

Jack Purcell
July 17, 2012
St. Peter's Church, Brentwood
Interviewer: Todd DePastino

Interviewer: Jack, I usually start with asking this: Do you remember December 7, 1941? Maybe we'll start there, but I know you were very young when you started playing music professionally.

Jack: Yes, I was 14.

I: Tell me how you started playing music.

J: Well, I went to Brentwood High School and I was a violinist then. I started a band then, and of course, in those days, practically every band had strings. I was with a band called Chuck Dale. The leader was Chuck Muelmen(?), the piano player was Dale Hauser, and they called it Chuck Dale. I was with them for about a year. About a year later, we were rehearsing at my house, my dad was doing bird docking (?) for the band, and they decided, if they were going to do that, they might as well do it for me! So, when I was 15, I had my own 10-piece band!

I: You had your own 10-piece band when you were 15?

J: Yes

I: What was it called?

J: Jack Purcell Orchestra. And our theme song was still the same "Saying It Was Music".

I: Where did you play?

J: Well, you want to hear about the first job? We played down in Allentown. There was a sports place there. One of the guys that ran the dash was a boxer. Punchy McCann was his nickname. My piano player, George Morgan, was a championship boxer, And his weight, about 120, he graduated 2 years before I did, from Brentwood High School. He was a very dedicated guy. He couldn't get a job in the Depression, so he decided to take up the piano, and that was his job. He practiced 8 hours a day. By the time he joined me, he was a good player. We play at this dance, and Punchy sees George, because they had a real organized thing for sports, boxing especially, and I guess he wondered if he was going to play the piano with his gloves on! A few minutes later, I'm setting up the band and he's putting the curtain up at the front of the band, and he hears my trumpet player say he hasn't had a job in a month, and Punchy drops the curtain! We got through with it, and it wasn't too long later that I was invited to get on the circuit, because they had dance halls everywhere. Every community had one. The bigger ones, like McDoogles (?) in East Liberty and Forma's (?) on North Side ran three nights a week. So they needed bands

and they couldn't have the same bands. So I was on that for about a year and a half, while I was still going to Brentwood High School.

I: This was the Great Depression, so the income was probably low.

J: Well, I used to get \$25 for a 10-piece band. We'd play a three hour dance. I would count the house to make sure we got paid! Later they had a period in the paper that their looking for a trombone player. Incidentally, with Chuck Muelmen, that's when I started playing the trombone. I made a remark one day that I'd always wanted to play the trumpet because I was a bugler in the Boy Scouts. He heard me say that, and going to Brentwood High School, a brand new school and rather small, he said, "Jack, don't buy a trumpet! We need a trombone. Why don't you get a trombone!" So I went to Volkwein's downtown on Liberty Avenue, I got a horn for \$20, and that included 5 lessons. I took the horn home and the first note was a good note! The reason was the mouthpiece was at least twice as big as the trumpet, so the sound was okay, and about a month later, I'm playing down at the shop with the trombone! I could read music, having played the violin for about 6 years.

I: And you graduated high school in 1936?

J: 1936, Brentwood High School.

I: And what did you do?

J: I worked that summer at a place called the Italian Gardens. It was a restaurant on 5th Avenue, across from the old Farmer's Bank building, just above Wood Street. And they just tore the building down. They're putting a skyscraper in there. Anyway, it was a supper club. We worked three sessions a day: noon, dinner, and 10-2, and the job payed 16 dollars a week, three sessions a day. But with that, I was able to save enough money to start at Carnegie Tech that fall. I bought two suits, and I had \$100! Anyway, that got me going. I went to Carnegie Tech on violin. I actually majored in violin. But when I got there, they decided they were short of trombones, and they knew I played trombone, they asked me if I'd mind playing trombone, and I said no. A man next to me, Neil Debias(?), had won the national contest in Chicago, the year-before-high school contest. Later that year, he became first trombone of the Pittsburgh Symphony. He ended up with Foster Inny(?) for a number of years, till they disbanded the NBC Orchestra with Foster Inny. So, he got me going on trombone, and I, by the next day, dropped the violin. And I was a trombone player! Well, Neil got me in the Symphony and got me to join the union to be a substitute. There would be nights that he couldn't fulfill his obligations, so I became his backup man.

I: When did you graduate from Carnegie Tech?

J: 1941.

I: What were you doing after graduation?

J: It wasn't too long that the war started. Then, at Carnegie Tech, I was usually director for the campus show for 2 years. I was president of the Phi Me Alpha (?), which was the music honorary fraternity. I got my good times in there! After I graduated, I was on the road that summer playing at state and county fairs. That fall, I got a job teaching school. The reason was a friend of mine was teaching and he had a chance for a better job. They wouldn't release him till they got somebody to take his place, so he asked me to do it. I was there till the war started.

I: Do you remember December 7, 1941?

J: Yes, quite well. I worked at the university club the night before with a band called Home Rocks At Heart.(?) I had kind of slept in that morning, and my mother woke me up to tell me that they had invaded Pearl Harbor. That's how I remember that one.

I: What went through your mind?

J: I was pretty upset, naturally. It wasn't too long later that I went down and enlisted in the Navy.

I: When did you enlist?

J: Sometime that December.

I: Why did you enlist in the Navy?

J: Well, to be honest with you, I signed up to go into the Air Corps, and that didn't work. After that I ended up going to the Navy School of Music in Washington, D.C.

I: Why didn't it work for the Air Corps?

J: It just didn't work out. We had a few incidents that I felt I was not qualified.

I: Eyesight?

J: No, just mistakes. Anyway, the next day when I came home, I signed up for the Navy and went down to the Navy School of Music in Washington, D.C. I had to go through boot camp down in Norfolk. My Navy experience went sort of like this: it was an eye-opener because ninety percent of the young men at the boot camp came from the deep south, so it was a completely different kind of approach to life, let's put it that way! We were not allowed to leave the boot camp till it was all over--about 5 weeks. Except, about six of us going to the music school, found out that there was a choir at the church. We were allowed to go out every Wednesday night for rehearsal, and every Sunday morning to sing in the choir! After that I went to the Navy School of Music in Washington, D.C. I was there about a year.

I: What were you doing there?

J: Playing the trombone. And some violin, but mostly trombone.

I: In a navy band?

J: No, this is what they called the Navy School of Music. This was a spin off of the Navy Band. It ended up we probably had a better band than the Navy. The guys, coming in from the different positions in the music business, signed up to go there to do music. The Navy did have one great player, though. They had Earl Wile (?) who graduated from Terry Kyle (?) School on Carnegie Tech, and became internationally known as a pianist. He was the piano player for the Navy Band.

I: When did you graduate from Carnegie Tech?

J: 1941.

I : What were you doing after graduation?

J: It wasn't too long that the war started. Then, at Carnegie Tech, I was usually director for the campus show for 2 years. I was president of the Phi Me Alpha (?) , which was the music honorary fraternity. I got my good times in there! After I graduated, I was on the road that summer playing at state and county fairs. That fall, I got a job teaching school. The reason was a friend of mine was teaching and he had a chance for a better job. They wouldn't release him till they got somebody to take his place, so he asked me to do it. I was there till the war started.

I: Do you remember December 7, 1941?

J: Yes, quite well. I worked at the university club the night before with a band called Home Rocks At Heart.(?) I had kind of slept in that morning, and my mother woke me up to tell me that they had invaded Pearl Harbor. That's how I remember that one.

I: What went through your mind?

J: I was pretty upset, naturally. It wasn't too long later that I went down and enlisted in the Navy.

I: When did you enlist?

J: Sometime that December.

I: Why did you enlist in the Navy?

J: Well, to be honest with you, I signed up to go into the Air Corps, and that didn't work. After that I ended up going to the Navy School of Music in Washington, D.C.

I: Why didn't it work for the Air Corps?

J: It just didn't work out. We had a few incidents that I felt I was not qualified.

I: Eyesight?

J: No, just mistakes. Anyway, the next day when I came home, I signed up for the Navy and went down to the Navy School of Music in Washington, D.C. I had to go through boot camp down in Norfolk. My Navy experience went sort of like this: it was an eye-opener because ninety percent of the young men at the boot camp came from the deep south, so it was a completely different kind of approach to life, let's put it that way! We were not allowed to leave the boot camp till it was all over--about 5 weeks. Except, about six of us going to the music school, found out that there was a choir at the church. We were allowed to go out every Wednesday night for rehearsal, and every Sunday morning to sing in the choir! After that I went to the Navy School of Music in Washington, D.C. I was there about a year.

I: What were you doing there?

J: Playing the trombone. And some violine, but mostly trombone.

I: In a navy band?

J: No, this is what they called the Navy School of Music. This was a spin off of the Navy Band. It ended up we probably had a better band than the Navy. The guys, coming in from the different positions in the music business, signed up to go there to do music. The Navy did have one great player, though. They had Earl Wile (?) who graduated from Terry Kyle (?) School on Carnegie Tech, and became internationally known as a pianist. He was the piano player for the Navy Band. So anyway, I was at the Navy School of Music and we formed our own dance band, which was pretty darn good. We were all guys like myself, young guys. Probably only one guy got famous, and that was our drummer, Jackie Sperling. He started off with Dex Benicky, who took over the Glenn Miller band, and ended up doing shows with Johnny Carson and people like that. He got a national reputation for his ability. I ended up being first trombone of the dance band. When I went, I was a swabby. I was cleaning decks and everything else, but every quater, they had auditions. So there would be maybe 20 or 25 trombone players with everybody playing the same number. The first time I was there, I got put up as number 5, which put me in the concert band. From there, I worked my way up to number one.

I: When did you receive your commission?

J: Well, two young men at the Navy School of Music tried to get a commission. They found out that the leader of the school had not forwarded their request. One young man's grandfather was an admiral. So he called the captain to see why people were qualified. At that time the Navy was looking for personel in this increasing fleet that they were

building for invasions and so forth. So the upshot was that anybody that wanted to apply for commission could do so and they had to approve you. About 20 of us did, and we all got commissions! The only bad thing was I found out that week that I got the commission that the Big Navy Band wanted me to play first trombone for the dance band and either violin or viola, and they also had an orchestra. If I hadn't heard that first, I probably would have never left Washington, D.C.

I: You would have been playing in the Navy Band?

J: I would have been in the Big Navy Band. After that, we ended up going to training. Our first place was Princeton University for basic training for officers. We stayed there for a couple months, lived in the dormitories, so I really felt like I was going to Princeton. I was moved from there up to Fort Skyler (?) which was at the north end of the east river, just south of New York City. That was, again, more advanced training. One of the pleasures of that place was we got the whole Great Lakes basketball team from the year before. What they did with the Navy is they recruited all Americans, all conference guys, to play for the Great Lakes basketball team, with the promise that the next year, they'd get commissions. Just by chance, they were in my class. Along with that was a man named Lou Tulio (?). He played football for Holy Cross. He ended up being Mayor of Erie for many years. He's the man that died and they named the disease after him (?), which Richard Callen Jr. (?) also died from. Being there, I was able to go into New York City in the weekends. One of the great weekends, we went to the Commodore Hotel, which the Navy took over and handed out free tickets. I got a ticket to Oklahoma for free. We had to stand up. I got a ticket for the New York Philharmonic. And here was a box seat, next to a very famous composer from Europe by the name of Martenu (?). He made one of his works make the world premiere. At the beginning of the concert, a man comes down and says, "Ladies and Gentlemen, I regret to announce, our conductor, Mr. Bolevolter (?) is indisposed, and our apprentice (?) conductor, Mr. Leonard Bernstein, will conduct." He came out and killed them! I didn't know then that 5 years later I would be playing for him in the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. I was there for his real debut: the conducting business. So from there, I got acquainted with New York, but from there I was sent out to San Francisco.

I: You have a story, don't you, about the owner or manager from the Comodore Hotel?

J: No, that was Mrs. Kramer. We went to see Count Baysee (?). I was in uniform. There were about twenty or thirty people in line waiting to get in there, and I was the only one in uniform. This lady comes and grabs me and says, "Come on! Get in there!" I was with my aunty, who was living in New York. She got us a table near a cigar stand and says, "Sit here!" Turned out, her name was Marie Kramer. She owned seven hotels. She would come in on Saturday nights on the weekends to be the hostess for Count Baysee. I got to meet her and her singer, who was a gal, Carpy, or Thelma Carpenter. She came over and sat with us during the intermission. So she gives me her card to come and see her some night in New York City. Unfortunately, the next Tuesday, we got our orders to San Francisco for duty afloat! So, I got to San Francisco, and I guess they didn't know what to do with me. Maybe a roving officer to take mail and orders around the community, which

was great because I'd never been to San Francisco. I got to know the city. After several weeks I was assigned to a ship called the Zaka. (?) The Zaka was a two masted (?) schooner, owned by the name of Templeton Crocker. The Crocker family of Los Angeles was pretty close to the Nowens (?). They had banking interest, railroads, and other things. This ship was Templeton's toy. It had gotten famous because before the war, a man by the name of BB who made deep sea expeditions in the south Pacific, used the Zaka as his base. It was two masted. We had another sailing vessel we relieved. We'd go out about 500 miles, send in what we called homing signals and weather reports. We relieved the other ship and come back in. So we'd be back in for about three weeks and I got to know San Francisco.

I: Didn't Earl Flynn also own the Zaka?

J: Well, that was after the war. When the war was over, Templeton didn't want the ship back, and Earl Flynn, who was rather famous in those days, bought the ship. He had a lot more fun on that ship than I did! He had one of his escapades, where they caught him on (?). It was a great ship. Of course, being in San Francisco, I got to know the city. I'd sit in with a band, a dixie band (?). I called them "Six Guys with Seven Eyes." The bass player was blind, the clarinet player was blind, and the piano player only had one eye. So, out of the six guys, there were seven eyes! I'd walk in, and the clarinet player would look at me and say, "Is that you?" So I said, "Yeah, how do you know?" He said, "I could tell by your walk!" I was able to carry my horn, incidentally, which might not have been legal, but I carried it with me all the time as I was an officer. When I'd get to a base, I ran into a lot of my friends from the Navy School of Music. There, again, I was able to sit in and play sometimes and keep my finger in the business.

I: It was in San Francisco where you had the encounter with the glass ball, right?

J: Yeah, my third trip on the ship. For those who don't know there's a Japanese current, which is much like our gulf stream. It starts up around Japan, goes down south on the western side, makes a big loop, and comes up to the west coast of the United States. That's why San Francisco, Portland, Seattle and those cities never really get very cold, since there's warm water there. So there was kind of a rule: The Japanese used these fishnet balls which were big around, and I happened to spot it. I was officer of the deck that day, and in the place, all I had to do was stand station. We could move around a little bit, as long as we were in the general area. I ordered the ship around to go get the ball. So a young man gave a bag or a net or something, and he missed the ball. We turned around, he missed it again. The third time he missed it, I said, "To Hell with it! I'm going in to get it!" So I stripped down, dove off the ship, and got the ball! Now, the rest of the officers were all having lunch. Finally, the skipper realized we were going this way and this way, so what was going on to make the ship do that? He gets up there, and I'm about 400 yards out holding the ball, till they came around to get me. He gives me Hell because I was the officer of the deck! I was supposed to be on board ship! But, we got away with it. And I still have the ball.

I: You have that ball?

J: Yes. Souvenirs of the war--how we won the war!

I: How long were you in San Francisco?

J: Well, about six months all together. Almost a month as officer messenger--that's what they called me. And then about 5 months on this ship. Then, I got orders to go to Miami. The one thing the Navy did for me is I got to Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., New York City, San Francisco, and Miami. So, I had orders to go all the way down to Miami for further training. From there, I put in for a duty on LSTs. They said, "You'll probably get that."

I: Why did you put in for duty on the LSTs?

J: Well, I was kind of analyzing that. Even though it might have been considered dangerous, it was also a supply ship, and I thought it might be a good way for me to go. I had to go to camp down there in Norfolk called Camp Bradford. That's where they trained all the people for the LSTs and the smaller ships. There was a whole family of landing ships, the LST being the biggest. It was about 330 feet long.

I: Couldn't you have stayed in San Francisco, or was that not an option?

J: No, oh no. That was not my option. They sent me to Miami for further training.

I: You knew you were going overseas, and you had to try and pick if you could, knowing that you might die?

J: Yeah, I chose the LSTs. I went there, and part of a program was that they would form the crews there and send them to meet their ships. Because I had previous sea duty, they put me in a standby crew. I was hoping I'd make it because at that point, they were sending the crews to Pittsburgh, where they made ships that drove all (?) an American bridge. I had a girlfriend then, not the one I married. I was looking forward to getting home for several weeks, which was usually the time, and spend some time with her. But about after 10 days, somebody jumped ship on an LST. The communications officer down in Orlanes (?) that I was sent down to replace him, and we left pretty closely to go over to the Pacific.

I: What was your LST's number?

J: 598. It was built in Indiana, right on the river there. I became the communications officer. They caught the guy who jumped ship, incidentally. His story was that he was a conscientious objector, and when it came time to do anything, he wouldn't do it, and they were supposed to be called out to the Pacific, so he decided to jump ship and get caught! He probably ended up in jail, but I took over his place. The funny part was, for some reason we had to duck over from New Orleans to Biloxi, Mississippi. As communications, I was sent ashore to pick up something there in Biloxi. On the way back

to the ship, I'm passing a theater, and it says, "The Benny Goodman Story." I said, "Wow, I better go in there!" When I did, the people thought I was crazy. There were 7 guys from Pittsburgh playing in Benny Goodman's band in this movie. Cliff Hill's on bass, four saxophones, one of the great trombone players from over there, and a drummer. So, I'm sitting there, laughing my head off, to see these guys in a movie, which was strictly an accident! Kenny Cutchall was the trombone player. He ended up being one of the top trombone players in the New York City area. He was actually with Benny Goodman for many years. And then the saxophones, John Walton, who came from Clariton, one of the outstanding saxophone players, was the lead soloist. So, that was a nice thing. Then, we got to go down through the Panama Canal, then up to San Diego, then while we were in San Diego, one of the officers on the LST, the second in command, had played football in Geneva and attended Geneva College. We actually bonded because I remember the team. They played Carnegie Tech on several occasions. They had a darn good team. Tech beat them, but not by much. Ray was one of the players on that team. We kind of bonded, just by the fact that sports was part of our life and so forth. His father owned a steel company up in Rochester, New York, so Ray was waiting for the war to be over so he could take over the steel company! But, he and I became friends and palled around together.

I: Where did your LST go, from San Diego?

J: We went up to San Diego, and there we put a smaller landing craft on our ship. We put it on top, and took it out to Honolulu, where we dumped it. We turned the ship like this and slid this thing off into the water. Then we had a lot of equipment and stuff to take out to Guam. We went out to Guam and back. Eventually we got part of a posse or caravan to go down south and we ended up at Brinosantes (?) which was an island held by the French. That's where we had staging, or starting, for the upcoming invasion of Okinawa. That's when I got mad at the French. We were saving their necks over in Europe, and the story was that for every tree we damaged on this island, we had to pay the French government fifteen bucks! Well, in fact, that was pretty cheap! But, we were there for a while and eventually left there for a convoy to go up to Okinawa.

I: What did the training involve?

J: Not much. Just getting formations. We had one funny thing happen. Some of the islands, and one very big one, our forces decided to abandon it and just go around it and leave the Japanese guys there. It turned out they had large submarines of supplies. So we're coming up alongside this island one night, and here comes a submarine, going near the way in the middle of our convoy! We couldn't shoot at it, and he wanted to get the heck out of there, and that's what happened! He went right down the middle of the convoy and out of our sight. We kept on going. So, that was kind of fun. We ended up, as I said, eventually going to Okinawa. When we got to Okinawa, we were warned about certain things. We had a real staging at a place called Carameretto. (?) That was maybe thirty miles or so from the actual landing place. We were alerted that there would be certain things. One thing the Japanese had was a one-man sub, in addition to suicide planes. It turned out, when our advanced forces got to Carameretto, this was the base for the one-man subs, so they busted that up. Now, one day a suicide plane came in and we're

all shooting at it, when he makes a dive and he hits the ship right behind us which was sort of our sister ship, the 599. That was one of the miracles of the war. Nobody got killed. He hit the middle of the ship and went down to the bottom. When they had crews come in to clean it up they found 300 lb. bomb that hadn't gone off! If it had, they'd probably been killed. Anyway, that was kind of a miracle. Our deck officer had read a manual. We were carrying everything for the Marines. Gas, all the equipment, pilots, the whole thing for a Marine group. Somebody had recommended that they punch holes in things and put in on the deck in case anything hit the gas. So the same man on the LST 599 that went to Carnegie Tech and played basketball came over and saw our ship and he did the same thing. So when the ship got hit, naturally the flames went flying up in the air. We all thought these guys were all going to be dead. In about 10 minutes, you could just see the flames subside because the thing worked! It put the flames out.

I: Can you explain that? What put the flames out?

J: Well, we had pipes around the gas, and they punched holes in the pipes like a spray, so that if anything happened, they could spray the gas tanks. It worked. It was one of those good things. The big thing was actually the invasion. April 1, 1945, which happened to be Easter and April Fool's Day. We got to the beach and there was no opposition. The Navy and the Army pulled a mock invasion on the southeast end of Okinawa, which drew all the Japanese troops down there. We went through the motions: we bombed the beach, we sent boats that looked like they were going to invade, and were all ready to take these guys on. Our main invasion force went right on at the beach. Our goal was our Marines were to take over an airport called Kadina (?) and that's still in operation on Okinawa. It wasn't more than a day or so that the suicide planes started coming around. Again, they made a mistake. We had destroyers as a picket line. Instead of coming in and bombing us on the beach, we all lined up with dozens of ships, they started to graft (?) at the picket line. They sunk some of them, and we shot some of them down. But if they had ignored that, and come in while we were unloading, they probably could have busted up the invasion force or the supplies. That was my experience there. Later, the war was over, and we were sent back out to Okinawa, to help clean up. The last island we invaded was an island called Iwoshima (?). It was near Okinawa, and that's where they were taking their planes out, the suicide planes. That was the last major invasion. That's where Ernie Pile, who's a very famous correspondent, got killed during, what I would consider, the last invasion we ever made. I saw the rock that he put his head up on to see what was going on, and he got killed. So, we cleaned that place up and came home. I got my orders to come home around January. They used the Ticonderoga, which was an aircraft carrier, as a troop ship. And, the horn came in handy! They called for musicians, we got a hell of a band together! We had sixteen days to rehearse coming back to the west coast. We put on a show before we left. The place went nuts. I thought, "Wow! Music in us really gotta go!" (?) So we came back to Pittsburgh, I got home on February 1, and I found out I was going to be married on February 20! I was home the summer of '45. That's when I really met my wife. She had become friends with my mother. We got together and in three weeks, things started to click. I proposed to her, and she said yes, but then I had to go back overseas. So when I got back, we decided to have the wedding right away. That's a

good thing! With her mother and my mother, if the wedding would have been held in June, we probably would not have gotten married!

I: After you got out of the Navy, you got married. What did you do?

J: Well, my friend, Ray, had a good friend in the insurance business. He was from Beaver Falls. His name was Brainerd Metheeny (?). When I came home on leave, he had me go and see Brainerd. He gave me a test for insurance and I guess I sort of passed. He suggested that I see him after I get out of the service. I did and I got the job at the Fidelity Mutual Life Insurance Company in the Grant Building. The advantage of that was the KDKA staff orchestra was also in the Grant Building at the time. A buddy of mine, Bill Murriss (?), was a staff trombone player there. All of a sudden, he sees me out in the hall around lunch time, and he said, "Hey, Jack! What are you doing Saturday night?" Well, the first thing you know, I was playing more jobs, I got to be his substitute on KDKA. It wasn't too long that in a couple of years a friend of mine that had been in the Navy School of Music, Erwin Price, suggested that I try out for the Symphony. I went out and took the audition. Erwin, in the mean time, was first trombone on the Riner (?). They had a falling out, so he was going back to New York where he worked for many years as an outstanding player. He had me go out and take the audition. He was teaching at Carnegie Tech, and he took over some music. When I went to the audition, we had just finished practicing, and that was the audition! Brach Lindy (?) called from the concert master, Holberg, and said to me, "You read pretty well!" Well, Hell, I just finished playing! So my attitude was if I made it, fine, if I didn't, I was doing okay selling insurance and playing jobs. So, I had a good attitude toward the audition. After getting all these things: recommendations and so forth, I called the Symphony about a week later to see how I stood. When I did, my wife said to tell Eddy Specter, who was the manager and really the founder of the orchestra back in the twenties when they only had a part time orchestra, hello. He said, "Who's your wife?" I said, "Jeanie Jollef." (?) He said, "You married Jeanie Jollef?" It turned out her mother was with Bat & Bart and Durst & Osborne, which at the time was the big advertising agency. They were sponsoring a concert using the Pittsburgh Symphony with a conductor from New York by the name of Raymond Page. Jeanie would help her mother with tickets and various things, so she got acquainted with Eddy Specter. The next day, I got the job! So, that's how I got the job. Then after about a year, I was playing with other bands and I finally decided I better take a look at starting a band, which I did. In 1951, they started having the Symphony Ball, and a lady with a man, Patton, went to the Ball in '51 and the man said "We're having the Symphony Ball, and Jack Purcell is going to play." Well, I'm sure the lady said, "Who is Jack Purcell?" Well he explained I was in the orchestra with three or four guys who also did commercial music in my band and I got the Symphony Ball. That led to the Cinderella Ball, The Opera Ball, the Twentieth Century Club Ball, the Medallion Ball, and my record was playing in Greensburg was playing at Baster's Hop (?) thirty-three years in a row! So that's how I got going with a band. Eventually I had to make a choice to either be with me or with the Symphony. I resigned effective the end of '56. But I had another break. We were in Scranton, Pennsylvania on the road, and I was out having my morning walk when I met conductor William Steinburg, who was also doing the same thing. He said to me, "I heard you're leaving the orchestra. What are you going to do?" I said, "Well, I hope to get

my band business." He said, "I thought so." Then he said, "Have you ever heard of the Lieberman concerto for jazz band and symphony orchestra?" Just by chance, I had. He said, "Well, Ralph Lieberman approached me to offer me the Less Brown Band (?) had done with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Don Finnegan's Band (?) down with the Chicago Symphony." And Steinburg's answer was, "That's okay, we have a jazz band. Me." So the next year, I got to play this with my own band with the symphony. That didn't hurt either! So that's how things got going! I always credit the Navy with showing me things. One thing I'll say about the whole armed forces in my opinion is that it opened our eyes up. Like I say, I went to boot camp, there were all these guys from down south with a completely different approach to life than what we had. Guys from New York went to the west coast or Europe, they got to evaluate and see what else was going on in the world. That really turned our world around as far as our experience is concerned. Guys married a girl from Texas or from Miami or somewhere. So I think, at least, we won the last good war in my opinion! I was glad to be part of it. I never regretted having get in the commission. I would have enjoyed playing with the Navy Band, but I did enjoy what I did and the things I got to do and see in the Navy.