Max Herzog World War II Memorabilia collection, MS 715

Speaker: Max Herzog

Date of Interview: ca. 1943, WW II
Transcribed by Speak Write
Edited by: Dara Flinn

Background: Max Herzog was born on February 11, 1915 in Joliet, Illinois. When he graduated from high school in Joliet in 1932, Depression conditions led him to pursue his future in Texas where he had relatives. In Houston he met Mayme Bergson on a blind date, and the two later married on March 8, 1942. In October of that year Max was drafted into military service.

During the year he spent time in Hawaii where he recorded photographs of island scenes, as well as of his fellow soldiers. His discharge papers list him as a searchlight crewman in the Asiatic Pacific theater of operations. He received a Philippine Liberation ribbon while in the service and was honorably discharged in October 1945.

While Max was serving overseas, he received a telegram that his wife had given birth to his son in May 1943. It was not until his discharge in 1945 that he first saw his son, Robert. The young boy died at age 8 in 1951. A second son, Alan, had been born in 1947.

Returning to civilian life in Houston, Max worked in the grocery business and owned his own store on Lyons Avenue. He later worked for Bert Wheeler Liquors and remained in Houston until his death on Oct. 20, 1999.

It is noteworthy that Max Herzog's wartime service is memorialized on a banner created at his Houston synagogue, Congregation Beth Yeshurun. His is one of about 220 names of congregation members or affiliates that are embroidered on the banner begun in 1942 and dedicated in 1945.

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Side A of original LP record:

Max: Ready?

Speaker 2: Right now.

Max: Darling, this is a recording of my voice unsponsored and without the courtesy of anyone but myself. I'm counting the days when I'll be with you and Bobby. Uh, yeah, hurry up, Max. Bobby, this is your daddy talkin' to you and telling you that he loves you and hopes that he will, uh, be home soon with you and your wonderful mother. I am in the best of health and with your letters coming in almost daily my morale is tops. All these months we have been separated, you have been a real trooper and I can't tell you how proud I am having you for the one and only girl
in my life. Uh, but when I started making this record I thought I had lots to say but now really I
don't know what to say and the few boys up here with me so perhaps I can get them to put in a
word or two. Hold on just a minute.

Other Speaker: This is, uh, a fellow by name of Litchfield now.

Litchfield: Well, uh, I don't know what to say neither, Max, except that – well
anyway, Max is fine and he's a fine lad and we're all doin' fine over here so you do not have to
worry about 'im. Here's another boy right here, Joe Boyd, another one of Max's friend. Say
something will you, Joe?

Joe Boyd: Uh, hello, Mrs. Herzog. This is Joe Boyd. We're all doin' fine over here
and everything's gonna be okay soon now.

Elsner: Uh, this is a fella by the name Elsner and I know Max a long time and he's
a pretty good lad.

Side B:
Max: Ready? These boys seem to be giving me quite a build up. After all, you know best. I don't
know what else to say. I haven't got much more to say except that, uh, well no use in me telling
you that I love you because you already know that and I've put it in all my letters and these boys
are tryin' to prompt me here, but as you say, by proxy, don't work out so good 'cause the real
McCoy is the only stuff. But, uh, I'm just biding time. I hope this thing ends soon so we can get
together again, honey, and this time for good and that, well, I better say hello to mama and dad
and tell Milton and Bibi hello and lots of love to Milton and Bibi and their new arrival in the
family when it gets here, and I hope it's twins. And give Bobby loads of kisses for me and tell
'im to be a good boy and I better be signing off now, honey. So remember, I love you.