued to contribute to it, because it's underwater right now. The endowment is underwater. So, I've been pumping in a little bit of money so the award could be made every year. But it's for — the idea is for high school students (any high school in the United States, it doesn't have to be in North Carolina) who are composers, and they apply for this scholarship. And, then, they have to commit to coming to UNCG and majoring in composition. So, it's for an incoming freshman. But they have to be a high school graduate somewhere in the United States. They apply for it. And they've had some — I met the very first recipient. But they tell me every year they have better and better applicants.

HT: It's amazing.

HS: It's good.

HT: It's wonderful.

HS: So, as long as we keep that award going. But that's how that came about. Nancy thought it up. She said, "Well, they really need this." And she found a donor to get it started. Then we sort of help it along as needed.

HT: That's great. Well, Harold, we have talked about a variety of things this morning. Is there anything that you would like to add that I haven't asked? I'm sure there probably is.

HS: Well, I'm looking to see. I made some notes, and I think we've covered just about everything that — oh, you asked me about my military service, and one of your questions was where I had served. And, of course, I was in Germany in the army. But I was inducted at the Presidio, [California] in San Francisco, because that was right after — I was still in Berkeley. I did my basic training at Fort Ord, in California, and in fact that's the only thing, I think, that I had not mentioned that I had in my notes. And I don't know if it's all that important. That's where I was when I went into the service. I remember that they'd get us up at five o'clock in the morning to go out to the rifle range to fire. And, then, we had to wait until eight or nine o'clock for the fog to lift so we could see the targets.

HT: Well, I understand the Presidio has been turned into — the army is giving it up.

HS: The army is giving it up, yes. But it had a wonderful golf course there, and that's still there. So, I guess it's a municipal golf course now.

HT: Probably is.

HS: But they had a golf course there for the troops to play. There was an old saying in the army, "Excellence in golf is a sign of a misplaced military career."

HT: Well, thank you so much. It's been a wonderful to hear all those stories, yes.

HS: It's a pleasure.

HT: Again, thanks so much.

[Recorder turned off]

[End of interview]

Dr. Schiffman requested the following information be added to the interview

HS: [During World War II, there was an army base in Greensboro called BTC10 (Basic Training Camp). It was on East Bessemer Avenue. There were many

professional musicians stationed there because Glenn Miller had recruited them to form units to entertain the troops. But Miller was killed in a plane crash, and the musicians remained at the camp for much of the war. My mother invited many of them to our house for dinner on weekends; they were very nice to me, and encouraged my efforts at composition. In fact, I would find out who was coming at specific times and write pieces for them to play. So very often I got to hear my music right away. One of the musicians was violinist Elliott Magaziner who actually gave me harmony lessons. After the war, he came back to Greensboro and gave a concert in what later became the Brown Music Building; he included a piece of mine — *Passacaglia in B Minor* for Violin (1947). The score of that piece is lost. Other musicians who came to the house were violinist Felix Galimir and pianist Eugene Helmer. This was an important influence on my development as a composer. Further, I recall a symphonic band from the camp gave weekly concerts that I frequently attended. I was about fourteen years old at the time.]