**Transcription: Harold Berman**

*Good morning. Today is Tuesday, November 18, 2014. My name is James Crabtree, and this morning I'll be interviewing Mr. Harold Berman. This interview is being conducted in support of the Texas Veterans Land Board's Voices of Veterans Oral History Program. I'm at the General Land Office building in Austin, Texas, and Mr. Berman is at his work address in Dallas, Texas. Sir, thank you very much for taking the time to talk to us. It's an honor for our program.*

**Harold Berman:** Glad to do it.

*Yes sir. Sir, the first question that I always start with is please tell us a little bit about your childhood and your life before you went into the military.*

**Harold Berman:** I was born in west Texas. I grew up in Colorado City, Texas, born actually in Sweetwater because Colorado City didn't have a hospital at the time but my parents were in business there. I graduated high school in Colorado City and went from there to The University of Texas.

*How old were you when you went to The University of Texas?*

**Harold Berman:** When I first went down there, I was 15 years old.

*Fifteen.*

**Harold Berman:** I turned 16 shortly after I got there.

*How was it that you were able to graduate high school so early?*

**Harold Berman:** Well, first I skipped a grade. They moved from 11-grade system to a 12-grade system so they moved me up, and then I started early. I started when I was five, so I graduated early and been that way all my life, thank goodness.

*Were you an only child or did you have siblings?*

**Harold Berman:** No, I have two brothers. They're twins. They're younger brothers. Both have been in the military. Both were medical officers. They are both cardiovascular surgeons. They're twins.

*So when you went to UT at 15, soon to be 16, what was that like for you, being so young and being away from home?*

**Harold Berman:** You gotta remember this was 1942, James. This was war, and I went down in the summer of '42 because, you know, at that time the school was starting a program where they went all year round. I'm not sure they started in '42 but I went down early because I remember celebrating my birthday in Austin, and it was . . . The student body was around 20,000 at the time when I got there in 1942. But by the fall of, let's see, I guess it was the spring of '43, spring semester at the university or in the spring, the reserves were called out, both for the Navy and the Army, and the male population of the school was drained. It went from 20,000 to 10,000 overnight, and I happened to be one of the 10,000 left. Ninety-five percent were female, and the

rest of us were either returning servicemen who had been injured in the war or those who were not qualified and underage like me.

*What did it feel like to be in a school when the war's going on? Did you feel fortunate or did you feel like you were missing out?*

**Harold Berman:** I feel I missed some of my school life. I was very active in my college fraternity. I have been for over 70 years, and I see what peacetime university life is like, and I think I kind of got cheated a little bit but we did have a very good period of time while I was there. Although it was wartime, it was, still we carried on as normal as we could. But they rushed me on my education. It seemed like I was constantly learning something new.

*I understand, sir, you mentioned your fraternity. I was told that you started your fraternity. Is that right?*

**Harold Berman:** Well, I didn't start it. Actually the fraternity I joined, Alpha Epsilon Pi, had been, came to the campus in 1939. I got there in 1942, so I was there a couple years after they had been created although when they called out the reserves, my fraternity went down to five men. There were only five of us left.

*Out of how many was it before?*

**Harold Berman:** About 40 or 45.

*So a drastic decrease.*

**Harold Berman:** So five of us were left and we very fortunately got a house there in Austin on 710 West 21st Street, and we pledged 15 more and when I left there when I got drafted in '44, we were up to about 40 men again.

*Okay, so you mentioned being drafted in 1944, and I understand at that point you were in UT Law School. Is that correct?*

**Harold Berman:** Yeah, I'd already . . . I was on a combination program, BA-LLB, and by the time I became 18, I was already in Texas Law School in my first semester, and I got drafted during that first semester. They pulled me out. I think I got credit for it because I had passed the halfway mark.

*So obviously at that point, it wasn't like in Vietnam where those who were in college could get student deferments? You didn't have that choice.*

**Harold Berman:** No, not at that time in the war effort. After Pearl Harbor things were different. You didn't get student deferments, and even the ROTC units there were being called out even before they got finished with their college work. So it was a real tense time. We were fighting a real big war, and they needed all the manpower they could get.

*When you got drafted, how long was it before you had to report for service?*

**Harold Berman:** I turned 18 in June of 1944, and in September I was in uniform.

*Where did they send you to first?*

**Harold Berman:** Well, first I got drafted out of Colorado City. Let me tell you why I got drafted.

*Sure.*

**Harold Berman:** I had a very wise father, and I actually was concerned about my service so I had a long talk with him about volunteering and joining, you know, the service of my choice which would have been the Navy, of course, because the Navy we felt was a lot easier than the Army. But he very wisely told me, he says, "Look," he says, "You're not a career military man. Make 'em draft you because when they draft you, they have to let you out when the war is over." And he was absolutely correct. That's the way it turned out. I got out of the Army while some of my cohorts were still there, so I waited to be drafted. We were in a small town so he knew exactly that I was going, when I was going and everything. They let him know and so as soon as I turned 18, I had a physical I think the same week, and as soon as I qualified, they told me exactly when I would be leaving.

*And they told you you're going in the Army.*

**Harold Berman:** Yeah, I was drafted into the Army, right. Reported here in Dallas for a short time, and then was shipped to Fort Sam Houston.

*Okay. What were your memories, sir, of basic training in San Antonio?*

**Harold Berman:** Vivid. At Fort Sam . . . Well, let me tell you a little incident that occurred there that kind of leads into what happened to me. At Fort Sam, there was a classification center, and after we took all the tests and did everything we had to do, I was going through the interview process. By the luck of the draw, I drew an old Army sergeant. He was a master sergeant, and had stripes up his arm. He had been in the Army forever, and after he looked at my deal, he looked at me and he says, "How would you like to go back to school?" And I said, "Oh, I'd love that." He said, "What would you like to study?" I said, "Law." He laughed. He says, "We make dishwashers out of lawyers in the Army." And that's the only thing he ever said. He looked under his blotter, looked at something and then marked down, and "Excuse me." So I, very elated, called my family and told them what happened, and I said, "I may have a chance to go back to school." Well, it turned out instead of going back to school, I was sent to Camp Hood into an infantry replacement battalion where they were training us to be replacements for those members of the infantry who were either wounded or killed previously. So I went through an infantry basic, and it was vivid. I mean, it was Camp Hood. I remember the mud and the live tracer bullets above my head. I'll say one thing. I had a fantastic what started out to be 18 weeks. They shortened it to 15 weeks because of the Battle of the Bulge. Things looked bad and they needed people quick, so they shortened it to 15 weeks, and in that 15 weeks, I came out, I was a man, I tell you. I dropped about 20 pounds and you could hit me in the stomach and I wouldn't budge. They really . . . It was a wonderful experience when I look back on it now. While I was doing it, it was hell.

*I'm sure.*

**Harold Berman:** But it turned out. But now I'll tell you what happened to me.

*Okay, please do.*

**Harold Berman:** I finished my basic, and they issued orders for everyone in the unit. By that time the Battle of the Bulge had been solved, and they were shipping people to the Pacific. So everyone in my battalion but two of us, one other and me, received orders to report to the west coast for POE, port of embarkation, to the Pacific. The other man and I were called out. He was sent to Texas A&M where he . . . I don't know what happened to him. I've lost track with him but he was sent to A&M, and I was sent to the University of Chicago to go into a Japanese program. It was an experimental program that they had devised and had contracted with the University of Chicago to put on. They had a language program, Japanese language program at Yale but that had been in effect, and they commissioned everyone that went through that or went to that. They got a commission either in the Army or the Navy depending on what branch of service they were in, but this University of Chicago thing was a experimental deal. I'm sure they were planning for this invasion of Japan, and they were trying to get a group of Army people who might be used for interpreters or translators. So when I got there, when I arrived at the University of Chicago which was, I think, in what was about the first of the year. It was the beginning of the university semester in the fall of, winter of 1945. I found myself there with a group of about, I think there were a hundred of us altogether. All of us came out of the Army. All of us were privates. None of us got any sort of commission out of that, and we were all put into a program, intense program to learn the Japanese language and culture and etcetera. And after about six months of that, they broke off the group and they put 30 of us into language, into reading and writing, and the others stuck with speech.

*Do you think, sir, you were picked because you had gone though some aptitude tests that showed you had a potential ability to do well with the language?*

**Harold Berman:** Well, as I look back on it now, it must have been because I had an experience in basic training at Camp Hood, they interviewed for OCS, and I volunteered to go that interview. When I got there, they looked at me and they said, "No, you're not eligible," and sent me out. I couldn't figure that out 'cause I didn't know anything about this language program at the time but now as I look back on it, I assume that I'd already been selected for that program. They just, you know, rejected me for that interview but I didn't know anything about it until I finished basic. Quite a surprise.

*I'm sure it was because everybody else is getting shipped other places and you get sent to University of Chicago.*

**Harold Berman:** Actually the training captain we had there at Camp Hood was so upset with the two of us that got pulled out that he put us in . . . I was on three weeks of KP duty while I waited to go to Chicago. And he kind of kept us incognito. I couldn't reach my family.

*That's not good.*

**Harold Berman:** And when I got to Chicago, the Red Cross was there looking for me. My family got worried about me.

*Sure, and KP duty is no treat either so . . .*

**Harold Berman:** Anyway, it was a good . . . It turned out that was a wonderful thing because a lot of those guys that were in that group . . . I ran into after the war one of them, a guy named Best, Gordon Best. We shared a bunk bed. He became postmaster in a city in Nebraska, and he

came here to Dallas for a postmaster convention, and he looked up Berman and he found me, and he called me. He had gone to the Pacific and he told me that about 40 percent of our group was either wounded or killed in that group, so I just lucked out. I really lucked out.

*What was it like at the University of Chicago? Tell us about that.*

**Harold Berman:** We were students. We had Japanese instructors most of who had been in the camps, you know. They had these relocation camps for the Japanese and they brought these people out. Most of them are university professors, and they came out to teach us the language. We still had an Army program for physical education but it was done by a member of the staff of the University of Chicago who was probably worse than my drill sergeant at Camp Hood. He was so rough with us. I guess he wanted to keep us in good shape. So we were in the dormitory across the street from Stagg Field which was their football stadium when they played football. They no longer played football when we got there. But it turned out, Stagg Field was where they first split the atom.

*That's right. They did that in secret, right?*

**Harold Berman:** Right. We thought it was a weather station. We were doing our physical exercise in the Stagg Field, and I thought it was kind of strange to have all these guards around a weather station. They floated up a weather balloon every day. We saw it every day, but we had no idea what it was until later on when they did split the atom and revealed that's where they did it.

*That's amazing.*

**Harold Berman:** But that's where we did our physical education and we did all of our classroom work in classrooms of the University of Chicago. Our mess hall, we were at the student union. They kind of sectioned off part of the deal and served us our food, our meals. But we were there when the war in Europe ended, and we knew. They put out these training films, you know, trying to keep up the morale because everybody was going to the Pacific. So I remember going to these training films concerning our real enemy is Japan which really, it confused us. Well, it didn't confuse us. We knew the enemy was Japan but part of our course was to teach us the culture of Japan. And I had a real soft spot in my heart for these Japanese Nisei that were teaching us. You know, they were all American citizens, most of them, and they were treated very poorly during the war. So we had a weak spot, all of us did, for the Nisei who were our teachers but we were all convinced that we were gonna be in a real fight in the war.

*Where did the Japanese-American professors . . . Where did they live? Were they allowed to live on the campus or were they kept guarded?*

**Harold Berman:** I don't know for sure. I think they were part of the faculty. They were under contract with the University of Chicago to supply the government that course, so I'm sure they had their own . . . They weren't encamped anymore. They were free to go.

*How did you like the language? Did you feel like you were picking it up pretty quickly?*

**Harold Berman:** What, the Japanese language?

*Yes sir.*

**Harold Berman:** I didn't. There were some in our group that . . . There were two soldiers in our group who were speaking it fluently within three weeks.

*That's amazing.*

**Harold Berman:** And they were also in my reading and writing group. They were writing it fluently in another few weeks. But the rest of us, we struggled with it. We helped each other. We were able to carry on a pretty good conversation. When I eventually got to Japan, I found out I could use it kind of like my broken Spanish around here, but I had a little trouble 'cause I had so much Spanish in high school and college, and it confused me. I got mixed up in my languages but someone told me I was speaking Japanese with a Spanish accent.

*When was it that you had a chance to go to Japan?*

**Harold Berman:** Well, after Chicago we were sent to a POE at Camp Stoneman near San Francisco, and by that time, right about that time they dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, and everything changed. You know, the war with Japan ended shortly after that, and at the POE they put us into a training program for censorship. This was just my group, just 30 men. The rest of them had already been shipped overseas. They were already . . . I ran into one of them in law school later. He was in one of the islands in the Pacific when they dropped the atomic bomb so he was already in active duty with a combat unit. But the reading and writing people, we were apparently going to have a special deal, and when they dropped the atomic bomb, it all changed. So at Camp Stoneman they started a training program for us in censorship so we were doing censor work, and our cadre there, you know, were Regular Army people. Well, I would say that. My sergeant there was a lawyer from Houston. But we went through this for three months and then they got us ready to ship out for various units. So after three months I was shipped to Japan. I was alone. I was carrying my own orders. How that came about, I'll never know but everyone else was shipped out and then I was sitting there, and they handed me orders and I was put on a troop ship carrying my own orders, and I ended up in Tokyo but I landed in Yokohama.

*So this was after the war, approximately three or four months after the Japanese surrender.*

**Harold Berman:** Yeah, actually when I got to Tokyo they were still pulling dead bodies out of the debris there. They bombed the hell out of Tokyo. But MacArthur had spared what he wanted for his headquarters and for all of his support staff, and also for the Ginza. He wanted to make sure that the Ginza was spared. That's the Times Square of Tokyo or was at that time. But anyway, I went into a unit called the Allied Translator and Interpreter Service. I was the only Caucasian enlisted man in that group. All the other enlisted men were Nisei, and we were attached to MacArthur's military government headquarters. His office, his headquarters was the Dai-ichi building which was next door or about half a block away from where we were.

*How did the Japanese civilians treat you?*

**Harold Berman:** The Japanese civilians?

*Yes sir.*

**Harold Berman:** Scared to death of the soldier. You know, with our uniform, walked down the street, they would move across the street because the Air Force bombed the hell out of Tokyo, and they were just afraid as they could be. Now I was fortunate because everyone I was billeted with were these Nisei Japanese, and they had relatives in Japan and I had the good fortune of visiting a lot of their relatives. I'd go out with them every weekend and we'd visit in these various spots where very few soldiers got to. When we got there, we took off our shoes and uniforms and put on kimonos and really blended in. But that was very fortunate. The war crime trials were going on and my outfit was supplying interpreters and translators for the war crimes deal, and I got to attend that. I wasn't on the . . . I didn't do the work. I was sitting in the gallery as a spectator but I did get to go there almost the whole time because I was sort of an oddball. They didn't know what to do with me. I wasn't an officer, I was a private. I hadn't even gotten my first stripe. It took an act of congress to get the first stripe. After two years they had to give me my first stripe which I never got sewn on, by the way. But all the other Caucasian language guys were graduates of the Yale school, and they were all commissioned. We were all together. The language group, the commissioned, stayed with us. They billeted in the same place we were. They had a little separate section but they used the same PX we used, and I spent a lot of my time with those guys. When I eventually went home, they gave me a roast. I won't tell you what they called me but I was going home and they were having to serve out the balance of their contract, you know, their commission. They were not happy.

*So how long ultimately did you end up spending in Japan?*

**Harold Berman:** How long was I there?

*Yes sir.*

**Harold Berman:** About six months, a little over six months. By that time I had already served my two years, and as my dad said, they had to let me go and so I had enough points and so I was the only one in the unit actually that left. I came back alone carrying my own orders on another troop ship. But it was . . . I sorta kinda had my own little excursion to Japan.

*Yes sir, it sounds like it. Did you ever have a chance to see General MacArthur being as close as you were to the headquarters?*

**Harold Berman:** I never met him personally. I saw him several times. I learned a lesson, James. The first time I was there, I was walking down the street and all of a sudden I realized I was surrounded by MPs, and they gathered up a crowd at the front of the Dai-ichi building because he liked to have a group there to cheer him when he walked in. So I was there. After that I was very careful not to be on the street around 10 o'clock in the morning because we'd be gathered up and have to stand there for 30 minutes waiting for him to come in.

*That's crazy.*

**Harold Berman:** I did have, as part of the deal, we did have a relationship with the Dai-ichi group, and as an enlisted man, I was friendly with most of their enlisted men who were . . . Most of them were sergeants who were working for generals. There's a movie out. I don't know if you've seen it or not, called "The Emperor."

*No, I've not.*

**Harold Berman:** Tommy Lee Jones plays MacArthur in it.

*Okay.*

**Harold Berman:** But that is exactly a depiction of what was going on when I was there. They have almost an exact replica of the Dai-ichi building in the movie, and they had a translator who had to be with our unit 'cause we had all the translators who were working with a brigadier general in MacArthur's group, and they were trying to decide whether or not the emperor was a war criminal or not. That was the story line. But that's exactly what we were doing. We were involved in that. Just recently one of my friends asked me to Google ATIS, Allied Translator and Interpreter Service, and I did and I didn't realize it until then that it was a spy unit, counterintelligence unit that MacArthur had formed some time ago, and apparently when he went into military government into Japan, he took all of the translators, interpreters who were involved in that counterintelligence and formed that support unit for language services for both the war crime trials. I know they opened up all of his mail. He got tons of mail from the Japanese citizens, MacArthur did, and my group opened up everything he got and translated it for him. He got a lot of gifts and they cataloged those for him. So it was really a support outfit for MacArthur's headquarters. There were generals all over the place.

*Sure, because he was the commander of . . .*

**Harold Berman:** The emperor had this one-star general there and I started thinking that general was commonplace there. Of course, we always went to attention every time we saw one and gave him a salute but they got to be fairly commonplace even in our mess hall. We were quartered in an office building that used to be the headquarters of the Japanese steamship company, and actually their chefs, you know, all these cruise ships were chefs in our mess hall. We had separate sections for the enlisted men and the officers but we were all the same floor, and we visited each other and we ate with each other but every time a brigadier general came up there, they were quite often because we had great food, better food than they had.

*Not bad.*

**Harold Berman:** We had all these gourmet chefs there. I gained 20 pounds in that six months. I mean I never ate like that in my life. Rice and ice cream mostly. But I came back, I was fat as I could be. Took me forever to lose that weight. Now I got it all back. But anyway, that's the extent. I was there about six months, came back. I can't remember, I know I landed in San Francisco but I can't remember . . . I think I was put immediately on leave and I came home. And then later on I was discharged at Fort Sam again I believe. But I came home in the fall of 1946. It was the middle of the semester at the university and I was anxious to get back into law school. So I was prepared to get back in their law school in the spring of 1947, but during that time my mother . . . You have to know my mother. My mother said I was going to be a lawyer, and my brothers were gonna be doctors when we were born. We had no other choice. But my mother insisted, well, she suggested, I should say, that I should see if I could get into Harvard Law School since I couldn't get into Texas until the next spring. So I applied for Harvard Law School in the fall of 1946, and I got a conditional acceptance on the basis I had to have an undergraduate degree and I had to have grades, top grades. They gave me those two conditions. Well, I went back and I discovered that with the credits I had before I went into the Army, and they gave me credit for the Japanese study at the University of Chicago, that I could get my B.A.

degree in one semester from The University of Texas if I took something like, I think, 18 hours. And so I undertook to do that and I entered the undergraduate school in the winter semester, I guess spring semester, excuse me, of 1947, and I got my undergraduate degree after that one semester, and then I was able to go to law school the following September.

*At Harvard?*

**Harold Berman:** Went to Harvard, yeah.

*That's great.*

**Harold Berman:** On the GI Bill.

*Yes sir.*

**Harold Berman:** Thank God.

*Which was something that came about after the war, correct?*

**Harold Berman:** No, actually it was already in effect there, and that's why I find it so difficult now to understand. My wife's involved in helping female veterans. She has a nonprofit that deals with female, and they have so many homeless people, and unable to get their benefits. I found that very difficult to understand but I now know that's true. I had no problem. They treated us like heaven. I mean, we were truly returning warriors in World War II. They treated us just like, as good as you could be treated. They paid my tuition to Harvard Law which at that time was about maybe 12 hundred dollars a year which was a lot more than Texas. And got an allowance so I could go to school there. It's just . . . The whole thing, I look back on it now and it just felt like I was treated like a real hero, and they really took care of me for that little sacrifice, you know, those two years I spent in service. But that's the extent of mine. My brother, Irwin, served in the Army. Well, that's different. I won't get into that but anyway, he bought me a World War II hat just recently, sent it to me, and it has ribbons on it, you know. He had ribbon World War II, overseas World War II, and he had a good conduct medal. He said, "I just assumed you got that." I think I did get it, I don't know. My military service was so convoluted, you know, with that going to the university and so forth, and not really being attached to any unit. After the service, I was carrying my own orders wherever I went.

*You definitely had a unique perspective, unique experience that probably few others had a chance to have.*

**Harold Berman:** Yeah, it's a little different.

*Yes sir. Then I guess at some point you ended up coming back to Texas, is that right? To the state? After you graduated from Harvard, did you come back to Texas?*

**Harold Berman:** Oh, yeah, immediately I came back in 1950, got married. Married a Dallas girl that I had been engaged to for eight years. We started my practice. I've been practicing here now, I'm in my 64th year.

*That's great. And I understand you're still involved with your old University of Texas fraternity as well.*

**Harold Berman:** Oh, yeah. When I got back here in 1946 before I got back in The University of Texas, my two brothers were in Austin. They were at The University of Texas, and they had joined my fraternity so when I came back that semester I became active and I was able to live in the same place that they lived so we were together for one semester. And they went on to medical school.

*That's great.*

**Harold Berman:** But I came back and was active, and all the time I was in Harvard Law School, they had me traveling all over. You know, we had chapters up in the east and I used to make a lot of those chapters. I wasn't official. I was a volunteer but we had an executive director who knew where I was, and he had me going all over. I went to Tufts, BU, MIT, Rhode Island, NYU. I was all over there. So I got real active in the fraternity, and then later on after I graduated law school I began working in national and then I became the supreme master national president in 19, I think, '68 or '69 is when I served. So I've been very active with them for practically the whole time.

*Do you still have any family out in west Texas?*

**Harold Berman:** No, my . . . You know, my brothers and I inherited some property from my dad, and we love the little town. We go out there quite frequently. In fact, we had a reunion out there last June but all of our family is gone. All of our cousins. My dad had two brothers who also lived there, and so we had a lot of cousins but they've all moved out. They don't even know the Berman . . . Well, we're in the museum. They have a Berman exhibit in the museum. My dad was the mayor out there for a couple terms.

*What was the name of the town you were from?*

**Harold Berman:** Well, we call it Colorado City, it's Colorado City.

*You pronounce it "Coloraydo?"*

**Harold Berman:** That's the way I pronounced it.

*Well, if that's how they pronounced it . . . I never knew that. I know where Colorado City is but I never knew it was pronounced "Coloraydo."*

**Harold Berman:** Well, all the locals, we always said Coloraydo City so we knew who was local and who wasn't.

*That's probably why it was done that way.*

**Harold Berman:** But it's still there. I get the paper, and the mayor of the town is a good friend so he keeps me posted.

*That's great.*

**Harold Berman:** It's something I'll never forget. That was a wonderful upbringing. We lucked out. We had great schooling. We had a great education, and all of us graduated from the same high school, had fantastic teachers. Both of my brothers, they were Mayo trained and they are

cardiovascular surgeons. They're both retired now but they were three years younger than I was. They were unbelievable doctors and we all started out in that little town.

*That's great. That's a good story.*

**Harold Berman:** Actually in my high school class, we were just talking about that. Most of them are gone now of course, but I had . . . There were two lawyers. There's 86 people now. There were two lawyers, one internist who became president of the American Heart Association, and one publisher who owned every publishing house and trade magazine in the country. He was a journalist. And then one scientist who . . . We heard him make a speech on the tin can, how he invented the tin can, but he worked for Kaiser Aluminum. He was in their development department. But that's all out of a little class, in this small town high school, about five thousand people but we had wonderful teachers. Wonderful teachers. I don't know what they have now but what surprises me, the school is smaller now than it was when we were there. We thought it was small. I had 86 in my class, and my brothers had, I think, a little bit more in their class, and my cousins I think even more than that. So it was growing then.

*I think that's true. I think a lot of . . . Even as the state has grown, there's a lot of rural towns that have gotten smaller. More people have moved to the big cities and suburbs, and you've seen a decrease in some of those smaller communities.*

**Harold Berman:** Where are you from?

*I'm from Austin, sir. I went to high school, and I went to The University of Texas as well so that's why I like hearing the stories about UT that you told.*

**Harold Berman:** Well, I still wear my UT ring. I never regretted going to Harvard Law School but it's changed. I wouldn't let my children go there now. First place, we were in the last class where it was all male, and I hate to say this but it's now 50 percent female and a hundred percent changed. I just . . . I went back there for many reunions over the years and we all agree, everybody in my class agreed, it's just not the same. So I know I had a daughter and some stepchildren, and we tried to get them to go to The University of Texas. I did get my sons to go there but I never got my daughter to go there. She went to A&M to spite me. And another daughter went to SMU, but when they mentioned going above the Mason-Dixon Line, I just told them I'd rather they wouldn't. It's really different.

*Yes sir.*

**Harold Berman:** But, yeah, I'm not being critical of Harvard Law School, boy. It's . . . I much prefer UT. I would much prefer going to UT. If I had it to do all over again, I'd go to UT. I loved that law school when I was there. That one semester was a learning experience. First the dean, Dean McCormick. This is way back. When I was admitted to law school, you know, under my deal, he called me in because he said I was too young, I shouldn't do it.

*Okay.*

**Harold Berman:** So he tried to talk me out of it but I knew I was facing the Army. I was only 17 then. I hadn't had my 18th birthday yet so I told him, you know, I was faced with it and I just wanted to get a taste of, see if that's what I really wanted to do so he let me in. But he always

felt, and he probably was right, I was too young to give it a try although I did enjoy that semester. I learned a lot. While I was at Harvard I went back and spent one summer school, take some Texas courses because I knew I was going to practice in Texas, and I wanted to take a community property course and some oil and gas which I couldn't get at Harvard. So that's my life.

*Yes sir. That's excellent, and I really appreciate you taking the time to share this story with us, and I don't know if Justin Sperling had told you or not but here at the Land Office we have archives that go back to the 1700s. We have the original land grant that belonged to David Crockett's widow, and we have the registro that Stephen F. Austin kept of the original Anglo settlers that came to the state. So what we're doing with these interviews is we're saving them for the archive and for posterity. With that in mind, is there anything you would want to say to somebody listening to this interview potentially a hundred years from now?*

**Harold Berman:** What I would like to say?

*Yes sir.*

**Harold Berman:** I'm a very proud Texan, and I wouldn't trade my upbringing with anybody. I was very fortunate. I had wonderful parents and a small town upbringing in Texas, in west Texas. It's something unique. West Texans are unique people. They're very acceptable and we fit . . . You know, I'm Jewish and you have a small town with the only Jewish families there. We had about 10 Jewish families, and my dad was the mayor. We were so . . . you know, it was acceptable. Of course, I had things happen to me that couldn't happen today like I had a great English teacher who in my senior year assigned each of us, required us each to go to church every Sunday and write an essay on the sermon. So every weekend, every Sunday during my senior year in high school, I went to this Church of Christ, and this Reverend Haley, he got to be my mentor 'cause he knew I was writing up his sermons. He was a fire and brimstone type speaker. I loved his sermons. And then when graduation came, I got to pick the baccalaureate speaker so I picked Reverend Haley, so he got to perform at my baccalaureate. So it was really a great upbringing. I'm proud of that. The University of Texas, I never would have, never even considered any other university at the time, and that was my number one choice, and I never regretted that. It's just, it's always been a background that I always wanted. My brothers also went. They graduated The University of Texas Medical School in Galveston eventually but they agree with me. We were all very fortunate. We had a great upbringing, great family, great experience so it made a better life for all of us.

*Yes sir. Sir, on behalf of Commissioner Patterson and everyone here at the Land Office, I just want to thank you for your service to our nation. Like I said before we started the interview, in a few weeks you're going to get a package from us that's going to have copies of this interview on CDs that you can share with friends or family or whomever along with just a certificate signed by the commissioner. Again, just a small way of us to say thank you for your service.*

**Harold Berman:** Well, I thank you for even listening to me. It's a pleasure to do this and I'll be glad to pass this on to my grandchildren.

*Oh, yes sir. And also if you know of any other veterans in the state that might want to be interviewed, please put them in touch with me as well.*

**Harold Berman:** You might consider my brothers.

*Absolutely. Are they here in Texas?*

**Harold Berman:** Stanley was in the Army in Korea, and Irwin was in the Navy during Korea, and Irwin later joined the Army after he retired. He went in as a full colonel, medical officer, with his specialty, and he's now a retired full bird colonel.

*That's great. We'd love to interview them, absolutely.*

**Harold Berman:** I'll mention it to 'em, and let's see, I have your number here? Yeah, I have it. 512-463-1970.

*Yes sir. And then also if you have any photographs you want to email to me to share on our website, we'd love to have those as well.*

**Harold Berman:** You know, I'll look for that when I celebrated my 80th birthday. I was looking for those photographs. I don't know what happened to them. There were a lot of them. I found only one that was taken at the University of Chicago and I was yawning. It was after lunch one day, but that's the only one I've found. I don't know what happened to them. I've had sort of an unusual life here. I've been widowed twice so I think maybe that they may have disappeared over a period of time but . . .

*Well, if you find any, let us know because we'd love to get copies of those as well.*

**Harold Berman:** I will.

*Well, sir, thank you very much.*

**Harold Berman:** Thank you.

*Yes sir, and I hope to talk to you again soon.*

**Harold Berman:** I appreciate the call very much.

*Yes sir, take care.*

**Harold Berman:** Thank you.

*Yes sir. Bye bye.*