

**JEWISH HERITAGE COLLECTION
COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON
Mss. 1035-006**

Interviewee: Morris David Mazursky (b. June 10, 1923, Columbia, SC; d. November 26, 2012, Sumter, SC)

Place of Interview: Sumter, SC

Date of interview: February 9, 1995 Tapes 1 and 2

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Date of Transcription: Spring 1995/May 1996

Editors: Robert Moses/Alyssa Neely

Dates of Editing: July 31, 1998/November 22, 2013 and May 28, 2014

Proofreaders: Robert Moses/Alyssa Neely

Dates of Proofing: July 31, 1998/November 25, 2013

Note: quality of recordings is fair.

Begin Tape 1, Side A:

DR: Let me ask you to tell me a little bit about your family of origin, both your mother's and your father's side.

MM: How far back do you want to go?

DR: As far back as you know—seriously.

....

MM: Okay. My mother's side of the family were Austrian Jews. My grandparents on my mother's side of the family emigrated from Austria, province of Galicia. They first came to this country and had relatives in the Philadelphia area and stayed there a very short length of time. My mother had one sister that was born in Europe, and the rest of her family, which was seven

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children in all, were born in this country. My grandparents on my mother's side of the family immigrated to Charleston, South Carolina, because my grandfather and grandmother had what was called a landsman in Charleston, a Mr. Henry Hirshman, who has descendants here in Sumter, South Carolina. Ms. Kate Weinberg was a Hirshman and her family was from Austria.

My grandfather on my mother's side of the family was a baker by trade, and [he] came to Charleston and established a Jewish bakery. He had seven children, two sons and five daughters. The oldest daughter, Jennie, was the one born in Europe, in Austria. The next daughter was Rachel, and the next daughter was Mary, who was my mother. The next daughter was Annie, or Anne, and the last daughter was Paula. Most of them continued and lived either in the Columbia or Charleston area. I don't know how far you want me to go into the family.

DR: I would be interested in anything that you know.

MM: Okay, well, the oldest daughter, who was Jennie, never married. The next daughter, who was Rachel, married a Kaletski and settled in Columbia, South Carolina. Kaletski, K-A-L-E-T-S-K-I. She lived there for her whole life. She has two children who live in Columbia, South Carolina, still.

Annie was the next in age and she married a Rosen, Solomon Rosen, who everybody called Sol. That family still lives in Charleston. There are two children from the Annie and Sol Rosen family, Morris Rosen and Dr. Leon Rosen, a dentist.

I could go into depth, I don't know how far you want me to—but you'll be getting to them when you start getting back to Charleston, or whoever is going to do Charleston, I guess.

DR: Right. We're actually going to—

MM: I had another aunt in Charleston—of course, all of these aunts are deceased now—the next one was Paula. Their name was Blatt [ed.: pronounced “blat”], B-L-A-T-T, not Blatt [ed.: pronounced “blot”]. We weren't related to Solomon [laughs] Blatt [ed.: pronounced “blot”], who's a rather old family. I think it's Solomon Blatt Jr., [inaudible] a retired federal district judge of Charleston—very good friend of mine, but not related.

RM: Is it spelled the same way?

MM: It's spelled the same way, but my family always pronounced it “blat,” for some reason. Probably in Europe it was pronounced “blot”, but in this country, it's—

DR: Do you know if the Sol Blatt family was from the same—

MM: No, they were from Russia. They had Barnwell County connections, which is my father's side of the family. I knew them from that side of the family also.

Anyway, the other aunt was Paula, or Pauline, but everybody always called her Pauline. She married an Addlestone from Charleston. Her husband was a Sam Addlestone, who was an uncle of Nathan Addlestone, who was a resident of Sumter, and I think is now a resident of Charleston. They had no children.

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DR: There were only girls in this family?

MM: No, there were two sons—I mentioned my aunts—but two sons. The two sons were the youngest two children. One was Benjamin. For all practical purposes, he was never married. He was the youngest of the crowd and, in fact, died in 1987 at the age of eighty-seven.

The next to the youngest child was a son named Israel Edward Blatt; everybody called him Ed. He lived in Charleston a great portion of his life, and then, I'd say, from about thirty-five years old [he] resided in Columbia, South Carolina. He married a nice Baptist lady and has one daughter whose name is Sykes . . . his *granddaughter* is married to a Sykes in Columbia. I don't know how deep you want me to go, [inaudible].

DR: Tell me this: do you know anything about why they left Austria?

MM: Oh, [inaudible], same reason. From what I could understand—I know more about my father's side of my family than that—but, as near as I can understand, my grandfather on my mother's side of the family, and all of them, left because of the persecution of Jews. Now, I'm no big geography person, but Galicia really was closer to Poland in that area. All of the Jews there felt the antisemitism. My grandfather on my mother's side of the family immigrated to this country in about 1888, when he first hit Philadelphia.

RM: Then you said they came to Charleston.

MM: Charleston.

RM: And the lady—your mother's aunt, was it?—that moved to Columbia, you said married—

MM: No, mother's sister.

RM: Mother's sister—you said the name was Kitsell or something—

MM: Kaletski.

RM: And they still have children over there now?

MM: Yeah, two. They are well up in their, almost, eighties.

RM: They didn't marry?

MM: Yeah, and the ones in Columbia—well, one didn't. The aunt in Columbia had two children—Aaron Kaletski, who never has married, and he's about eighty years old, and his sister married a Wengrow. Some of our distant relatives [inaudible] in the Camden area named Wengrow.

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DR: Windgrow?

MM: Wengrow, W-E-N-G-R-O-W.

DR: Is that Jewish?

MM: Yes. Well, a lot of these names are Jewish and they've been shortened [laughing] and changed to be more Anglicized. Lord knows what they were originally. The only one I can vouch for is Mazursky, and you can tell that's never been changed. [Laughing.] You couldn't have changed that from anything else.

DR: Your family came through Philadelphia?

MM: Philadelphia to Colum—that's on my mother's side of the family.

DR: [Inaudible] [ed.: sounds like "Charleston"].

MM: Oh, yes, and when they moved— When my grandfather—his name was Morris D. Blatt—moved to Charleston, along with his wife—his wife was Mamie; they called her that; it was something else in Hebrew—they moved down with her sister and her husband to Charleston—all of them had come to Philadelphia—and their name was Rephan, R-E-P-H-A-N, who settled in Charleston. They are still old Charleston residents.

I don't think anybody—well, there may be one person by the name of Rephan left in Charleston, and that's my, I guess you'd call her my second cousin or third cousin. Her name is June Rephan. She would be in her late sixties, early seventies. She retired there recently. She was a long-time employee with Lord & Taylor in New York. Her father was Hyman Rephan, and he was a son of Harry Rephan. The brother-in-law of my grandmother was Harry Rephan. It's hard for me to remember her name; we always called her Auntie because she was my aunt. He had a dairy in Charleston.

DR: Really?

MM: Yeah, a dairy; it was Rephan's Dairy. You might have [inaudible] that when you were at The Citadel, Robert. It was still almost—

RM: I remember Coble's.

MM: Well, they ran a local dairy, Rephan's Dairy.

DR: Do you have any idea what Morris Blatt or any of the other family members did in the Old Country?

MM: I think my grandfather was a baker in the Old Country, and he brought that trade over with him. He baked kosher Jewish bread, like pumpernickel and rye. When he moved to this

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country—my mother used to tell me the story—it was like the old days, like they delivered milk; you had a bread route, and you delivered your bread with a horse and wagon. I think somewhere my sister has a picture of my mother as a young woman standing next to the horse, which amazed me, because she was so scared of most animals. [Laughing.]

RM: We'd love to see anything that Helen could come up with.

MM: Well, when my mother passed away, Helen—I made her the custodian of everything.

....

MM: That's on my mother's side of the family. I haven't gotten to my father's side yet.

RM: Morris, you said they came to Charleston because they had a contact there that was sponsoring them or—

MM: No, no.

DR: A landsman.

MM: In those days—I don't know whether Dale has heard this story before—it wasn't quite as bad as it is with the Russian immigrants and the Israeli people. They worked, and they were looking for some good place to live. They would work, maybe, in some industry or some business in the North, and most of the [ed.: sounds like "latter"] ones that immigrated to this country in the 1850s, or the ones that came south, really, came probably because they were looking for a way of life that was more agrarian then.

In Europe my grandfather and grandmother on my mother's side lived, more or less, in a farm area, a small-town area, and apparently they didn't like Philadelphia. The same thing was true with my father. [Laughs.] I'll get to that in a few minutes.

DR: Do you know if they brought any objects with them that have stayed in the family?

MM: If they had, my mother didn't have many of them. I think that she may have delegated that some, but they really—when you say objects, I would just have to ask. I don't know. I'm sure they were poor, and if they had some old candelabras, you know, menorahs, stuff like that, I don't recall my mother retaining any of it. Maybe because when she got married, she moved down here to Sumter County. When my mother married my father, her mother was still living in Charleston, right on St. Philip Street, right near where the college is now. Right near Beth [inaudible] Elohim, although they were very Orthodox, they didn't belong to that one. [Laughing.] They belonged to the Orthodox one.

DR: They went to Brith Sholom right away.

MM: Right. Well, I guess—[inaudible] the early 1900s—that was founded well before that.

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DR: Brith Sholom was founded about 1856.

MM: Anyway, so they migrated to Charleston. There's quite a bit of the—that two families, the Rephans and [inaudible] on the Rosen side . . . on Uncle Sol Rosen's side. Of course, you know that Bonnie Moses here in Sumter is a cousin to Morris Rosen, too. Her father was the judge from Orangeburg. I don't know whether you've gotten into that—

RM: No.

MM: —area. Boy, we really get—it just spreads out, you know—

RM: So you and Bonnie would be distant relatives?

MM: No, because I'm related to Morris on the maternal side of the family. His mother and my mother were sisters. Morris Rosen is a cousin to Bonnie Rosen, first cousin to Bonnie *Moses*, but on the Rosen side of the family.

DR: It's an interlocking thing.

MM: Well, you know, like we've discussed, a lot of my friends and I have discussed, you really have more fun playing Jewish geography, because when you get to South Carolina, after fifty or sixty years, everybody has some [inaudible] in South Carolina and Georgia and all around. You get me talking and it's just hard to keep up with all the family after a while.

On the Rephan side of the family, the Rephans had numerous children. You may have met them in Charleston. On the Rephan side there's a Fay Solomon. Her husband may be—I think he's still living. They were in the furniture business there. She was Fay Rephan. Like I said, her sister is June Rephan; she's still living there. I think she has another sister who's still living there, likely right now.

DR: Are they still members of Brith Sholom?

MM: Probably. They're members of one or the other. I'm sort of the generation with Henry Berlin. I don't know whether you know Henry—Berlin's store there.

DR: I know who he is.

MM: He and I, we were beach bums over on Sullivan's Island when I was growing [laughing] [inaudible].

DR: Let me ask you, just for the tape, if you know how to spell Galicia?

MM: I think it's spelled G-A-L-L-I-C-I-A or G-A-L-I-C-I-A. Can't remember whether it's two Ls—

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DR: So we can find it on a map.

MM: All I ever heard them say was Galicia, which is a province, not a city. For that reason, I just assumed they lived in a rural area, not really in a town or village. I know my mother used to say that my grandmother used to brag about the fact that she saw the Emperor Franz Joseph. He stopped and watered his horse at their farm in Europe. She was really Austrian; she loved all of the Austrian waltzes and loved to waltz and stuff like that.

DR: Did they communicate with the family? Did they write letters or—

MM: You mean back to Europe?

DR: Yeah.

MM: Not of my knowledge. I have to say—I can't say yes or no on that. Like I say, I wish I had—my grandma on my mother's side of the family, she was very Orthodox, kept all of the dietary laws, never would eat out, and she had sort of a—she never really— My grandfather got [inaudible], because he ran a bakery, and she never really talked English real good. My recollection is, whenever we'd visit, she'd always hug me and say Boychik and Dumchik, [laughing] doing my cheeks like that. She died when I was about eight.

My grandfather, Morris, he died before I was born. You know, according to Orthodox tradition, that's how I was named after him; we couldn't have named him—

DR: That's right, according to Ashkenazic tradition.

MM: Yeah. We were always, in my family, named after the deceased, in honor of the deceased.

RM: Well, they were saying this morning, after *living* people.

DR: In the Sephardic—

MM: Sephardic.

DR: —Sephardic tradition. That's a *huge* [ed.: sounds like “difference”].

MM: The Ashkenazic was that you would never name after living.

DR: In Ashkenazic belief it's a death wish—

MM: That's right.

DR: That you're wishing someone dead, and the Sephardics consider it this enormous honor, so it's very—

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MM: It's a memorial to name them after the deceased.

DR: Exactly.

MM: That's why Morris Rosen and I were both named after our grandfather Morris.

DR: When were you born?

MM: I was born June 10th, 1923.

DR: So your grandfather had recently passed away?

MM: To tell you the truth, I've really forgotten. No, he had been dead about ten, eleven years, when I was born.

DR: Do you know where he's buried?

MM: He's buried right in Charleston. I used to know the name—the oldest—

RM and DR: Coming Street Cemetery.

MM: [Inaudible], and my grandmother is buried there, too. [Ed.: Mamie and Morris Blatt are buried in the Brith Sholom Magnolia Cemetery.]

You know, I said Mamie; it's not Mamie. Mamie was Mrs. Rephan. [Laughs.] I'm going to have to think—Everybody called my mother Mary. She said that in Hebrew her name was Maryam, which would really be translated to Miriam, but they Anglicized it on her school records and everything, and it was Mary.

RM: Good Christian name.

MM: Right! [Laughing.] [Inaudible.]

DR: I interviewed Isaac Jacobs from Charleston last week.

MM: Very old friends of ours, yeah.

DR: He talked about the Mazursky bakery.

MM: He did?

DR: I hadn't made the connection until you [inaudible].

MM: Is that right? Yeah. Well, I've got an old book from Columbia that a fellow named

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Griffin from here wrote, but he lived in Columbia. He married one of the Hurst girls from here.

RM: Rabbi Hirsch's daughter?

MM: No, *Hurst*, you know, Hurst, like Hurst Furniture? This really has nothing to do with it. He wrote a book about Columbia, and the main street of Columbia, and he's got a story in it about my grandfather's bakery in Columbia in the early 1900s. It's called *Main Street Columbia*. I'd be glad to show it to you.

DR: I'd *love* to see that, yeah.

MM: My grandfather—my mother always said that he never really accumulated a lot of wealth because he was a rolling stone. But in those days, you know, you didn't have much money to roll far, so he lived primarily between Columbia, Charleston, and Augusta. My mother said every time she thought he was doing real good, he decided he'd rather go back to Charleston or go back to Columbia. [Laughing.] My mother grew up— In fact, she was confirmed—and this sounds funny, because the family was Orthodox—she was confirmed in Augusta, Georgia, and attended public school in Augusta. She was real southern. My mother was four years old when they moved south from Philadelphia, but she sounded *real* Southern—I guess like [laughs] me!

DR: So this is your mother's side of the family.

MM: Right.

DR: And your father's side were also bakers?

MM: No, no. Let me say a little more about my mother's side. Robert will probably find this interesting. The landsman, or good friend, from the Old Country that they knew in Charleston was a Henry Hirshman, and Henry Hirshman had become a prosperous wholesale grocer in Charleston in the early 1900s, when my grandfather on my mother's side moved down. So they went to Charleston because they knew Henry, who they called Herschel, not Henry—in Europe he was Herschel.

When they went down—what Jews would do, back in those days, is they wouldn't give charity, they would give you credit, they would help you get started. Henry Hirshman sold my grandfather his first supply of flour and whatever he needed to make bread. In fact, Henry Hirshman—his daughter was a Kate Hirshman, who married Sam Weinberg.

RM: And that was the Kate Weinberg I knew.

MM: Yeah. That was Rusty Weinberg's grandmother.

RM: Grandmother—wait a minute.

MM: So I [inaudible] Rusty [inaudible]—

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RM: No, Mortimer was her brother.

MM: No, Mortimer was her *son*.

RM: Her son? Mortimer was Kate and Sam's son, yeah.

MM: Right, right.

RM: And Sam was the one that—

MM: He had the shakes, you know.

RM: I got behind him coming down the street, and he turned the corner and got on the wrong side—up on the curb on the wrong side of the road [inaudible]—

MM: I don't know whether you'll find anybody in the Weinberg family, but from my knowledge they started out—I don't know how they got up from— The Weinbergs settled, I think, near the Mayesville-Sumter County area. Miss Kate must have met Sam and [inaudible]. At one time they made most of their fortune running a little country store in Wedgefield, and moved up to Sumter and invested in real estate. They owned all that black property, you know, residential property on the south side of town, and other property, too.

RM: She was the—

MM: She was the businesswoman.

RM: —landlady, yeah.

MM: She was the businesswoman.

DR: Here it is again—*she* was the [laughing] businesswoman.

RM: That's right.

DR: The men—

MM: Well, my mother always said—she wasn't picking on them—she said that of the Austrian and the Hungarians, the women were the b—the *men* were all [inaudible] playboys, and they never could settle down too good. That's what she said. She said when she married, she was looking for a Russian. She married one. [Laughing.]

RM: Well, they were saying that they were credited with being ho—

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MM: Very astute [inaudible]—huh?

RM: —holy, the men were always holy.

MM: Oh! [Laughing.]—davened all the time. But Hungarians were the worst. [Laughing.]

DR: That's really interesting. Your mother said that.

MM: Yeah. She said that her father wasn't the best businessman in the world.

RM: The Russians were?

MM: The Russians were traders.

RM: [Inaudible.]

MM: I mean, they were just naturals—drivers. My father had that nature, too. He was a very adventurous [inaudible], loved to take chances on enterprises. . . . That was my mother's observation, [inaudible] and Daddy suited that image.

I was going to say on the Hirshman side, I thought you'd be interested, because when you get back to Charleston and you start talking [inaudible]. I don't know that any of them are down there. But because so many Jews had Charleston connections, Marcia and I went down—believe it or not, we were there this past weekend. Marcia's birthday was the weekend before, and we tried to get in and couldn't get it. So I said, "We'll go down to Charleston." We stayed at the Omni and just walked all around the antique section and up and down King.

It amazed me when I got on Meeting Street there, where they've got Nathan's Deli and Hyman's Deli. Hyman's—I think they must've [inaudible], because old Herman Hyman was a Jewish man and he was married to a Karesh and ran a wholesale clothing jobbing house there. That other store adjoining Hyman's was the other member of the Karesh family that had a wholesale jobbing, you know, clothing, sundries, and things like that, just like Jacobs had.

My father was a merchant here for many, many years, and back in the early days, they didn't buy directly; those were called jobbers that sold clothing and socks, and [inaudible] on your hosiery and stuff like that. We used to go down many a weekend. They were all Orthodox and they closed on Saturday and opened their places of business on Sunday. In Charleston they were very—

RM: And you all would get stock from them.

MM: Yeah, Dad would go down and my mother would visit with her sisters and things, and I'd be, as a little boy, go down. My father would take me with him. All of the men, they'd sit around and joke, and speak mostly in Yiddish, and tell jokes in Yiddish—they'd use Yiddish because I couldn't understand [laughs], darn it [laughing]—right there on Meeting Street. So all those old stores really brought back not old history [inaudible], but wonderful memories.

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DR: Mr. Jacobs said, at one time, he thinks—

MM: I saw him at the meeting.

DR: —a third of the stores on King Street—

MM: You mean that real elderly Mr. Jacobs?

DR: This—Isaac Jacobs is seventy-something years old.

MM: Yeah. His wife, believe it or not, Ruth is a Bass, and her sister lives over in Bishopville. When you get over to Lee County—

RM: We've got a new Lee County.

MM: —and her sister, Ruth's sister Frances, who's married to a Ginsberg, she lives there—
[inaudible] sister. Ruth and I were at Carolina together—University of South Carolina together.

Jacobs—gosh, I remember when my father used to go in there and buy hosiery and socks from the hosiery company. I spoke to him—we shook hands—and he said that he remembered my father. [Ed.: sounds like “We were at”] the first meeting.

DR: Yeah, he's an interesting guy and Ruth has been *enormously* helpful.

MM: She's a very intelligent girl.

DR: *Terrifically* helpful.

MM: Well, her brother, you know, is the fellow Bass—I don't know if she told you—

DR: I know Jack.

MM: Jack wrote the *Orangeburg Massacre*.

DR: Right.

MM: His older brother, when I started at Carolina, was Bernard Bass. Bernard's dead now.

DR: Bernie.

MM: Bernie, yeah. There's no end to family connections in this state.

DR: So let's just go back to your father's family, starting at the beginning again.

MM: All right. I have to start this way. My father was born in Russia. He was born in a city—

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and it's still on the map—called Kobrin, K-O-B-R-I-N—

RM: It seems to me I've heard of that [inaudible].

MM: —in Russia. It was in a province—and don't ask me how to spell it—called Grodno Gubernia. I'm sure we could look it up in the encyclopedia and find it. It was about two hundred miles east of Warsaw, but it was always in Russia. It was right near the area they called the Pale. That was an area that sort of went back and forth between Russia and—I think World War I, World War II; you probably heard that from some of your—

DR: That's where my family is from.

MM: Really? But getting back to that, my father had numerous sisters and brothers in his family. Or rather, his *father*—no, let me get back. His father was David.

My father in Russia—Dad was the youngest—I can't tell you exactly—probably of about ten or eleven children.

RM: What was your father's first name? I can't remember.

MM: His name was Abraham Isaac, but nobody ever called him Abraham. He was Abe, and I don't think many people knew his middle name in this country. He was always Abe. He grew up in this—I guess it was a little village—of Kobrin. Actually, he didn't live in Kobrin. He always called it Kobrin. It was like the county seat of the province. They were wheat farmers, grain farmers. Dad always said that one reason he left Russia was because there was no freedom. They had no civil rights. They weren't allowed to go to school, except in rare circumstances.

RM: Was it because they were Jewish?

MM: Yeah, just because they were Jews. Jews were very downtrodden in Russia, but they survived. The way they were educated—my father got all of his education in what was called cheder, which was Hebrew school. It was primarily because of the Jewish admonition to read the Torah. Everybody had to be literate. Jews were literate and the Russian moujik [ed.: or muzhik—a Russian peasant], who were slaves, were not.

And because of being literate, they would—I think it was during the days of the czar, Peter or Czar Alexander—who knows? When they freed the serfs—now, they were freed somewhat the way the blacks were freed after the Civil War; they were given forty acres and a mule; they couldn't read and they couldn't write. And what happened is the Jews were survivors, and they came and they leased—they couldn't own land, but it was a legal subterfuge; they *said* they owned it—and they leased land from the moujiks, who didn't know anything about managing, and produced wheat.

I assume the czar and the people who governed were glad because that was some economic worth. Actually, the moujiks, or the peasants, the Russian peasants, were like the sharecroppers. [Laughs.] It was a reverse of where the whites own the land here and sharecroppers, the blacks—the moujiks owned the land, but they were still sharecroppers of the

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Jews

RM: They couldn't do anything.

MM: Of course, that was just my father's family. Most of the Jews lived in the town of Kobrin, and they were the type that you would see in *Fiddler on the Roof*. I'll never forget the first time my father saw the Broadway play, *Fiddler*. He says, "That's it!" I said, "What do you mean, 'That's it?'" He said, "That's the conditions under which I grew up." He really loved that play.

RM: He must have been fairly up in years before he left then.

MM: No. He left in 1909. He was born on July 26, 1892. So when he came over, he was only seventeen years of age.

RM: That's long enough to have gotten a good feeling, though.

MM: Oh yes. Oh, he knew life in Russia. In fact, he told me that when you were thirteen and you were bar mitzvah, you were a man. You had finished all the schooling. In other words, bar mitzvah in Europe meant a lot more—you graduated from school, you said, "Today I am a man,"—

RM: You meant it.

MM: You meant it. And you didn't have any high school, anything like that. You had to be literate—

RM: [Inaudible.]

MM: —by that time. He had his own mill.

RM: Good *night!*

MM: Well, when I say mill, picture some like you see in Holland. Some of them were windmills that ground the meal, and some of them were pu—they put a horse inside and it'd go round and round and round and run the grinder.

RM: Yeah, I've seen [inaudible] molasses mills like that over here.

MM: He said at one time they had under lease well over a thousand. [Inaudible]—with the oldest brother. That was Uncle Louis, really Lazar, but when he came to this country, they called him Louis—was like the patriarch of the family, and they leased this land. My father grew up under those circumstances . . . I forget who died first, but his mother and father had died by the time he was eight years old. But Louis was, believe it or not, twenty years older than him. That's how long they had families.

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RM: *Mercy!*

MM: I thought just the other day, I said, “You know, maybe that’s why he was called Abraham Isaac, because of the fact that Abraham was so old when he had his son Isaac.” [Laughing.] You know, they said he was a hundred years old. I don’t know why they named him Abraham Isaac, but that was his name.

He remembers his mother and he remembers his father. When they died, his brother—who had children that were just as old as him, almost—raised him. His brother was like his second father. That was Uncle Louis. He was the manager of the plantation, so to speak, which it was [inaudible].

My father, when he reached—he was already operating his own mill—he reached seventeen, and in Russia, even though you weren’t given any civil rights, everybody was conscripted and drafted into the Russian army. My father just made up his mind—I think he just had a lot of guts, I guess, nerve—he said “I’m not going to serve the country.”

Of course, word trickled back about America and freedom. By that time he already had had an older brother, Uncle Charles, and Aunt Rebecca, who had immigrated to this country and settled in the New York area. He decided he was going to this country, to come to America. He went to Louis and he said—and he owned a share of the land, you know, it was like a family [inaudible]. Louis said, “You mean give *all* of this up?” And my father says, “I told him, ‘Give up what?’” You know, all the moujiks got to do is turn on you and you’ve got—

RM: Nothing.

MM: —nothing. So he settled and sold his interest for five hundred rubles—that’s five hundred Russian dollars—to his brother.

DR: And Louis stayed.

MM: Louis stayed and got caught in the German invasion of Russia. That’s another long story. [Laughing.] I guess the people who [inaudible]—he ultimately settled in Madison, Wisconsin. He was a pillar of the Jewish community there. I won’t get into that or we’ll get way down the line.

DR: But he escaped the—

MM: Finally escaped with all of his children.

DR: Amazing.

MM: It’s a long story about him, but I don’t want to digress from my father.

DR: Maybe later. I mean that’s of interest to me, because it’s a—

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MM: Anyway, what it was, they may have had one brother before—who would have been an uncle of my father—who had deserted. The Russians were very penal to the family. The way they would try to stop the young Jewish boys from deserting was to penalize and fine the family, and they could do it. So what my father had to do was go ahead and enlist. Oddly enough, they had an enlistment age of eighteen, just like we have in this country, but he was only seventeen. So he went . . . when he got to them, he says, “Well, I’m ready to go.” They said, “How old are you?” He said, “Eighteen.” They didn’t check the ages or anything like that.

So they inducted him. It’s a real humorous story. They were watching him. [Ed.: sounds like “He went through like”]—he said when he got through basic, he was scheduled to go to a *far* outpost in Siberia, so he knew he had to get away. There was sort of a time schedule.

You know, my fairy tales were the things—my father was the greatest storyteller; he’d tell me all these things. [Laughing.] He’d tell us the story again about how he got out of Russia, and maybe he glamorized it a little, too, you know? [Laughing.]

RM: He had to make it good.

MM: He said that he—finally, [inaudible] he wanted to get away. It was very subtle. They assigned him to be under the command of what we’d call a corporal, and this fellow—Daddy said he had to get *real* friendly with him. He got some money from his brother—he was still stationed near home. He told the corporal, “I want to take you out for a big dinner.” Well, Russians were notoriously big drinkers, and he said that it was amazing how much vodka he had to buy. [Laughing.] This fellow finally passed out, and that was the night he escaped.

In those days they would get a horse and wagon—Jews were always leaving, and other people. He tells us hair-raising stories about where they got caught at the border—men, women, and children. He was a young single fellow. They were just about to cross over into Germany, and the Russian border gua—

RM: This is the same night?

MM: Yeah, the same—Russian border guards caught them. Most of these people were poor, and Daddy’s family, because, I guess, of their influence, had learned about the great art of bribery and how to get what they wanted. That’s why Russia was going to collapse. Back in those days it did collapse.

RM: The [ed.: sounds like “worm eating”] from within.

MM: Well, they—yeah. Even the people who were Russian had no loyalty, because the czar was an absolute tyrant and monarch, and they were kept in subjugation.

So the guy from the [inaudible] says, “They’re going to take you back.” The people were wailing. Daddy went around the wagon. He says, “Give me whatever contribution you have.” He went and talked to the head officer—all of them were on horseback—and he said, “Look, we’re a bunch of poor people. You got to go *ten miles* back in the snow. Why not go get some drinks? What do you care about these”—you know. I guess he used some very choice w—“What in hell do you care about these poor bunch of people? You’re going to carry them back? For what?” So

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they took whatever there was, the thirty or forty—

RM: Looks like they would have taken it anyway.

MM: —fifty rubles. Well, no, they're maybe halfway. If they took it, they would still have to carry them back, see? What they did was head for the nearest bar. That's the way he got across the border.

He went to Hamburg. The takeoff point was in Hamburg, Germany. In those days the Jews would—that was one of the great ports of embarkation, and Daddy got on. [Inaudible] must have been.

He loved to play poker, and he said by the time he got to New York, he'd lost two hundred [inaudible] [laughing] dollars [inaudible] playing poker; he got caught with some sharks. But he said he learned fast. He realized—he was seventeen years old.

DR: Explain to me why he needed to join the army.

MM: Because of the family. If he hadn't joined first, his family would have been penalized, would have been punished. And then—

DR: Okay, this was—he was born in [inaudible]?

MM: He emigrated in—

DR: 1909.

MM: 1909. He was seventeen. Landed at Ellis Island. I sent in a contribution to have him listed on that Ellis Island reproduction. Anyway, I want to go there. I haven't seen it yet, have you?

DR: I haven't, but that's the first thing on my list.

MM: That, next to the Holocaust [Museum], I guess. Anyway, when he came to New York, he had a brother Charles, who then lived in Yonkers. Charles later moved to Perth Amboy, New Jersey, and his family primarily lived and died in New Jersey, and [inaudible] still [inaudible].

He had a sister Rebecca, who lived in the Bronx. Daddy and Rebecca were closer because she was the next to the youngest and he was the youngest. She had immigrated earlier and was married and had some children. She married somebody by the name of [ed.: sounds like "Hirshenhaus"], and I don't know what his background [laughing] was—might be interesting, though.

Charles had quite a family. His oldest son was named David. David was married and had several children, one of whom was a son named Paul. Paul Mazursky is the actor-producer-director, who's a distant cousin of mine.

DR: How do you like that? I didn't even think of that connection. He's very well known.

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MM: Yeah.

RM: Well, he wouldn't be a *distant* cousin.

MM: He's a third cousin. That's pretty distant. [Laughing.]

RM: That's not so—

MM: I never have met him. But Paul's uncles . . . a fellow named Arthur Mazursky and Bernard Mazursky—two of the children—they were in the juvenile furniture business. Uncle Charlie was a mattress-maker. I won't say manufacturer, because he started off making [inaudible] mattresses, until finally, I guess, got run out by Simmons and people like that. They went into the furniture business in New Jersey. Bernie—I call him Bernie—and Art, they've retired now; they're well into their seventies. They live in the Miami area now. They've changed their name—I think they're traitors—they've reduced it to Mazur, [inaudible] M-A-Z-U-R.

DR: And those are Charles's—

MM: Charles's sons, too. Paul is a grandson.

RM: Paul's name was Mazur and he changed it back to Mazursky?

MM: No, Arthur and Bernie were Arthur and Bernard Mazursky and they changed their name to Mazur. Paul still goes by the name of Mazursky. His father was employed at the *New York Times*. I don't think he was [inaudible] in the writing department. I [inaudible]—

RM: So that's three siblings that beat your father to the states.

MM: Right. When he came over he—when dad started out, he couldn't speak English. One of his first jobs, he says, was delivering seltzer bottles in the flats of New York. Here he was, strong, [inaudible], strong fella, *short*—Robert remembers him.

RM: He was small.

MM: He had muscles [inaudible], good frame. He said he carried them up four or five flights, which, that was his first job. Then they told him that he could make a lot of money—they were using immigrants to build roads in Pennsylvania. He went with the work crew, and he said all of them were mostly Italians [laughing], and they weren't very bright. [Laughing.] He said going out and digging roads wasn't his exact idea of really getting ahead in the world. He got very disillusioned with New York real fast, real speedily. He thought of his uncle, who lived in Barnwell, South Carolina. This is—I'm sort of—

RM: No, that's all right, because we want to know how he got to the South.

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MM: He had an uncle who was really Beryl, but who was called Barney. He'd settled in the Barnwell County area. At the time my father decided to move down, he was already a very prosperous merchant in the town of Barnwell.

RM: He was a Mazursky?

MM: Oh, yeah.

DR: This would have been his father's brother?

MM: Right, this was his uncle. In fact, I think there was a little hard feelings, because Barney was one that had sneaked out from the army—or Beryl—and had caused the family a lot of trouble. They'd gotten in a big argument about it and Dad didn't know how well [laughs] he would be welcomed when he got down into Barnwell. Beryl—well, we never called him—we called him Great-uncle Barney. In fact, the blacks called him Mr. B. because they could never pronounce—

I will say this, and I want you to know this, too, because you'll run into people—in latter days we're called Mazursky. In Russia, it was [ed.: sounds like "Mazurvsky"]; that was the former name. My father—Robert [inaudible] remember this if he talks to any of the old-timers—my father was never known as Abe Mazursky; his name was Abe [ed.: sounds like "Mazoosky"], because nobody in the South pronounces an R.

End Side A, Tape 1
Begin Side B, Tape 1

DR: —were talking about his—

RM: He joined his uncle.

MM: Yeah.

DR: In Barnwell.

MM: He came down to Barnwell, and I think it's right interesting. I asked him how he got down. He said he took a boat, a steamer, just like a coastal steamer from New York to Norfolk. In Norfolk you—

RM: [Inaudible] out to Barnwell?

MM: —you'd disembark, or whatever you'd call it, in Norfolk, and then you'd catch, I guess, what was either—I think it was already the Atlantic Coast Line Railway. It went all the way through Virginia and North Carolina down to—I think terminated at Augusta, Georgia. It went right through to Barnwell.

Dad tells the story that this was—he came to this country in 1909, and I really think he

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probably arrived in Barnwell about 1910. He didn't last long in New York. That's as near as I can place it. The reason I'm saying that is because he was already, later on, in Sumter County by 1912.

He came to Barnwell and couldn't speak English, yet, very well. He said that was one—he always told me, he said one reason he wanted to get out of New York was if he stayed in New York, there were too many people there that could speak Yiddish or that still speak Russian, and he said he would have *never* learned the English language.

So he came down to Barnwell. He came in at about, maybe, two o'clock in the morning on the train; got off in the dark. He says the first one to greet him was a colored porter standing on the—he wasn't on the train, he was, you know, like a—

RM: Platform.

MM: —platform worker. The fellow says to him, "Hello, white folks!" [Laughs.] Daddy, with his poor knowledge of English, thought he was calling him a fox! [Laughing.] He said, "*I'm no fox!*" [laughing] . . . and the black person was very meek. He said he must have scared him to death, because he said all he could see in the dark were these white teeth [laughs] grinning at him.

He finally made it known well enough to—I guess he finally made him understand what he was looking for. And Barnwell's a little village. It was the county seat. Early that morning, probably about daylight, he got to his uncle's house, because everybody—he called it Mazursky, so they must have recognized the name, because that's what his uncle went by. My father says he walked up to the door—he wasn't announced; he hadn't sent him any letter in advance—he knocked on the door. He says to him—Uncle Beryl is what he probably called him—and he says, "Who are you?" He says, "I'm Abram Itzak . . . David's son." And he took him in.

Of course, he said, they didn't make it easy for him, exactly. When he first got there, he said his uncle said, "Well, first, you've got to learn the language. You're not equipped to go into the business because you can't talk to the people." So he says his job, for about the first few months, was to take care of the stuff in the stable and the horses and—

DR: What was the business?

MM: He had what we call a general store. It was like the old country general store. He sold groceries, everything—like old McDonald and Company [inaudible]—clothing, everything from the bottom up. He was the main general store in the town or village of Barnwell. I guess my daddy progressed a while and then he went into the store. Daddy was very gregarious. Robert probably remembers. He liked people and he made friends among the non-Jews real fast. In particular, he must have been a little on the maverick side—some [inaudible] stories I could [inaudible].

He was a pretty strong-willed guy, and he liked to play poker, and he liked to go around with his boys. Uncle Barney was *tight*. As Daddy says, he was a very frugal person. He didn't believe in any of that stuff, you know. So Daddy says that he worked and, by that time, he had learned a little bit about the business, and he and his uncle had a great falling-out. He was paying him a low salary, and Dad went out and he lost three dollars in a poker game.

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RM: Three?

MM: Three, yeah. That was a fortune back in those days. Some people worked for three dollars a week. His uncle fussed at him, told him off pretty bad, and Daddy was strong-willed and wouldn't take it, and he made up his mind—

RM: To leave.

MM: —to leave. He was not going to stand for that. He had enough money saved up, and he was going to go back to New York. He hated to do it, but—so he got on the train at Barnwell. The train used to stop at all these little small towns—Allendale, Williston—it went through all of those—

RM: Had he bought a ticket for New York?

MM: Oh, yeah. I think it stopped at a place called Allendale . . . in Allendale County. He said that it stopped to take on passengers, so he got off to get a breath of fresh air, and probably a smoke. He was smoking from the time he was thirteen years old, in those days.

RM: I remember him smoking heavily.

MM: Yeah. He's standing on the platform in Allendale and he saw a fellow that looked familiar. They looked at each other. The other fellow turns, he says, "Abram?" and he said, "Irving? I think it was Irving. It was a guy named Pomerantz.

RM: [Inaudible] Pomerantz?

MM: Pomerantz, a Jewish guy. He said, "What are you doing here?" He said, "Well, I moved to this country." Somehow, the Pomerantzes were distantly connected with the Mazurskys. Some dist—not even really cousins. But Daddy had gone to Hebrew school, the cheder, in the same place in Russia. Would you believe that? This is fate. He said, "I'm working for a Jewish merchant here named Wolff, the Wolffs." Daddy said, "Well, I'm going to New York." He said, "You don't want to go back to that pesthole." [Laughing.] Don't have to go. He said, "What can I do?" He said, "Oh, I'll get you a job."

Daddy said he really hadn't learned too much about the—you had to be a fast learner in those days. So he somehow cashed in his ticket or was able—probably wasn't but two dollars all the way to New York back in those days, who knows? Anyway, he took a job—this fellow got him a job with the Wolff for about three-and-a-half dollars a week. He said you could get a boarding-house room for a dollar-and-a-half, or two dollars for your room and board for a whole week in those days, if you can believe it. [Laughs.]

This fellow Wolff—Daddy says he was an *amazing* merchant. He was really just a hard-driving, smart operator, probably less wealthy than his uncle. He had the drive. Daddy said he really learned more about the business working for him.

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He picked up English real fast. I don't [inaudible] fellas. He must have been a speed demon. He got in with the young fellows in Allendale. He was really one of the boys, you know. He was working and doing really well.

Daddy said one evening one of the non-Jewish boys—Daddy'd say goyscha boys—they were out all drinking. Daddy said he'd go with them, but he'd [inaudible]. One of them got real drunk and had a pistol and started shooting at everybody's [inaudible]. One of the times he shot—and Daddy wasn't looking at the time—the bullet went and hit him through the instep.

R M: Your father's instep?

MM: Yes, knocked him flat, [inaudible]. The fellow, he said, immediately sobered up, he was so—

RM: Through his foot?

MM: Yeah. Daddy said the guy picked him up and put him in some kind of little doctor's place that they had there. Of course, bad news always travels fast; it probably wasn't the next day—you know, blood is thicker than water, as Daddy said—his uncle Barney heard that it was some boy by that name. He knew it must be him. Came over and picked him up and took him back to Barnwell [laughing], and they nursed him back to health.

But he had learned enough with Wolff and then . . . his uncle took him into the store. Daddy said he had really gotten behind the times. He was doing business because he was the only store there. My father put in all kinds of innovations for him, and straightened out his stock. I think he was there until about—

RM: Well, you say he came here in 19—

MM: Yeah, it was only about the middle of 1911. My uncle in Barnwell had numerous daughters and sons. He had several daughters and two sons. Oddly enough, his two sons were the youngest, just like in my mother's side of the family, so they were not old enough. They were young, comparatively young boys, and they were a lot younger.

RM: To go in the business.

MM: To go into the business at that time. But my uncle was still active and had other help. He had one daughter, Rebecca, who had married a fellow by the name of Theodore Kahn, K-A-H-N, who—how he got there, I don't know—owned a little department store in Mayesville, South Carolina. Theodore had some illness. I think he, maybe, developed TB. That was when they used to have to go places like Camp Alice [ed.: in Sumter].

RM: Right.

MM: He says, "Theodore is real ill." He told my father, "Would you go down and manage the store?" So Dad moved to Mayesville. That's a little village, a crossroad now.

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RM: About nine miles from here.

MM: Nine miles from here, still in Sumter County. At the time Dad moved there, he said it was a very prosperous little village, and [inaudible]—

RM: At one time, they had about seven banks. You hardly even can *see* the place now.

MM: I don't think it had but one bank.

RM: I heard it had seven banks.

MM: Well, anyway, it had a bank—when my father got there, he said it had a bank, a drug store—

RM: It had a hotel.

MM: —hotel, Anderson Hotel. My father, a young, unmarried fellow, he lived at Anderson Hotel, which Bubba Jim Mayes—it was his office when he went bankrupt and went out of the cotton business.

So he went to work for—and they called Theodore, Theo, [inaudible]. His wife was Rebecca, who was a “Mazoosky” or Mazursky. [Laughs.] They never had any children.

RM: This was his uncle's daughter?

MM: This was his first cousin, Rebecca [inaudible].

RM: And her husband.

MM: Right.

RM: And that's who he went to work for.

MM: He worked for them until about 1913. Theo got well, or at least came back. And Daddy, by that time, had become well acquainted with [inaudible]. He told Theo, he says, “You know”—

RM: Not going to [inaudible].

MM: No. He says, “You know, Mayesville, things are changing. You need to open a branch in Sumter.” Theo said, “Oh, no, we're doing—he was as conservative [inaudible]—

RM: Your dad was telling him that things were changing and he needed to open a branch.

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MM: Yeah. Theo said, “No, no.” Daddy said, “I’m getting to the place where I want to go into business for myself. I thought if you would finance it, I’d run it, and we can split the profits, and it would give me a chance.” Theo wouldn’t do it. So about that time—this was in 1912, 1913, probably the middle of 1913—Henry Weinberg—

RM: Is that Goza?

MM: That was Mr. Sam Weinberg’s brother, and Marvell Goza’s [ed.: father]—[inaudible] Goza’s brother.

DR: Goza?

MM: G-O-Z-A. They were not Jewish.

DR: A name I never heard.

MM: Somebody’ll get to that later when we get to the Weinberg side. Anyway, here’s an old Sumter—old Jewish family, the Weinbergs, which is another thing you’ll eventually get into if we follow Sumter [laughing] long enough. He had become a very wealthy man. He was what you’d call a lien merchant. Have you heard that phrase?

DR: Lien?

RM and MM: L-I-E-N.

MM: Lien, meaning mortgages.

RM: Loaned people money and then took their property.

MM: Yeah, and they’d run some kind of store they would supply people from, but their primary business was lending—

RM: Like pawn shops.

MM: —pawn shops—and supplying them, and taking a mortgage on their crop and their land. He was also a big gambler in the cotton future market.

RM: This was Henry Weinberg?

MM: Henry [inaudible]. He saw my father and he said, “Abe, if you ever want to go into business, I’ll be partners with you”—my father apparently impressed people—he said, “I’ll back you up.” So when Theo wouldn’t go with him, Daddy . . . went and rented—he told Mr. Weinberg, he said, “What I’d like to do is open in Sumter.” Anyway, he went with Henry. I don’t know whether you remember him or not.

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RM: No, not at all.

MM: He was a typical Weinberg, you know, he'd curse every other word [laughs], drink like hell, but very wealthy. [Laughing.] I don't know whether you knew old Julien Weinberg down in Manning. [Inaudible.] He was sort of the same way. Julien [inaudible]. He was a big tall [inaudible], same way.

Daddy said he didn't ask too many questions; he had to learn by experience. He said, "Well, I'm ready to go." He'd already cut his ties with Theo, and Theo was real mad at him that he was leaving him, his cousin by marriage. He said, "I'm ready to go to Sumter now and [inaudible]." He said, "No, I'm not going to [inaudible] Sumter. He said, "Well, you know, even Mayesville, we'd need about five thousand dollars." Henry said, "I was thinking in terms of about fifteen hundred." Daddy said the dye was cast and he couldn't retreat. He knew people well enough, so one lady rented him a store there, and he got farm help to help him build handmade fixtures. Then he went to the market—

RM: Excuse me, this was where? In Mayesville?

MM: In Mayesville. He decided he had to open up in Mayesville. With fifteen hundred dollars he developed the store and went—in those days a big wholesaler was Butler Brothers in Baltimore—and Daddy went up. . . . I said, "How'd you get merchandise?" He said, "Well, I went in to the credit manager," and he says—I guess you have to have a lot of brass—he says, "I've got five hundred dollars I can give you in cash, but I need the other five hundred, but I want to get several thousand dollars' worth of merchandise." The credit man [inaudible]; he says, "You know, you've got so much guts [laughing], I'm going to let you have it." [Laughter.] And he came back to Mayesville.

You know, the crazy thing was, in 1914 . . . World War I was coming on, things were really—

RM: Starting to [inaudible]?

MM: —[inaudible], you know, and things got so busy, Daddy said he worked day and night. He couldn't afford any help. But then—

RM: Was he in competition with Theo?

MM: Yeah, all of them. But apparently, they were all doing all right. He says within two or three years they had their whole stock of merchandise worth ten or fifteen thousand dollars, and he turned over ten thousand dollars in cash to Henry Weinberg, and kept ten thousand himself. That was about 1919, [inaudible] 1919, [inaudible] the end of the war. . . .

He had met my mother—

RM: That's what I was getting ready to ask you.

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MM: My mother, by that time, had gone—her father, my grandfather; I wasn't born then. Of course, he had died with cancer of the liver.

RM: This was in—

MM: In Charleston. He died in Charleston. He was a baker in Charleston. I think, by that time, he'd gone into the grocery business. In fact, the same Henry Hirshman, Rusty's great-grandfather, who was at his bedside when he died—[inaudible] from cancer in those days, and finally they realized what it was.

It was very traumatic to my mother. She was one of the daughters that helped nurse him. After he died she said she just had to get away, so she went to Columbia, worked as a bookkeeper for a business, and lived with her sister Rachel Kaletski.

RM: I see, okay. Getting closer.

MM: Yeah, getting closer. My dad was in Mayesville. They had several Jewish families; some of Isidore Denmark's family were there. The Denemarks lived there at one time.

RM: Wasn't Isidore born there?

MM: Yeah, I think so. And the [ed.: sounds like "Monnasons"], which were cousins of the Denemarks, and they had one family in Mayesville named Goldmans. Of course, the Goldmans had a child, and Rabbi Karesh from Columbia, who was—you'll probably get into that eventually, through Lourie and all of them. I told Robert, he was [ed.: sounds like "marrying Sam"], he was the shadchen, he slaughtered the meat, he was the shochet and [laughing] everything else, and he was the mohel. So he was in Mayesville, and Daddy was asked to be a part of the minyan at the bris, the circumcision of this—

RM: [Inaudible.]

MM: —of Goldman. Rabbi Karesh spotted him right away. Here was a young Jewish boy—so many of them were staying in these towns, and he didn't want them to marry out of their faith, and "Have I got a girl for you," you know. [Laughing.] So he invited him up to Columbia. Daddy said, "Well, I've never been to Columbia." The same old adventurous Abe. My mother hated shadchens. She was never going to deal with them.

RM: [Inaudible.]

MM: That's another story.

DR: A matchmaker. How would you spell that?

MM: I'm not sure . . . My mother used to say that the Jews jokingly would say *shotgun* [laughing], you know, a made marriage.

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Anyway, Rabbi Karesh invited him up to Columbia for some affairs and brought him around the house—to my aunt [ed.: sounds like “Rae’s”] house. My mother wouldn’t hardly have anything to do with him, because she figured it was a matchmaker, you know. [Laughs.] Finally, my father was very persuasive, and Aunt Rae said, “Well, you could go out with him *one time*,” you know, [laughing]. “You don’t have to marry him.” So they did start courting. My mother said, “He was really a handsome fellow,” she told me. “I really liked him and I [inaudible]. [Laughter.]

So in 19— My mother was—*ooh!*—set in her ways, and she didn’t want to be one of those war widows. My father was subject to the draft. She says, “I don’t want to get married until I’m sure you’re not going to go over to Europe, get shot, and leave me all alone.” So they courted for about nine months. Then the armistice came in 1918, and they were married in September 1919.

RM: Well, Helen must have been born pretty quick.

MM: About a year, my mother said [inaudible]. It was almost a place where there would have been talk. [Laughter.]

RM: I’m just judging from my own birthday, knowing that Helen’s about a year older than me.

....

MM: My mother moved to Mayesville and established—and it was a traumatic experience for her, again, because she was living in Columbia, which already had—

RM: A big city.

MM: —a big city, state capital, it had electric lights and transportation. She moved to— Mayesville did not even have electricity, and she had to deal with kerosene lamps and pumps. Two of the people had Delco pumps, a big deal [laughs]. [Inaudible.]

RM: [Inaudible.]

MM: My sister was born in Mayesville in the home. Not by choice; she came early. [Laughing.]

RM: Well, I was thinking you told me you were born in Columbia, [inaudible]?

MM: Right. My mother had scheduled it with her sister in Columbia. She had scheduled to go there to Columbia Hospital, and my sister came two weeks early. Daddy had to run this old country doctor down to do the delivery at home. Dr. Mills delivered her, who was a great-uncle of Andy Mills, who founded Mills Electric—

RM: Yeah. I know Andy, of course.

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MM: —right here in Sumter. My mother said she didn't take any chances. She went to Columbia two weeks early when I was [inaudible], so I could be born in Columbia Hospital. And then I came a week early. She said she was the type of woman who had early arrivals. [Laughing.] I don't know how far you want me to go.

DR: Let me ask you this. I have never heard of a Jewish community in Mayesville at all, until this trip. Where did they worship? What kind of a—

MM: Well, I think that they—see, the railroads had a great influence on things. What is now the Seaboard Coast Line—of course, I don't think that line even runs that way now; it's been discontinued. There used to be a train that came from Rocky Mount, the old Atlantic Coast Line Railroad that ran from Rocky Mount in North Carolina—I think it was a change-over to another train to go on to New York—but ran from Rocky Mount to Augusta, Georgia. It passed through all these little cities through the middle of South Carolina and terminated in Augusta. Then it would turn around and go back north again.

When my mother and father were first married, she tried to keep kosher. She wasn't that particular about it, but her mother was so kosher she wouldn't visit and eat with her. But it got to the point where—they didn't have refrigerated cars and she just couldn't get kosher meats—finally had to start using—

RM: Your father had never been all that—

MM: My father was never that devout about things.

RM: He identified himself as a Jew all right, but just never was—

MM: He believed in Judaism, but he just never was—he was always so busy in business. I was telling Robert the story that he thought the Reform was too Reform, and [laughing] the Orthodox—he didn't agree with everything they did either. He saw that we got a religious upbringing, and he would go on the High Holy Days. And if there was a special event that Helen and I were participating in, he might go on a Friday night, too. [Laughing.] My mother was the one that was the pusher on that.

RM: I don't know what Dale's going to ask you, but I'd like you to bring it on in to Sumter and eventually—

MM: Yeah, well, what happened was—

RM: —[inaudible].

MM: —[inaudible]. Well, my dad was in Mayesville, and I was born, and—like I say, he and Mr. Henry Weinberg were partners. Then my father got married, and then he had Helen, my sister. It was hard to raise a family. His deal with Mr. Henry Weinberg was that "I'll do all the

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labor and then we'll split the profits."

RM: [Inaudible.]

MM: Finally, he said to Mr. Henry Weinberg, "Mr. Weinberg, I don't mind splitting the profits, but I think, in addition to that, I need to draw a salary." Mr. Weinberg said, "Oh?" [Laughing.] Daddy said, "Well, we'll just have to dissolve our partnership."

Dad tells the story; he said he ca— [Ed.: sounds like "They wanted to get out the dissolution agreement—came over"], Mr. I. C. Strauss. He was Henry Weinberg's nephew. His mother was Henry Weinberg's sister.

RM: This is the man your father was in the partnership with.

MM: Yeah. He went to his [inaudible]. Daddy said, "I know Mr. Strauss, even though he's related to you." [Inaudible.] He got in front of Mr. Strauss, and Mr. Strauss said, "Uncle Henry, you don't know a *thing* about running a dry goods store. Sell it!" They had a buy or sell agreement. Mr. Henry was so mad, he wouldn't sell out to Dad. The agreed price was ten thousand dollars, so he paid Dad ten thousand dollars and took over the store.

Daddy just turned around with his ten thousand dollars and opened another store in Mayesville and did really well, so to speak. Mr. Henry's—well, Mr. Strauss told him. He put a manager in there and sold it out in a year. He didn't listen to Mr. Strauss' good advice. [Laughing.]

DR: At which point there were *three* Jewish—

RM: That's right.

DR: —dry goods stores in Mayesville?

MM: Yeah.

DR: There was your father's, there was Weinberg's, and there was the—

MM: No. Well, Weinberg really didn't, in a sense, compete. My father did the retail business. The merchants, in those times—it's sort of an economic study—they were independents. They didn't deal in financing the farmers. They had to wait till the crops came in, and in the fall of the year, they did their big business, when the people bought with cash money. My father was a cash merchant, you might say, and Weinberg and them did financing. There were several stores around like that, but they really didn't compete. They were just more or less farm supply stores, sort of like the Barnetts had, you know.

DR: Was Theo still in business at that point?

MM: Yeah, but—

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RM: He says that his father went into kind of a specialty of dry goods. The other people were general merchants selling the farm supplies.

MM: Stuff like that, yeah. [Ed.: sounds like “And he had a little bit of clothing.”]

RM: They sold on credit and his father didn’t. That’s what kind of made it a different thing. But there were still three Jewish merchants there.

MM: Yeah, Weinberg still had his. In fact, the Mayses had theirs, and Henry [ed.” sounds like Corbett”] had—Corbett had—

RM: She was making a point of the number of Jewish merchants in a small town.

MM: Well, there was Dad, and Kahn. And at one time they—I think they were mishpocha, relatives of Denemarks—the Monnasons. There were some distant relatives from [inaudible] that had a store over there. I’m really not sure about that.

Then in 19—Daddy ran the store there and went through one little depression. It started the year before I was born; the market crashed and everything. The year I was born, he said, things started coming back up. He nearly went broke during that year.

RM: You were born in ’23?

MM: Yeah. When things started picking up, things were real busy, and my mother wanted to stay—she was helping him in the store some, too—she wanted to start staying closer to the children, and she started nagging him. She says, “I don’t want the children brought up in Mayesville. I want to move to Sumter.”

So about that time he started looking around for somebody to help him in the store. The traveling salesmen, the drummers used to come through. Most of the time they were Jewish fellows, from the North, traveling for big concerns up there. He got to telling these fellows, “I need somebody.” One guy says, “I know a fellow in Philadelphia. I think he’d make you a good man.” Daddy says, “What’s his name?” He said, “Jack Adelsburg.”

RM: [Ed.: sounds like “Dear Lord.”]

MM: Daddy said, “Well, have him”—so they corresponded or something. Finally, Daddy said, “Come on down. I think I’ll hire you.” Lo and behold—Jack had worked in a factory up there. Didn’t know a thing about [laughing] [inaudible]. Daddy had already planned a trip to the New York market to buy, and my mother was going to keep the store. My mother said, “But Jack was real smart.” She felt really sorry for him, because she was afraid [laughs] when my father got back he might fire him. She knew—

RM: Jack came while your father was gone?

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MM: Well, he came, but Daddy hadn't had a chance to see his lack of skill. [Laughing.]

RM: I see.

MM: My mother, she started training him real fast and, by the time he got back, my mother was able to talk him into keeping Jack. Daddy said he was a very bright fellow.

RM: Yeah. I'm sure he was.

MM: He was later a merchant here himself. But then you'll get into that later on.

DR: This Jack—what's his last name?

MM: Adelsburg, A-D-E-L-S-B-U-R-G.

RM: [Inaudible.]

MM: Well, Jack may have called himself Adelsburg. Max came over and said that Jack was spelling it wrong, and the name was really Edelsburg.

RM: There were two brothers. One spelled E-D-E-L and one spelled A-D-E-L—

MM: One of them spelled it Edelsburg and one spelled it Adelsburg, like tom-A-to and tom-AH-to.

RM: They both were in business here in Sumter.

MM: Anyway, while Jack was there, he wasn't married to Esther yet. You [inaudible]?

RM: Yes.

MM: He kept telling him, he said, "I'm going with this young lady." Daddy says, "Get married! Get married!" Esther Adelsburg only came down when I was a baby. She always said that she diapered me many a time. [Laughs.]

RM: One of them taught Sunday school a long time, one of their wives?

MM: Maybe it was Esther, I don't know.

RM: Was one of them kind of reddish hair?

MM: I don't know. In the latter part of 1923, Daddy had Jack—by that time he was a well-trained manager. He opened a branch store—that was going to be his permanent store—he opened up in Sumter. So we moved to Sumter in 19—I was not quite a year old.

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RM: Was that called The Hub then?

MM: I think that's what he called it. The one in Mayesville was called The Beehive. [Laughing.] I don't know where he got that. I guess it was symbolic of being real busy. Helen's got some old pictures of him standing in the store [inaudible]—

RM: [Inaudible.]

DR: Does anybody have any of the store fittings, like the signs or the cash register or—

MM: Oh, gosh. We may have—no, I don't know. I don't know what the Bergers [ed.: referring to his sister, Helen Mazursky Berger and her husband, Harry] did with the last one they had. I've been married so long; next year will be fifty years. I got out of the clothing business about fifty years ago. [Laughing.]

RM: As much as he could, [inaudible].

MM: For a while.

RM: His brother-in-law was in the business.

MM: My sister and brother-in-law, yeah.

RM: They stayed in the business and now their son is running it.

DR: And he might have—do you think he might have—

RM: No, [inaudible]. but—

MM: No, [inaudible]. Well, Helen can give you a lot. . . . She's got a lot of pictures. I'll ask her about it and see if I can get— How much of the old fixtures they've got, but I know one of the old [inaudible]—some of the old pictures, you know.

I remember this as a real little boy. We particularly had a heavy black business. The way you sold these cheap stockings and socks was you hung them up—you didn't want to waste shelf space for them—and they had, maybe, fifteen cents on them. [Laughing.] And you'd pull them down, just break off [inaudible]. It was amazing. I grew up in that business, so I can tell you a lot about it. He moved to Sumter in 1923.

DR: You and your sister were the only children?

MM: Two children—we're the only two children.

RM: We want you to tell us about growing up Jewish in Sumter, but before you forget it, I

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want you to tell her the little story about Mr. Montague and you and the steps, and how you [inaudible] why you became a lawyer.

MM: [Laughs.] Well, I don't know, they tell me. Well, I don't have to convince you after now, I was always a big talker. [Laughing.]

RM: Yeah, you have convinced me.

MM: [Laughing.] That reminds me of this ad on TV. I don't know if you've seen it recently. A guy that had the interview with the teacher, and the teacher's telling—and his father's saying “blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah” The teacher says, “Your son's doing really well in school, but he talks too much.” And the father says, “I can't imagine—blah, blah.” [Laughing.] You'll see that commercial [inaudible].

Anyway, we had a neighbor, Mr. B. L. Montague. I think it's sad the way that business has gone down—I guess you've been reading in the newspaper—the B. L. Montague Company. He was just a—apparently a very able businessman. We lived next door to him, down in one of the older areas of Sumter—Salem Avenue, which is the street—

RM: The street I was born on.

MM: Really? You were born on Salem?

RM: Yes.

MM: I was born right near the [inaudible] on Salem. At that time the [ed.: sounds like “Raines”] lived there, and the Duprees, and—

RM: I was on a block closer towards Liberty, where the [ed.: sounds like “Booths”] and the [ed.: sounds like “Shannons”]—I was on the other side of the street.

MM: Yeah. I went to kindergarten with Herbert and Debbie in Ms. Atkinson's kindergarten.

RM: So did I. That was on Saratoga Street, wasn't it?

MM: No—she was later on Saratoga. You couldn't have gone on Sa—because I was out of it when she was still on Salem Avenue.

RM: Well, I went to Ms. Atkinson's kindergarten, but I always placed it on Saratoga.

MM: She later was on Sa—No, Herbert, Vivian and I and Dorothy Bultman and—

RM: Lord, I thought Ms. Atkinson's kindergarten was on [inaudible].

MM: She did, she—

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RM: I thought that's when I went.

MM: [Inaudible], Mr. Montague, and we were his tenants. [Inaudible], you had big houses with high ceilings, and had to build a fire in every room. Mr. Montague owned a house next door just like it, and we rented from him. This is a story they told me, that my father had a crooked ma—he had then become sort of a chain store. He was a pioneer in trying to develop chain stores in South Carolina. He hired this manager—I hate to admit it; he was a Jewish guy—his name was Krawitz. Jack Krawitz was his name, K-R-A-W-I-T-Z. The fellow was a grand crook. Daddy got—at the end of one year, he found that the inventory was short, and he fired him. Then he turned around and sued my father, claiming he breached a labor contract.

My mother and father, they always talked in front of their children. I guess they didn't think I had sense enough to absorb anything, and [inaudible] being sued. [Inaudible] upset. Incidentally, Davis Moïse, the lawyer [ed.: Davis DeLeon Moïse, b. 1880]—Dr. Moïse's [ed.: Dr. Davis DeLeon Moïse, b. 1917] father was his lawyer, and won the case; they threw it out of court. [Laughing.] I was sitting on the front steps—you know, children walk around the neighborhood, and I knew the Montagues, so one morning I apparently just ambled over and sat on his front steps. Mr. Montague came up, and I was sitting like this. Mr. Montague used to tell the story. He said, "Morris, what you—sitting there? You look like something's worrying you." "Well, everybody's suing my father!" [Laughter.] He got a big kick out of it.

RM: Now, that Davis Moïse [ed.: b. 1880] you're talking about was Virginia Rosefield's father.

MM: Right.

RM: They were all lawyers.

MM: Marion Moïse was the son who was a lawyer, and then Davis [ed.: b. 1917] was a doctor.

DR: The story is that this is why you became a lawyer?

MM: I doubt that. [Laughter.] I'll tell you what—I'll just be very frank about it. My aptitudes were probably speech and language, and I *hated* the clothing store. When I got to college I decided I'd do anything rather than be—I really wanted to be a journalist and a writer. But when I got into Carolina—I was in the school of journalism, on the staff of *The Old Gamecock*, which was our campus newspaper—

RM: And you were the editor of the high school newspaper.

MM: Yeah, I was editor of the high school newspaper. I got to talking to some of the guys that were graduating and, oh boy, they were getting a job at the *State* newspaper as cub reporters for twenty dollars a week. I said, "You know, I think writing will be my avocation. Let me"—
By that time I'd gotten to know a lot of the guys in law school, and I liked their style.

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[Laughs.] I decided I wanted to be [laughing] a lawyer. But I was going to write my great novel one day, which you never get around to. [Laughing.]

DR: There's still time.

MM: Maybe my cousin Robert's going to be the writer.

RM: No.

DR: Have you written any of this history?

MM: The only thing I've written—and I gave Robert some [inaudible]—

RM: [Inaudible]—oh, excuse me.

MM: —it's a history of Congregation Sinai.

RM: Yeah, she's got it.

DR: Robert sent it to me before I came.

MM: Yeah, I did that. The major portion of that comes from his uncle Herbert, [inaudible]. You need to get—have you got the copy of your uncle Herbert's?

RM and DR: No.

MM: You need to get that, because that really gives you the whole background.

RM: That's the Sumter side of—[inaudible] the minutes of the Hebrew Burial Society? Or the—

MM: I don't know what y'all call it. When I was doing that, somebody loaned me your uncle Herbert's.

RM: I know, but Uncle Herbert did two or three things. He did the yellow book called *Pertaining to the Moses*.

MM: Yeah. I had his history of Congregation Sinai. He might have called it—

RM: Yeah, "Early Minutes of the Hebrew Union Society." That's your paper.

....

MM: Yeah, that's what I used as a reference. I don't want to cut you off on Mazurskys or

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anything like that, but—and then, of course, I grew up here, and my sister grew up here. My father died about twenty years ago, and my mother died about a year before him.

RM: She would like you to tell her what it was like growing up Jewish in Sumter.

MM: Well, I have to preface what I'm going to say. Have you read Eli Evans, particularly *The Provincials*?

DR: Yes, I have.

MM: To me, with my background, that was *so typical*. You could almost call that a carbon copy from my point of view. I don't know about Robert's point—

RM: I haven't read it. I've got the book, but I [inaudible].

MM: My mother and father were great believers in us taking part in community activities and things like that, so we didn't segregate ourselves as Jews like some Orthodox families tend to do.

RM: Do you think we would have done it a lot more if there had been a huge Jewish community?

MM: As far as my upbringing in Sumter, [inaudible], that is, almost—except for Congregation Sinai and going to Sunday school there. You know, people were critical of Shillman, but I think Shillman was one of the better rabbis, from an intellectual point of view. We had a fairly large Sunday school there.

My parents did observe the Jewish holy days, so I knew I was Jewish. But I felt—we had so few Jews here. I had one good friend, Robert, and maybe his brothers, and Philip Schneider—do you remember Schneider?

RM: [Inaudible.]

MM: [Inaudible] sister Helen, really, were the closest Jewish friends I had; I had so few Jewish friends. So growing up in Sumter, I felt a certain amount of antisemitism. I don't know about Robert's reaction. And my parents both came from backgrounds that I had to overcome, I feel, to this extent: they said, "If you scratch a non-Jew deep enough, you're going to find an [laughing] antisemite [inaudible]."

RM: If you scratch a Jew deep enough—

DR and MM: A *non-Jew*.

RM: —a non-Jew deep enough, you're going to have to find an antisemite left.

DR and MM: Mm-hmm.

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MM: My dad, he wasn't completely like that. At times he said—he wasn't quite that bad about it—he said, you know, you just got to feel that. I felt a certain amount, *I* did, of difference. I knew I was different.

RM: Did you experience any of that directly yourself, or do you think you kind of absorbed it from the way your folks [inaudible]?

MM: Yeah, I felt a little. It wasn't as bad as . . . *my* observation is Sumter was a great community to grow up in as a Jew. We had, I'd say, a minimum of antisemitism. One of the things I would attribute that to is that we had so many people of mixed marriages, that their ancestors were Jewish. There really wasn't much room—

RM: [Inaudible.]

MM: That's right. You might be talking about their grandfather. I've had, I'd say, two experiences—Robert, I never told you this; [inaudible] my mind is. Of course, my father wanted me to belong to the YMCA. Of course, I'll never forget Mr. Austin Francis—

RM: “Spot.”

M: Yeah, “Spot” Francis. He always had—at the end of the gym class, they went into a little Bible study group, because it was the Y—Young Men's Christian Associ— My father, [inaudible] when I joined, said, “Morris can't take part in that.” So, of course, when all the boys went off to that, I just went—

RM: I went to the Y all that time. I don't remember one thing about it one way or the other.

MM: Well, when I was starting, I was in there with Phil Booth and some others like that. Particularly during the summer months, Austin would take them all in the back and make them say their prayers.

RM: I was on their swimming team and on the basketball team.

MM: This may have been the real young ones. That's one of the things I remember. One day we were leaving the gym class, and one of the boys—I can't remember which one; I think he grew up with one of my best friends—but a non-Jewish boy, says, “Don't you believe in God?” You know, because I didn't believe in Jesus. [Laughs.] I said, “Yes, I believe,” and I went home and told my par—here I was probably seven, eight years old, and what's this guy accusing me— [Laughs.] This was just the kind of thing. It wasn't—

RM: Open [inaudible].

MM: Open, you know. I would say that—well, I had a few fights, or near fistfights, with one

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who'd say "damn Jew," you know, but it was not as stringent as you would think. But I always had the same feeling as Eli; he said that Sundays were very lonely.

DR: You said y'all went to Sunday school.

MM: Yeah, we had a Jewish Sunday school here. I'd say one of the most striking experiences I've had—I was in the third grade. I remember Ed [ed.: sounds like Tizzle]—you remember Ruth Tizzle's [inaudible]—

RM: Yeah, sure.

MM: —[inaudible] a classmate of mine—and Reverend Billy Rogers. Remember Rogers? He founded Aldersgate Church. We were all in the same class. One day we went out to recess and—they always knew I was Jewish, with a name like Mazursky; there wasn't too much doubt about that, and my background and all that. All of a sudden, would you believe, all the kids come up dragging a little boy. I looked down and it's Billy Rogers—E. W. And they say, "Do you want to hit him?" I said, "Why should I hit him?" They said, "Well, he said some bad things. You remember, he told that little story in class."

This was back in the days when the teachers would have people tell Bible stories from the New Testament. They didn't have the decisions on no prayer in schools. I remember that he had told some story about Good Samaritan. Apparently it didn't sink in much with me, and I didn't know whether it was Old Testament or New Testament. Billy told the story—I think he was always [inaudible]; but he [inaudible] was a Methodist preacher [inaudible] [laughs]—he told the story about Good Samaritan . . . it went over my head that there was a little bit of antisemitic in the—which was it?—the Sadducee, whoever, had not rescued the man along the road who was Jewish. [Laughs.] And that was the end of that. When I got home and got the explanation of what it was, I said, "There were some kids"—Now that was the reverse of antisemitism; they were taking up for me. They thought he had made—they didn't call it antisemitism, but he said something against Jews. As I said, that was two experiences.

The only other thing was, my mother having a sister in Columbia and we having family connections there and Charleston, we visited there quite a bit, and I always felt like I had a foot in one side and a foot in the other. I had experience with the Orthodox group and experience with the ultra-Reform group, and had so many cousins. There were—

End Side B, Tape 1
Begin Tape 2, Side A

DR: Go back about two sentences so we don't lose that.

MM: I was saying that when I was a teenager, Philip Schneider and I—who was a close classmate of mine—we roomed together at Carolina. He's now a pediatrician in New York City, but he grew up here in Sumter and we were classmates. We started going to Columbia on weekends, because my parents would be the ones that would take us over, and I joined AZA. That's the junior arm of B'nai B'rith. Are you familiar with that?

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DR: I'm not. What is that stand for?

MM: That was a Jewish fraternity, Aleph Zadik Aleph. See, you're so young. You've heard of B'nai B'rith.

DR: Of course.

MM: Well, B'nai B'rith sponsored a junior order, and it was called AZA. Later on they sponsored the B'nai B'rith Girls, BBG, too. It was a very active group in Columbia, South Carolina. Robert would know these fellows. When I first went over there, two guys were like our seniors—they were freshmen in Carolina—our senior counselors, Dave Baker and Lee Baker.

RM: She knows them.

DR: I know who they are.

RM: Yeah, that's what I meant.

MM: They became very prominent in real estate field. They have Berry family connections and all that. Of course, my mother having connections over in Columbia, and having relatives, it got to be almost a weekend thing. I started going to all those big AZA conventions and meeting people—Jews—all over the Southeast, Savannah and Charleston and where have you.

RM: That probably sharpened your political appetite.

MM: Yeah, well, I don't know about that. During my growing-up period we did have a big B'nai B'rith—I don't know whether you remember that, Robert; it was during the war years primarily—we had a B'nai B'rith chapter here in Sumter.

RM: I think I—was Larry Goldsmith?

MM: Well, Larry—we had an elderly gentleman who founded the Lyric Theater, the black theater here, Mr. Sam Rabin. Do you remember him?

RM: Yeah, sure.

MM: Well, Sam Rabin was a moving force in that.

RM: Yeah, I remember Sam Rabin.

MM: Now, B'nai B'rith drew members from Manning and Bishopville and Sumter and Darlington and Hartsville. Sam would go over and get members, because Sumter was sort of the center at that time. So, being an active member of B'nai B'rith, I started going to—we were what

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we called district number five—I went to meetings in Washington and Miami and all that [inaudible]. Biggest cultural shock I ever had was I went to Miami. I had been there once before in college to a University of Miami-Carolina game, but the first time I really went to the Miami area was about 1946. We had a B'nai B'rith convention in Miami Beach, and I had never seen so many Jews in all my life. [Laughing.]

DR: So what you're describing is that because of all the network of relations, and the network through the youth organizations that you had—

MM: That I did get a Jewish—a stronger, I'd say, knowledge, a stronger Jewish background. Just a Jewish background of a different type, I guess. . . .

[Tape interrupted.]

DR: I don't mean this to be a provocative question, but it's something that really has occurred to me several times in terms of antisemitism. Many, many of the Jewish people, at least of the people who came, say, in the late nineteenth century, came as merchants. Do you think there was a resentment of Jews as business people, or people of an exploitative class? Do you think any of the antisemitism that might have existed was more of a class conflict?

MM: It's hard for me to answer that. As I've matured, I've found that, except for little instances that I've mentioned—and I don't know what's Robert's take on it—but my take on it is . . . I didn't find the South that much antisemitic.

RM: Me either.

MM: I think Eli Evans and other people have noted—and I experienced this several times—southerners being Baptists, the fundamentalist type, and recognizing Jesus was a Jew—they call the Jews the People of the Book—the antisemitism was different. Not from the virulent type of—There was a certain amount that said Jews were sharp in business, and this and that, and [inaudible], but I think they were more prone in the South to judge people on an individual basis, just like they would anybody else.

Not bragging, but my father had the greatest respect for peo—I mean, if he— My father always taught this: you respect their religion, and expect them to respect yours. He was honest and ethical—not bragging—but he was. It helped me a lot, having that background.

I found that we really didn't have— I probably just limited the Sumter community. I can't speak for— I know they had it during certain periods, and there was terrible times during the Leo Frank case. Daddy, at one time—I don't know when that sneaked in, [inaudible] history— When Dad got in this area, sometime in those y—I don't know how he worked so fast, coming over 1909, and he was in business by 1912—but at one time, for about a year, he worked as a store manager for Mrs. Goldstein, who was a distant mishpocha and relative of Bernie Warshaw, you know, the ones down in Kingstree. She owned a branch store in Madison, Georgia, and Daddy managed that for her one season. It came during the Leo Frank—I don't know if you're familiar with that case.

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DR: I am, yeah.

MM: Daddy says it scared him to death. He was a single young man and he stayed in this little country hotel. Madison was a little country town. He said the only thing that kept him a [inaudible], he was real good friends—because he liked to play cards, and the desk clerk who ran the whole show loved to play setback, and my father played setback with him. He said, “Don’t worry, Abe, I’ll take care of you.” Daddy said he wasn’t going to stay there but one season. It was terribly virulent in north Georgia. North Georgia is a little different animal from most of South Carolina.

RM: Apparently, Columbia had a pocket of it pretty strong, even up till now pretty much, [inaudible].

MM: Well, that’s what [ed.: sounds like “Isadore”] and Hyman Rubin and people like that would tell me.

RM: I agree with you about the assessment in Sumter.

MM: I think Sumter is rather unique.

RM: Mm-hmm. It was probably attributable, though, to the extremely small number of Jews in Sumter .

MM: That’s right.

DR: That’s what you attribute it to?

MM: Well, and the people that have been here so long.

DR: The Sephardic—earlier Sephardic [inaudible].

MM: Yeah, people are just used to Jews.

DR: Well, and used to a very upper-class—

RM: [Inaudible] prominent, yeah.

DR: —prominent, aristocratic, so to speak.

MM: I think in Sumter we had a separate thing for a while, and I think this was fairly prevalent. Stephen Birmingham brings it out in his book that the older Sephardic or earlier German Jews were a little afraid of the rest of us, who came over sometimes speaking with an accent and not—and didn’t feel they lived up to the same lifestyle, or would create a different image of Jews. Of

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course, time cured that. I think in Sumter—I don't know if you felt it, Robert—at one time it seemed like all the Ashkenazis sat on one side of synagogue and the Sephardic—

RM: I never knew that, but I understood their old-timers-versus-the-newcomers kind of attitude a little bit.

DR: You did feel that?

RM: Yes. I mean, I felt—I would have been among the old-timers—and I could sense some of the old-timers— Oh, they didn't look down their nose or anything, but there was that slight feeling, well, those folks weren't natives, or they weren't for real, or their grandmothers hadn't been born here like my grandmother, something like that.

MM: Let me tell you, when I first started, I belonged to a fraternity [inaudible], it merged [inaudible] a Jewish fraternity. It was Phi Epsilon Pi. Are you familiar with that, Dale? Now, Jewish fraternities have sort of almost gone out of style, because all the non-Jewish fraternities, with a couple of exceptions now, are rushing Jews, and there's no discrimination or anything else. But I belonged to a Jewish fraternity when I went to Carolina.

DR: What was it called?

MM: Phi Epsilon Pi. Now it's merged and it's a part of ZBT. You've heard of ZBT.

DR: Mm-hmm.

MM: When I went to Carolina, as a Jew, you weren't invited to join a non-Jewish fraternity. We had our own group. When I went to Carolina, I went with—when I started, people like Bubba Ness—Julius B. Ness—was on the campus. He had been affiliated with another Jewish fraternity, but Bubba was trying to get away from it. He was a chief justice of our Supreme Court, but he joined the Methodist church during his lifetime.

Sol Blatt, Solomon Blatt, who lives in Charleston, he became an Episcopalian. And yet, his father, Solomon Blatt, Sr., who was the speaker of the house, got in a fistfight with somebody in the legislature for saying something against Jews.

In my little history there, what amazes me, the Green family. . . . In Sumter Ethel Green—I think I've got it in the history there—was the daughter of this Green merchant who married Solomon Blatt. She later moved to Barnwell, and I can tell you stories about Barnwell, too. My cousins down there would say that Ethel played the piano at the Methodist church. She was so anxious to get away, and I think that was part of the influence that Sol—and Sol was president of the student body at the University of South Carolina the year I was a freshman, and we're good friends.

DR: His mother had converted first.

MM: I [inaudible] she converted; she just disassociated herself.

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DR: I think she converted.

MM: Did she?

DR: The McKissick Museum did an oral history with Sol Blatt, Sr., shortly before he died, and I believe—I read that years ago—I believe I read that.

MM: Henry Cauthen—I think he's the father of the Cauthens very closely associated with ETV—his father wrote a book called *Mr. Speaker*. It was a very friendly book. It was [inaudible] Sol Blatt—didn't want to be critical in the way he said that Sol Jr. felt, because of his not marrying—he married—I knew his wife; she went to Carolina with me, too. She was Episcopalian, and he felt it was more congenial to have all of them Episcopalians. But Sol was just practically—he would not associate himself with Jews when we were at Carolina.

RM: This was Sol Blatt, Jr.?

MM: Yeah. He was president of the student body and—

DR: He actively avoided, in other words, the association.

MM: Actively avoided, yes.

RM: His father changed over, too?

DR: No, no.

MM: He just wasn't an active Jew.

DR: But he did not—

MM: I'm pretty familiar with Barnwell; that's really where my family got started in South Carolina. Uncle Barney had two sons and several daughters. I may have to help you with that [inaudible] if you want.

DR: That would be great. I think I've met one of the younger—someone in Charleston.

MM: That's Vaughan.

DR: Vaughan—I have met Vaughan.

MM: She's a teacher at—

DR: Porter Gaud.

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MM: —Porter Gaud. Her father was the mayor of Barnwell for thirty-seven years. He was one of the sons of Uncle Barney, Uncle Beryl. His brother was Mordecai, but in Barnwell they always called him Mordekee. They never called him Mordecai.

. . . .

MM: Everybody called him Mordekee. I guess maybe that was the old country way of pronouncing Mordecai. Anyway, he was the merchant; he took over the father's business. He married a Minnie Surasky from Aiken. I'm right close with his children. In fact, Herman, when he died—he married a Baptist. But most of his children—he has a son who's named after the grandfather, Barney; they called him B—Barnett. Well, actually, that's what the name was; he adopted the Americanized name of Beryl to Barnett. But they always called him Barney, my great-uncle and—

DR: And Vaughan is the daughter of the one who married the Baptist. Is that right?

MM: No.

DR: No?

MM: Yes, yes. She's—

DR: I know she's not Jewish.

MM: She's not. She doesn't practice Judaism.

DR: No.

MM: Do you know that her father took her every Sunday for years to the synagogue over in Augusta? I guess he just wanted to get away from [inaudible].

DR: I say this as if I know her well. I met her at a party and this was told to me—

MM: She's a sweet girl.

DR: —that her father had been Jewish and the mayor of Barnwell for whatever he had been, [inaudible]—

MM: I [inaudible] have seen Barney, yes.

DR: —and that she was no longer Jewish. That was what I was learned [inaudible].

MM: Well, I'll put it this way—I don't know whether she's joined a church, but she obviously

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is not. She has a brother—well, her mother's Baptist.

RM: Before we get through, I think that you're so modest, you haven't said one single thing about your own career and your own many, many accomplishments. I think, for the record, that it would be nice for us to hear about your public service, as well as your professional career.

MM: Well, of course, I graduated from high school [laughing]—

DR: Here in Sumter.

MM: Sumter. I went through school [inaudible]—[inaudible] was a little break. When the '32 depression came on, my father lost every dime he had—I don't know whether you knew that or not—had to start over at age forty. We doubled up with my aunt Paula Addlestone in Charleston, because things were so bad. We were waiting for my father to get another start. He stayed here in Sumter to start getting things—

I went to school for half a year at Julian Mitchell, which was then—*now*, I understand, all black. [Laughing.] Nice public school on Rutledge Avenue. We lived with Aunt Paula for four-and-a-half months, half a school year, and then we moved back to Sumter. Those were tough times during that '32 depression.

DR: What exactly happened to a merchant in that time? Because obviously your father wasn't alone. What was it that—

MM: Well, number one, this was pre-Roosevelt. The thing that really started him on downgrade is he had a chain of six stores at the time in Hartsville, Darlington, Cheraw, two in Sumter, and one other place. I forget which.

RM: [Inaudible.]

DR: No longer in Mayesville?

MM: Oh, no. Mayesville was long since gone. What happened was, Daddy says that—of course, the bottom dropped out of everything in 1929, the big market crash. Cotton went down to four cents a pound. Dad said, because he was in a chain, he started doing business with a chain bank in South Carolina called [inaudible] People's Bank, and they had branches in all these cities. One day he woke up and the People's Bank was closed with all his money in it. That was before bank deposit and FDIC. That was it.

DR: So, it was the bank closing that [inaudible]—

MM: [Inaudible] with that and if he could have maintained his capital, but he lost his capital and the business was—

RM: Depression—nobody was buying; nobody had any money.

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MM: The money was gone. There's another long story about that of somebody double crossing real bad—the family's very prominent here now—but I won't go into that. [Laughs.] No use digging up old wounds.

But anyway, he was an amazing fellow. He got started again. Robert's uncle, Mr. Herbert Moses, and old-timers like that, they did each other favors back in those days. [Inaudible.] My father told me—you wouldn't even know this—Mr. Herbert was a wonderful guy. Dad said, "I got to pay some creditors" one day. They would swap checks. Mr. Herbert had some money, so Daddy had to pay a bill to one of his creditors. Credit was a very important thing back in those days—

RM: I'm not *exactly* following you.

MM: Well, he'd give Mr. Herbert his check and Mr. Herbert would hold it till the following weekend, after he did some business in the store, and put it up. Mr. Herbert had his money in the bank. So Mr. Herbert would give him his check and [inaudible]—

RM: Uncle Herbert was very, very frugal and never had any children, married real late in life, and was a thrifty man, so he was usually [inaudible] and—

MM: I was always very thankful for him. He was a wonderful guy. Apparently he had a good opinion of my father, and my father [laughing] [inaudible] down on. Anyway, same thing happened to my father—I will say this. When things were down, he had so many non-Jewish friends, too, that did things for him—favors—and helped him. Said, "Abe, what can we do for you?" When we first moved back from Charleston to Sumter, we had a hard time renting a house. We lived with . . . did you go to school with Sara Lemmon? She later married Johnny Sweatte. Were you about her age or—

RM: I went to school with Johnnie Sweatte. Who'd you ask [inaudible]?

MM: He married Sara Lemmon.

RM: Yeah, I knew Sara.

MM: We were very close friends with Sara Lemmon, you know—I mean with Mrs. John Lemmon. We lived in Lemmon's house for about two—

RM: Where'd they live? They live on [inaudible]—

. . . .

MM: Blanding Street. John Lemmon—it was a long story. My father befriended John, and his wife was Elizabeth Lemmon; she was Elizabeth Britton. She was the daughter of J. J. Britton and aunt of Bill Britton.

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. . . .

Her brother was Bossard Britton. People like that were so close to my father. Neil O'Donnell, of great fame and endowment of Tuomey Hospital and all that, ran the bank. During the Depression my father went over and—everybody looked worried those days, with business. Dad tells the story, he says, he used to sit in a little office, you know, the little branch bank across—right on South Main Street there, where Johnny Miles's law office is? Daddy was in there making a deposit or getting some change, and Neil O'Donnell called him in and said, "Abe, you look so worried. What's your problem?" Daddy said, "Well, I could use a little more capital right now, buy a little more merchandise." He says, "Go to Edwards"—you know, what's his name? You know, what's his name [inaudible] he died.

RM: Buck?

MM: No, not Buck. Then he said, "Tell him that I said it's okay to give you—what do you want to buy?" Daddy said, "Oh, about twelve hundred dollars." He said, [inaudible] sign the note." He said, "Abe, I'm giving it to you. I just want fifty dollars back each week when you get your— He said, "Okay, I'll do that, Neil." And he did.

RM: Billy Edwards.

MM: Billy Edwards, yeah. . . . Those were hard days.

DR: But he got back on his feet.

MM: Right.

DR: And you came back to Sumter and finished school?

MM: I was just away four-and-a-half months. That was when I convinced myself I didn't want to leave Sumter. Charleston is great, but I didn't really care for Charleston. [Laughing.] Sumter was home. I still love to visit Charleston. I used to visit every summer. We'd run around Sullivan's Island, me and Henry Berlin and a bunch like that. Henry and I are about the same age.

RM: Did you know Aaron Raisin [inaudible] down there much?

MM: I don't believe I knew [inaudible]—

RM: [Inaudible] both a little older than you.

MM: It was a funny thing, back in those days, too, that the people that came from the Ashkenazi—

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RM: Okay, same thing you were talking about [inaudible].

MM: [Inaudible] here in Sumter. We didn't get together with the old Reform group. Later on that became more prevalent.

RM: Yeah, [ed.: sounds like "dropped in"]. Well, get on with your—

MM: I finished Sumter High School. I was editor of the *Sumter High News*. I won the high school oratorical contest; that convinced me I could speak. I went on to Carolina. But coming out of the Depression in 1940—I started in the fall of 1940—my father said, Well, Son, I don't know how long I can keep you there." But—

RM: This was in law school.

MM: No, this was my freshman.

RM: Freshman was 1940?

MM: Right. I was just seventeen going on eighteen. That was when we only had eleven years of school. I went to Carolina in 1940, and I don't know how I got to taking extra subjects. . . . In my second year, my sophomore year, I had overloaded with credits. The draft was then still at twenty, and I knew I was going to have to go after Pearl Harbor, so I wanted to get as much of my education. At the end of my sophomore year, I figured out that I had seventy-three hours. Carolina had the old combined course, where you could take three years pre-law and then three years law and finish, rather than four and three that they have now. I said, "If I go this summer—if I work in Columbia and go this summer, I can get up to eighty-four hours, and maybe I can talk them into admitting me into law school. Then I can go back the following summer and pick up my undergraduate degree." I went over and talked to old Dean Frierson. You know, he was a Sumter County native.

DR: Dean who?

MM: Frierson, F-R-I-E-R-S-O-N. J. Nelson Frierson. You probably remember his brother, Mr. Johnny Frierson—

RM: Yeah, I remember [inaudible].

MM: —bookkeeper at Lee and Moïse, the law firm that I started practicing law with. I went over and I told him, "I want to go in the navy." I did. I wanted to get an undergraduate degree so I could become a ninety-day wonder, an ensign. He was a very patriotic fellow, and very [inaudible]; he was narrow on liquor. He would bust you out of law school. He was a rabid prohibitionist, Dean Frierson, but he was very liberal racially and otherwise. After I explained I wanted to serve my country—he was mad at Hitler and everything, too, like everybody else, so

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he let me in the law school at the end of my sophomore year, and I finished my first year of law school.

George Gregory, who was later chief justice, and I were classmates, and friends forever after that. [Inaudible] South Carolina Supreme Court. I did squeak through. I got to the summer school. I had six weeks to get my undergraduate degree. The draft board started sending me a notice, and I only needed *six weeks*.

I'll tell you a funny story; don't repeat it. George Levy was chairman of the draft board.

RM: I knew that. That's Corinne's father. [Ed.: Corinne Levy Philips.]

MM: To give you a sort of juxtaposition of personalities. L. E. Purdy, Judge Purdy, was the attorney for the draft board. He had judged me in the high school oratorical contest and knew my family and knew everybody. Not Jewish.

RM: Some of the Purdys were very antisemitic.

MM: Not Ju—not Purdy.

RM: That old postmaster [inaudible].

MM: Oh, that one, yeah. [Laughs.] That was just a character from the word go. He wasn't postmaster; he was just a postal employee.

RM: Maybe so.

MM: Anyway, Dad and George had had their differences—goes back a long way—but Daddy swallowed his pride and went around [inaudible] to see George Levy, chairman of the board. All I was asking for was six weeks; I wasn't trying to be a draft dodger.

RM: Six weeks delay.

MM: Delay, so I could get my degree. I had already signed up for what they called the V-7 navy program. Went in and talked to George, and Dad said the situation, and I told the situation. George says, "You know, everybody don't want their son to go into the service. I don't think I can do anything for you." We walked out, and my father—if he hadn't controlled his tongue, he'd have hit him over the head.

Harry Berger had already moved down and married my sister at that time. He was from Brooklyn, New York, originally, but he came down as a manager of the old Polly Prentiss plant, [inaudible].

RM: Right.

DR: The old what?

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MM: They made chenille bedspreads. It was called Polly Prentiss.

....

MM: That was a popular thing back in early '30s and late '40s, [inaudible]. Harry had to [inaudible] the business because—William Purdy represented Polly Prentiss. Mr. Scher—I don't know whether you knew that family—Scher Textiles in New York, a Jewish family.

RM: S-C-H-E-R?

MM: Uh-huh

RM: Yeah.

MM: Anyway, Harry went down there, and Harry was real upset about it. Harry's been more like a brother to me than a brother-in-law all these years. He said, "Harry, you look worried. What're you upset about?" Harry told him. He says, "What? I know Morris; I judged him in that high school oratory contest. He's a fine boy." Harry said, "Well, that's what George Levy says." He says, "George Levy may be chairman, but I'm attorney for the draft board." He says, "You tell Morris to go on back to summer school; they won't [inaudible] him." I don't know what he said to George.

DR: That's very interesting.

MM: Here was a non-Jew—

DR: That was a gentile protecting a Jew from another Jew. Very interesting.

MM: Yeah, well, you know, [ed.: sounds like "worse things"]. [Laughing.]

RM: So then what happened?

MM: Well, anyway, I went home—I did get through, and I got my undergraduate degree in 1943. I was able to get my undergraduate in just barely three years. I went over to the navy. They had it in the McKissick Library there; they had a procurement office. [Inaudible.] When I went down there—I have an injury on my left foot; it's a childhood injury, but I'm always able to get around, play football, things like that. When I get tired, I [ed.: sounds like "still have a"] perceptible limp, but I thought I could bluff my way through. It's a funny thing; they let you enroll in a navy program but didn't give you a physical first.

RM: Richard was in that same program, V-7.

MM: Yeah. He got his commission, didn't he?

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RM: No, I don't think he did.

MM: I don't know what happened. Anyway, I went down there, Dr. [ed.: sounds like "Philpot"] examined me. Guess who was procurement officer? This will be interesting. He was a lieutenant jg in the navy—Gus Pearlstine. [Ed.: Gus Pearlman, not Pearlstine.] You know Gus?

DR: I know who he is.

MM: He is a retired judge of probate. He's married into somebody from the Rephan family, his wife, Betty Mae. Do you know his wife, Betty?

DR: No, I don't.

MM: Well, anyway, he's a Charleston lawyer. He was a lieutenant jg already assigned to procurement, and I knew Gus real well.

I went in and he gave me the examination. When he made me take off my shoes, he didn't say anything, this Dr. Philpot. He wrote something down, and he sent me—he said, "Go see Mr. Pearlstine." [Ed.: Pearlman, not Pearlstine.] I go out and I see Gus and Gus says, "You know, he's turned you down." I say, "Can't we talk him out of it?" He says, "He's got an N-W on here; that means 'no waiver.'" I said, "Can I go back and talk to him?" I went back and talked and talked, until he finally threatened to throw me out of his office. That was the end of that.

The draft was about to take me. They still didn't relieve you from the draft, so I came in—I worked in my father's store for about thirty days and, sure enough, they called me over to Fort Jackson. They passed me in something called A-1-L, limited service. But they said, "We don't have a slot for you," because it had to be some— Because they asked me, they said, "Are you a bookkeeper?" I said, "No." "Are you a typist?" "No." I said, "I'm studying law." [Laughs.]

Anyway, I came back home. I missed a whole year of school after making up all that time. They called me back to Fort Jackson and then turned me down. I could have capitalized on it, but I said, "Well"— It really upset me not being able to fight Hitler in those days.

So I went back to law school. I entered my second year of law school. We got on the accelerated schedule. We went year round, three semesters a year. I got shot through like a cannon and I graduated from law school when I was twenty-two. [Laughs.] That's why I've been practicing fifty years.

I came back to Sumter and went in with an old established firm, Lee and Moïse, as an associate. The senior member of that firm was an I. C. Strauss—you'll probably get into the Strauss family, too, before you get through with Sumter County history. I practiced with them until Mr. Strauss died and then I opened my own office.

I practiced a few years and, for some crazy reason, decided to run for city council in 1958. I served seven straight terms. There was always one project that I wanted to finish. [Laughs.] When they went to the—under the Voting Rights Act they decided to go to wards. I had always run at large and got elected at large. I decided it was about time I got out of it [laughs] anyway. We made a lot of progress in—

RM: When was that?

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MM: 1987.

RM: You haven't been on city council since '87?

M: 1987.

DR: But from 1958—

MM: To 1987.

DR: Almost thirty years.

MM: No, twenty-eight and a half.

RM: That's almost thirty.

MM: Yes, almost thirty. I served a little short term—I wasn't elected—during my term I was mayor pro tem. Many years they didn't rotate at that time, and I was the senior member of city council. I didn't want to run for mayor so I served as vice-mayor, mayor pro tem.

RM: Why did you not want to run for mayor?

MM: Because I had a busy practice and if you do your job—if I was going to be mayor, I wanted to do a complete job. We're not a working mayor; we have a council-manager form of government, a city manager, but still you're expected to greet all the visiting firemen, and attend all the green pea and turkey luncheons. I didn't mind working on projects. [Inaudible.]

RM: Morris, were you on council when Richard [ed.: Robert's brother Richard P. Moses] was mayor?

MM: Oh, yeah, I served with Richard.

RM: Did you serve with Unc [ed.: Robert's uncle "Unc" Herbert Moses] any?

MM: No. I think at the time I ran that your uncle and Fulton Creech probably had served as long as anybody. They had served three terms of twelve years. No, your uncle had long since—
When I was elected to city council, it was Cliff Goodwin, [ed.: sounds like "Bill Fort"]—
excuse me, Bill Fort and Charlie Rowland, who never came to a meeting, and me. [Inaudible]—

RM: [Inaudible.]

MM: C. G. Rowland, II. Charlie was sort of a fluke. I think they put him on there for protection. They figured he was conservative enough to protect the vote.

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RM: Are you talking about Playboy Charlie?

MM: Yeah, Playboy Charlie. He inherited several million dollars and went through all of it.
[Laughing.]

DR: Really.

MM: Nice fellow. Principled fellow, but he just didn't—he wasn't a businessman. He inherited all that wealth.

RM: [Inaudible.]

MM: He hunted and fished.

DR: Had a good time.

MM: Clifton G. Brown was mayor. He got appointed to the state development board about three months before his term was up, so I served the interim term as mayor. I was asked numerous times to run—

RM: I'm sure.

MM: —but I always had to balance family and, you know, you have to be [inaudible].
[Inaudible] have to be just before you can be charitable, be fair to your family.

DR: So these are four-year terms to the council, and you have to run for it?

MM: Every time, yeah.

DR: Is there any pay associated? Do you—

MM: When I started it was primarily public service. When I started we made six hundred dollars a year, fifty dollars a month. [Laughs.] By the time I graduated, you might say, or quit, twenty years later, we had started drawing four hundred dollars a month. But in the practice of law that was really a net loss when you figured my usual hourly rate, and it took hours and hours. I'm not complaining.

DR: No, I understand.

MM: It was primarily public service.

DR: Did you have to spend money on campaigns?

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MM: After my first time I ran—and I ran against a fellow named Bill Boyle, whose father was a political power.

RM: [Inaudible.]

DR: B-O-Y-L-E?

MM: Yeah, B-O-Y—nice fellow.

RM: Nice but [inaudible].

MM: Very thick. [Laughing.] Nice fellow, but not too—

RM: [Inaudible.]

MM: I say thick. But anyway, [inaudible]. It started out a six-man race, and I came out, finally, in a second race with Bill Boyle. I beat him by a landslide. I beat him by fifty-nine votes. I think I was—I attribute it to my family and respect. People just knew Bill. He wasn't qualified [inaudible].

RM: No.

MM: I was [inaudible] grateful and I felt it was a great tribute, not only to me, but the Jewish community, because there I was—Bill's father was a staunch Baptist, pillar of the community, former mayor, big businessman. You know what—Mr. Ed was a nice fellow—you know what he said to me when I won that night? He congratulated me and he says, "Well, the old Carolina boy beat the Clemson boy." [Laughing.]

....

MM: Well anyway, be that as it may. We made a lot of progress in Sumter and I'm real proud of it. [Inaudible] I don't want to say something without—Sumter had one of the [ed.: sounds like "greatest"] planning, city planning, and Robert was our first chairman of the planning commission, when we adopted a planning ordinance. I'm real proud of that. When I got on council, that had already been established, and we had gotten into the plan. Sumter had been sort of slow on industry development and everything like that.

When I first got back from college, Miss Priscilla Shaw—we had one woman mayor; she was a fine person—she spoke to a Jaycee meeting, Junior Chamber of Commerce. I was president of the Jaycees during that period four times.

RM: The state Jaycees?

MM: No, local Jaycees.

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RM: Richard, my brother, was president of the state Jaycees.

MM: Yeah, Richard and I were in there. I went through the usual path to get recognized. I was chairman of the general election commission, and served on the TB association, all those things that you do to get in the [inaudible]—civic service.

RM: [Inaudible.]

MM: [Inaudible.] I hate to collect money. But this lady mayor, Shaw—fine person. I liked her personally, but it was typical of the attitude you ran into [inaudible] in the early '40s. I said, “[Inaudible] what is the city doing”—I asked [ed.: sounds like “her the question”]—“to encourage industry?” She says, “I’m not too sure we want the element of people that industry”—You know, people thought in terms of mill villages and cotton mill villages, lintheads, and stuff like that, not thinking of jobs for young people. I thought to myself, “If I ever get a chance, we’re going to change that.”

I ran for city council as a part of a team. We had established a planning, development board, and we started appropriating money to a local development board. We accomplished a lot of things, I think. You know, we bought that thousand acres of—

RM: Industrial park?

MM: —industrial park on Highway 15 South. We were told by the state development board that we’d have to have land. So something came up; we bought a thousand acres for a hundred and seventy-five dollars an acre. The funny thing was, we didn’t know whether we had authority to do it. [Laughs.] We might be acting—we just had to be not cowards and go ahead and do it, and we were lucky. They’ve now added five hundred more acres.

RM: From the Rubins?

MM: No. They bought three hundred acres from Beau Graham and Charlie Rowland.

RM: [Inaudible], talking about school [inaudible].

MM: Herm and Eileen [ed.: Herman and Eileen Strauss Rubin] are upset. They’ve got six hundred acres out there.

RM: [Ed.: sounds like “You know”] they think they’ve been ruined.

MM: [Inaudible.] [Laughing.] I can tell you a funny story about that. We bought a thousand acres of land and thought we were going to be able to—we had been used to selling industrial sites of fifteen, twenty acres, twenty-five acres [inaudible], so we had enough to last us for the next hundred years, we thought. We had that industrial park developed [inaudible]. Campbell Soup wanted to come here, but wanted six hundred acres, because they had to have acreage. Exide Battery, they didn’t really need the four hundred acres [inaudible]. There we’ve got two—

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RM: Giants.

MM —giants, and they were going to take all thousand acres. It was a great thing. Campbell Soup, when it came here, had fifteen hundred people employed under a ten-acre plant.

It was things like that they'd talk about. I was [ed.: sounds like "acting"], and Werber Bryan was county attorney, and I was—we needed— Campbell Soup was a ticklish thing because they didn't want to come to a community unless they felt welcomed.

RM: Richard was mayor at that time, I think, when Campbell Soup came.

MM: He may have been.

RM: [Inaudible] was here.

MM: What happened was, they needed a little outlet from a septic lagoon going to a creek—

RM: [Inaudible] easement.

MM: —on the—which was harmless, because it was going to be treated water. Herm and Eileen, bless their hearts, wouldn't give the right of way.

RM: Wouldn't even sell it.

MM: O. D. Harvin was chairman of the county board, and Richard was probably mayor—I don't know who was. Anyway, Werber and I went around, when they were still on Moïse Drive, and spent a whole afternoon talking to Herm and Eileen, explaining how vital it was to the community, it wouldn't hurt them. They were afraid the odor was going to hurt the rest of their land.

As a result of our meeting, we agreed—the city paid their way up to Camden, New Jersey, to see the original plant. [Laughing] They went up there and still said no. Then they came back. I think Beau may have just been [inaudible]. Beau [inaudible] says, "Oh, the *hell* with them; we'll condemn it!" When [inaudible] told them they were going to bring the condemnation suit, they caved. [Laughing.]

RM: Beau Graham, you say?

MM: Yeah. [Laughing.]

DR: And you got the Campbell plant?

MM: Yeah.

DR: Is it here now?

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RM: No, they just recently sold out, and they got a successor plant that's even larger—Gold Kist-Carolina Golden.

MM: Gold Kist. They take in chicken with feathers at one end and it comes out a chicken dinner at the other. [Laughs.] [Inaudible] Campbell's, they made the Swanson TV dinner here.

RM: [Inaudible] all the Swanson TV dinners.

MM: I don't think they do anything but process chickens now.

RM: No, no [inaudible].

MM: We did see some industrial—when I first got on city council, we had one water plant at the end of Church Street, and they were still backwashing the water by hand, that is, running it through the thing—I beg your pardon, we did have one more down—

RM: Green Swamp?

MM: No—water treatment plant. It was over in—the number two plant was near Santee Printworks, because they needed treated—

RM: Yeah.

MM: I'm proud of the fact that we made some great industrials—I don't claim credit; I just worked on the part of a team. Sumter is now—we're rated as a metropolitan community now—fifty-one thousand—

DR: When did the air force base come?

MM: Oh, that was years ago.

RM: About 1939 or '40.

MM: It started as a cadet—you're not old enough to remember. When World War II started, they were training cadets so fast, it was called the cadet training program, and we were just a training base to get fellows trained to fly airplanes.

RM: [Inaudible] basic training. BT-13s, I think. But it was about '39 or '40.

MM: They developed—became Ninth Air Force Headquarters at one time.

DR: What about during the Civil Rights era—were you still on the city council?

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MM: Yes, I went through that. I've got some interesting stories about that. Sumter, like all southern towns, were very racist in a lot of respects—not as bad . . . we were all a little milder. In fact, a right interesting thing was that right after I got out of law school—they won't allow you to do that now—I got appointed to defend a black man who had raped a white woman. It was a horrible rape case. It was the Belle Palmer case. You remember?

RM: Yes.

MM: I was appointed, along with Arthur Wilder, Sr.,—

RM: [Ed.: sounds like “The defendant’s”] [inaudible].

M: —[inaudible] a black man. Arthur and I pleaded with the judge that we needed help, and he also associated Mortimer Weinberg, Sr. We did defend him, but he was guilty as hell. He beat her unmercifully, along with all kind of heinous sexual acts. We couldn't even let him take the stand. He eventually went to the electric chair for rape. I was aggravated. It was ticklish times. In those days, the Willie Harold case had just gone by up in Greenville, where a black cab driver had shot a white man.

End Side A, Tape 2
Begin Side B, Tape 2

MM: —for safekeeping at the state penitentiary. There was threats of lynching.

DR: The man that you defended.

MM: Yeah.

DR: What was his name?

MM: I can't even remember now.

RM: I have no idea what his name was.

MM: I'd have to look it up. I want to say he got a fair trial. He wasn't lynched. Later on a reporter came down from Washington, because it was a very—a terrible thing, the reputation that South Carolina got from the Greenville incident. The Willie Harold Case, they call it, in history. She wrote a story that the city where the lynching did *not* occur, in that case. So I was real proud of that. I wasn't proud that I lost the case, but of course I deserved to lose, [inaudible].
[Laughing.]

When I was on city council, during my term—I'll say this. Wade Kolb, Sr., was a pretty smart guy. He was our city manager.

DR: Wade Kump?

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RM: K-O-L-B. Pronounced [ed.: sounds like “Kulb”].

MM: It’s an old German name, which originally was probably Kalb, like Baron DeKalb. In Sumter County we call that [ed.: sounds like “Kulp”], like it’s spelled U-L-P.

DR: But it’s K-O-L-B.

RM: K-O-L-B, [inaudible].

MM: Of course, we were facing the civil rights issue, and we had the marches and—

RM: We have a black college here, Morris College.

DR: I didn’t know that.

RM: It’s a Baptist—

MM: Baptist, yeah, sponsored.

RM: It’s been here a long time.

MM: Of course, my personal feelings were the black people were mistreated. It was a delicate, ticklish situation. You wanted to make progress, and yet you couldn’t get too far ahead or you wouldn’t get re-elected, so it was—some people say, “Well, that’s just being a pure politician,” but you have to play it the best way you could.

RM: You couldn’t help if you couldn’t be there.

MM: That’s right. During my term we hired the first black policeman. We didn’t ever have black policemen. It went from there. And we—

DR: When would that have been?

MM: 1956, ’57. No, that was about 1962.

RM: Yeah, I was getting ready to say you were a little early, because the act wasn’t [inaudible], the Civil Rights Act.

MM: We started complying with that, realizing we needed to get something done, even before. A funny thing happened. When the demonstrations were going on—it was getting pretty rough. It was when the big push was on—Kennedy had gotten killed; Lyndon Johnson was there—and he was pushing. You can say whatever you want about Lyndon Johnson—Kennedy, nobody else got through the Civil Rights Act—he got it through in 1964; he had the clout to get it through.

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He wanted to go down in history; he had a great sense of that.

They were marching, and we on city council were not concerned about letting them march. What we were concerned about was riots, and not having civil disturbance that all the other cities had had. Of course, the Supreme Court had ruled, the appellate courts had ruled, that we could not stop parades; we could regulate. So we finally talked with black leaders, and for some reason or another they felt that I had more rapport with them, for some reason; I don't know why. I didn't [inaudible], [inaudible] Bob Palmer, Palmer Memorial Chapel—his wife's very active now—and—

RM: Theo.

MM: Theo, and even a fellow, Moses Jackson, who ran Jackson—called it funeral home in those days. I talked to them and said, “You know, this thing is going to take time. You can't expect us to change things overnight.” We were working with them, and one of the bitterest experiences I had was here the Supreme Court ruled you can't block parades. So we were letting blacks march, just about, as long as they did it in an orderly fashion. All of a sudden we get an application from the Ku Klux Klan. The bitterest *pill* I ever had to take.

RM: [Inaudible.]

MM: Under the Constitution I had to let them march too, [inaudible]. Talk about riots, now. I was really—it turned out they didn't have much. They were a bunch of rednecks by that time. It was very ticklish.

Oddly enough, Bill Hodge was real active—he was not on city council—on county council. He was very close friends with Wade Kolb. He invited Wade Kolb and Beau Graham just about the time—congress was about to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964. They went to Florida on a golfing trip, and I was mayor pro tem. The day that they passed the Civil Rights Act, they were in Florida. [Inaudible] [laughs] left at a very convenient time.

At that point the blacks had started going and sitting in the restaurants and they were doing physical damage; they were committing vandalism. It was really on edge. They passed the Civil Rights Act and the black leaders called me up and said—you know, people like Bob Palmer, he's at Palmer Memorial Chapel. He's a black fellow, high-type fellow. His daughter, incidentally, is married to Fielding, one of the—from Charleston.

DR: Oh! Which Fielding?

MM: I think the—

DR: [Inaudible?]

MM: Yeah, Herbert's daughter. The ones that run the funeral home down there, [inaudible].

DR: Mm-hmm, Herbert Fielding.

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MM: Bob called me up, and he didn't want violence. He [inaudible], he said, "What can we do about it?" When they passed the Civil Rights Act," he says, "The black community's going to want to know how the city—are they going to obey the law?" I had to sit down and think about it. What I did was I called Champion Edmunds, who was then the city attorney, and I said, "We've got to obey federal law, and we don't have it in our budget to fight the Civil Rights Act, and I don't want to fight." . . .

I got together with Bob Palmer, and our thing was to show the black community that we were not going to support segregation; we were not going to fight the act. What we developed between us was—believe it or not, we had a fellow named [ed.: sounds like "Elridge"] then, who owned the Holiday Inn. It had a nice restaurant. It's now Ramada or whatever. It was one of the most popular eating places, the restaurant there. Bill was torn. He didn't want to irritate the community, but, let me tell you, the businessmen in town were glad—believe it or not—the people who were in business were glad that the Civil Rights Act was passed; it let them off the hook. If they had cooperated—hired blacks and served them in restaurants—they would be ostracized by the white community.

RM: But when they're ordered to do it—

MM: When ordered to do it—

RM: They could say, "What choice did we have?"

MM: I called a meeting of all the restaurant owners. There was a plan that I had that if we would make a demonstration in the appropriate place, they would make sure that the persons who went in to be served were the high-type persons, you know, who were not just tramps and would not create an incident.

Believe it or not, [inaudible] Julius, who was on the Holiday Inn, too, at that time, he [inaudible] adopted a national policy that they would serve and blacks could be admitted, you know, they were going along with—and there he was in a little southern community. He says, "You send them around. Not only will I serve them, I'll have a white waitress serve them." That was unheard of.

DR: Wow.

MM: These two—it might have been [ed.: sounds like "Dr. McDonald"] or somebody like that—went there that day and was served. Of course, word was out through the black community. I called the restaurant owners, the ones that would come, and told them, "The part of the City of Sumter is to enforce civil order. We're not going to let anybody come into your businesses and tear it up or create a riot. But if you want to practice discrimination, we don't have it in our budget to defend you on a civil rights suit." Most of them were tickled to death. Big Jim called me up, says, "[Inaudible] me out"—They want to come in, I don't want to say I got to do it. I don't want to make anybody mad."

You know, the only one [inaudible]—the poor fellow's dead and gone—Frank [ed.: sounds like "Farrigan"] was a rabid racist.

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DR: Farrigan?

MM: He was a black fellow who ran one of the most prominent restaurants, a truck stop.

RM: It was written up in what? *Metropolitan*?

MM: Yeah. It had the finest food and one of the finest—

RM: Everybody in town raved about [inaudible].

MM: Frank's Truck Stop—everybody went there to eat.

RM: It was a *genuine* truck stop, but it was the finest restaurant in Sumter.

DR: But the guy who ran it was a bad racist.

RM: Yeah, apparently.

MM: Well, he didn't want to serve. [Laughs.] Let's put it that way.

RM: He didn't have a large eating place, and he had [inaudible].

MM: We didn't have any problem with that. He was out on the outskirts of town. He wasn't even in the city limits. So that wasn't my worry. [Laughs.]

RM: But with his truck drivers stopping in there, he probably was anticipating it was going to riot.

MM: Well, it never did develop. I think, finally, he ended up serving them anyway.

RM: Yeah.

DR: At this time, also, drinking fountains and restrooms and things—do you remember when, for example, signs came down? When the colored [inaudible]?

MM: The only place that we really saw them was in the public buildings, and those came down real fast, you know. They'd have a white [inaudible]—now, if you go to that courthouse, you've got two water fountains right in the front entrance—

DR: From [inaudible] days?

RM: Yeah.

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MM: That's right. Only reason they're there is they used to have a white fountain and a colored fountain. [Laughs.] But those days are long gone. I'm right proud of Sumter, I think. Not because of me, but because of the situation, generally. If you would come here during a weekday, you ought to see the personnel. It's really salt and pepper in our courthouse.

RM: It's mostly pepper.

MM: Yeah. [Laughing.]

RM: The public servants? Yeah. We've got black hired help in the government and public places going to [ed.: sounds like "bed"], no question about it.

DR: And school integration proceeded?

MM: Well—

RM: No. Well, they quickly had a white school, an all—affluent white school.

MM: Right next to here is Wilson Hall. [Inaudible] they went into it. The people who could afford it formed a private school. That's it right there. Believe it or not, they've got black students now.

RM: Yeah, I'm sure.

MM: Because they're token. They have to do it to keep their tax immunity.

RM: But they immediately opened that up and [inaudible].

MM: Well, the school situation is a bad situation because what has happened—

RM: Public schools went like that.

MM: Currie McArthur, when he was here, he and I discussed it. He really had the hog's share.

RM: Had what?

MM: The hog's share of it.

RM: The [inaudible] of the problem.

MM: He really had most of that on the way to [inaudible]—

DR: Who was he?

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MM: He was the superintendent of education. Very liberal, high-type fellow we had here. He said that the statistics show that if you could keep the ratio to fifty-fifty you'd get along medium well, but soon as you got sixty to seventy percent black, the whites would flee. All this whole area, we've got the private Christian schools and—

RM: [Inaudible.]

MM: I'll tell you, very frankly, it's a tough problem, education. I was a lead counsel for a short time for school district number thirteen, when they passed the bond issue to get the new high school. The reason that we've got the largest single high school, I believe, in the state of South Carolina, like thirty-five hundred students—

RM: [Inaudible] largest.

MM: Second right now? Well, the reason it's that big is if we tried to build two schools—which would have been probably, educationally, in one sense, the best thing—we would have had the problem of how to zone the city to keep the racial balance. So they built one major high school.

DR: One big one.

RM: That solved the problem.

DR: Do you feel that the Jewish community in Sumter was more or less liberal, more or less accepting of civil rights?

MM: I would say that it depends on the person. I can't speak for the Jewish—we never took a strong stand.

RM: I don't think there was any—

MM: I don't think the Jewish community, as such—

RM: No—would be—

MM: —would have taken a [inaudible].

RM: —identifiable as a segment, to answer the question, [inaudible].

MM: No, no. To answer very honestly, I think the community felt, and possibly rightly so, we were too small. We had to think of self-preservation, too.

RM: Shaw Air Force Base is right out there and the government was strong on it.

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MM: The Jews, you know, we weren't a strong enough entity, as a group, the Congregation Sinai, to say, "We want integration."

RM: I think the most disparaging aspect of it to the white community, Jews included, was the realization that—which I don't think anybody could do anything about—was that the blacks were *very*, very far below the whites in their educational level for the same grade [inaudible]. They would and did and have—I think; I'm not a school person—pulled the level of the schools way, way down. As a result of a fear of that, the affluent white community flocked to Wilson Hall and these religiously-backed, private white schools, which exacerbated the problem, making an even larger percentage of blacks in the public schools.

Today I think there is a recovery from that. I think today there are many people who are sticking with the public schools out of a sense of duty and a sense of rightfulness, feeling of rightfulness, and the public schools will gradually climb back out of it. But I think as long as we don't cure this welfare cancer that's among us, with the single parent and unmarried parents and too many children with unqualified, unable parenting, that we're going to be saddled with an *enormous* problem. I don't know if I put it well or not.

MM: I think we're closer, really, in the South to overcoming it than they are in the ghettos of the North. I mean, it must be a jungle. I haven't been up there, but what you see on the news—and maybe it's aggravated, too. You never can tell, because news media likes to put—

RM: [Inaudible.]

MM: They don't print good news, you know.

RM: That's right. Good news doesn't sell.

MM: My experience on that is somewhat the same, but I think that we've developed a big black middle class. I think the South generally has. I don't think they're any more in favor of the—

RM: [Inaudible].

MM: —[inaudible] or unmarried or bad family situation, but they've got a high percentage. It's economic deprivation, I admit, and it's hard to recover from it. I'll give you a typical example. We've got a maid that's been working with us—[name deleted]—for thirty-seven years now. [Name deleted] [Her] mother was never married to her father. She never knew her father.

When [name deleted] [she] came to work for us she was a young, skinny girl [laughs], and my children love her. She's worked for us—she's not a cook, she's [inaudible] clean-up, a good washwoman. But [name deleted]—what's her name that used to be with the welfare department, asked me to hire her, my wife and I to hire her years ago? Lawson, Gladys Lawson.

RM: Yeah, Gladys Lawson.

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MM: When she first came to us, she said she was married to a fellow named [name deleted]. Her name was [name deleted]. As things developed, the way it was, [name deleted], he was in jail, and he had been in and out of jail. She had two children by him, [name deleted] and [name deleted]. As things developed, as we got to know [name deleted] better, found out, well, she wasn't really married to [name deleted], because he had a pre-existing wife from whom he had never divorced when she married him. So here you've got a non-marriage to non-marriage.

It's a long story. Years later [name deleted] came back and I got his divorce, free. He joined back up with [name deleted] after he finally got through with his jail terms, and I was fortunate getting the divorce from his previous wife, and then they went through a marriage ceremony, and I was the best man. [Laughing.]

RM: That's great. We had a somewhat similar situation before with [name deleted] that you met. We had a lady that was with us for forty years, I think, forty years. She had several husbands, a bunch of children. I remember one time I said, "[name deleted], you and [name deleted] are getting married?" She says, "Well, I've tried that and we just, you know."

MM: [Laughs.] [Inaudible].

RM: Her children have made it pretty well. One of her daughters is married to a full colonel, black colonel, and it was the least likely of her daughters to do anything. Her son recently rang our doorbell. I got the boy out of jail once. He was driving a school bus and went around the curve on two wheels. I went down and got him out of jail and gave him a fatherly, stern lecture. His name was [name deleted]. I don't think the man that I mentioned a moment ago was [name deleted]; I just picked that name up. But her son [name deleted] rang our door—or he might be her grandson; it's hard to keep up with—just the other day, a tall, nice-looking boy. I wouldn't have known him from Adam's housecat. Came into our living room, and Harriet and I shook his hand and found out who he was, brought him right in and welcomed him and gave him some tea or Coke or whatever. He came by there to tell us how much we'd meant to his life, how much we influenced him, and how grateful he was for everything we'd done for his mother and him, and so on and so forth, real touching, touching experience. He's in Texas and has a security business installing alarms.

MM: Well, [name deleted] case is somewhat similar. . . . While [name deleted] was away and she wasn't really married to him, she took up with a fellow named [name deleted]. She had one child by [name deleted], but since she had a marriage certificate, they named this son [name deleted] also, so he's registered as legitimate. He's finally graduated from Morris College, and he's trying real hard, but he just don't—he's a lot like [name deleted]. I knew [name deleted]; he was a [inaudible] cab driver.

The oldest son, [name deleted], has gone in the navy and he's like a chief petty officer, and has done real well. Oddly enough, he's married a white girl—she was a French Canadian—and they've got a daughter, beautiful daughter. She never visits down here, his wife, but anyway, he seems to be doing real well.

The middle child was named [name deleted]. [Name deleted] came to visit years ago. It's got to be twenty-something years ago, twenty-five years ago. Marcie called me up; she was real

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upset. “[Name deleted] here, crying.” “What’s the problem?” “[Name deleted] is thirteen and she’s pregnant. The boy wants to marry her but his mother won’t consent.” Well, I first looked up the statute; found out that in cases like that, either side can consent in the interest of having legitimate children. So I got the judge of probate to issue the license and they got married. The fellow she married was [name deleted], and [name deleted] turned out to be an alcoholic, and she got worse and worse. She was a drinker and an alcoholic. [Name deleted] died first. They had a bunch of children. [Inaudible] and [name deleted] drank herself to death. It’s just—but she’s [inaudible], about two-thirds; she’s done pretty good.

DR: The name [name deleted] —would they have spelled it like the white family?

MM: [Spelling deleted]. Some of them do and—hers is spelled that way. People around here tell me that that was indicative—so many of them adopted the names of the families in which their families were originally slaves. We’ve got [inaudible]; we’ve got Moses. [Laughing.]

RM: There are a few black Moses.

DR: Although—well, this is an aside—that would have been a name that African Americans *may* have chosen because of who Moses [inaudible].

MM: Oh, yeah. So many of them did adopt—they might even have adopted the names of the farmers that they worked as sharecroppers with. I don’t know if anybody knows for sure.

RM: I don’t know anything about the history of slaves with my ancestors. I don’t know if they did or they didn’t. I guess I could find out [inaudible], maybe, but I don’t know. I never heard any talking about it.

DR: I don’t want to interrupt this, but I do want to, before our tape runs out, get on record the history of *your* family, because we haven’t actually talked about how you met Marcie, and how many children you have, and where they are now.

MM: Marcie moved down here in 1950. Her brother-in-law—her sister is Naomi, and she was not married; her father had died and they were living in Buffalo, New York. Her brother-in-law—his name is Warner T. Warner. That’s a long story. I won’t go into why he had the same [laughing] first name as last name. They moved down here to open a jewelry store, as part of the Reed’s Jewelers chain. At that time Warner was a classmate of the founder of that, [inaudible]. He was very experienced; he had been in the jewelry business in Buffalo, New York.

DR: A Jewish family, Warner T. Warner?

MM: Yeah. That’s an old German name. His background is more German. Well, it really wasn’t that; it was something else and they changed it. [Laughing.] When they moved down here I was a single, young male, and met Marcie, and we courted for about eight or nine months. I ran her crazy and we finally got married. We got married the day after your brother, Richard.

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RM: Is that right?

MM: We've got a one day difference anniversary, 1951, October 20th—

DR: In the temple?

MM: Yeah, in the temple. In fact, it's right odd; we were talking—I got sort of tickled at the last board meeting, with the Abrams wedding coming up, and they wanted a chuppa. We've had it for years now, but when I got married, we were so Reform here, nobody had ever used a chuppa.

Rabbi Karesh, the same one that had introduced my mother and father and had married them, was still living in 1951. He was up in years. He was the rabbi emeritus of Beth Shalom, House of Peace [ed.: in Columbia, SC], and he had married my sister, Helen, and Harry. Marcie and I thought it would be great—Jack Levy, Rabbi Levy [ed.: Rabbi J. Aaron Levy of Temple Sinai, Sumter, SC], was a fine fellow, and he said, yeah, he would have no objection, and Karesh, as Orthodox as he was, he was very liberal in certain ways. He was so proud to come over and marry the end of the two generations that he agreed to come to Temple Sinai and marry me and Marcie. We couldn't have the organ; we couldn't use it. But we did have a piano and old Bill Moore. He was a good friend of ours and a good voice and he sang "I Love You Truly" or something. [Laughing.]

RM: Just so it wasn't [ed.: sounds like "Sunset, Sunrise"].

MM: Right, that's right. [Laughing.] So Rabbi Karesh married us in October of 1951. We were married several years and we had a son, Don—Don, not Donald. We named him Don. We figured anybody that's got a name like Mazursky with three syllables don't need a long first name. He's Don Alan. [Inaudible]. He's finished at Emory University, undergraduate. He graduated from Georgetown Law Center. He got so used to Atlanta—he loves Atlanta; he started his practice there, and he's done real well. He's a specialist in what we call employee benefits, pension and profit-sharing plans, and he's now senior partner of the firm, Mazursky and Hiner there. They've got six lawyers in the firm. We're right proud of him.

DR: Mazursky and what?

MM: Hiner, H-I-N-E-R. He has two children. I have a granddaughter, Erin, E-R-I-N, a good Irish name, and a grandson, Eli, a good Jewish name. [Laughs.]

DR: Did he marry a Jewish—

MM: Yeah, he married . . . Melanie Butcher and she was from—what's the suburb of New York, on Long Island? I can't think of it right now. Anyway, she was from Long Island, New York. But she was—

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DR: Give me a clue, because that's where I'm from. North shore? South shore?

MM: What is it? Right near—

RM: Great Neck?

MM: No. Near Mamaroneck; it's the next place to Mamaroneck.

....

MM: I'll think of it in a minute. She was a graduate of the University of Syracuse. She was a dietician, and she was working at Grady in the diabetic clinic when Don met her, and they courted and got married. She went back to Emory shortly after they got married and became what we call a PA, physician's assistant, sort of an additional degree, and worked with an orthopedic group until they had children. Now she doesn't do that anymore; she just stays home. They're doing very well.

My daughter, Leigh, she went to the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. She was very interested in dramatics. I don't know whether you're familiar with UNC-Greensboro; they have a great dramatic school there. I told her she better do something besides [inaudible], because actors usually starve. So she did get a double major in early childhood education and dramatic arts.

She's done everything. She moved to Atlanta trying to break into the theater in Atlanta, and got disillusioned with the theater. By that time, when she went down there, she had a teaching contract, but she said she couldn't engage in auditions and stuff like that because it was too structured, and did we mind if she worked as a waitress; she could make more money as a waitress than she could as a school teacher, which is amazing. [Laughs.] She got into that, and when she got disillusioned with the theater, by that time, she worked for a restaurant group, and they asked her to go into management. She was doing more than the manager. She went into their management program and then later on, she—I don't know whether you're familiar with Atlanta at all. Do you visit there?

DR: A little bit, yeah.

MM: She got connected with the Peasant Restaurant Group. They were a local group, and they started a restaurant there called the Pleasant Peasant. It's a dinner—just lunch and dinner, a very big outfit. They have a place in Colony Square called the Country Place. Anyway, she got in with that group, and she ended up being a general manager of their restaurant the Peasant Uptown. She was doing real well; she had quite a big salary.

Then she met a young fellow who had finished at the University of North Carolina. His name was Philip Zaleon. His family was in Greensboro, North Carolina. Believe it or not, they had known each other even in UNC-Greensboro, but had never been attracted. They got together in Atlanta and she married him. He was with Turner Broadcasting. He's a graphic artist, is what he started as; he does all that stuff on the computers and everything.

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DR: And also Jewish?

MM: Jewish. He finally left. People don't realize it, but Ted Turner hires a lot of people; he doesn't pay them much. [Inaudible] they start there, he gets a lot of talent cheap. So they have to go in other fields. He went from one station after another and, finally, he ended up and they're living in Chapel Hill. He's got a job in Raleigh. He's vice-president of the company. They're doing—not broadcasting, but he does production of things. It's called [inaudible].

RM: Leigh's still working?

MM: She's the director of the child care center in Chapel Hill for the University of North Carolina.

DR: Oh, so she went back to her original—

MM: Well, she went back to—

DR: —what she originally trained as.

MM: Yeah, and she—well, more or less, child care is a little different; they have a certain education. But she's the manager-director. She doesn't have the day-to-day work of taking care of the children; she's running it, and does a real good job.

They have two children. They're both Jewish. They belong to the Conservative synagogue in Durham. Phil grew up as Conservative. He lived in Israel for a while; he went aliyah. He knows his Hebrew and everything real well—brilliant guy, real nice fellow. Way out—got long hair and moustache, but he's an artist. [Laughing.] He's very smart. They have two girls, Alyssa and Jessica. I hate "Jessica," but anyway, that's the name they picked. [Laughing.]

DR: Very popular name. I know many, many Jessicas. So both of your kids—

MM: And I have a third child.

DR: Oh, a third.

RM: Another boy.

MM: Jon. We had the two, two years apart, and then we waited six years and started a second family with Jon, J-O-N for Jonathan. He's Jon Eric—hates "Eric," so don't call him Eric. He went to Emory undergraduate and went through Emory Medical School. He's an M.D. He took his pediatric residency at University of Arizona, Tucson. He's a certified pediatrician. Then he decided to go into a sub-specialty—neonatal. He signed up for a three-year fellowship at University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa. I didn't realize there was a big center, but Jon investigated and said it was. You know, [ed.: sounds like "Dena"] Ackerman says that she's

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familiar with it—her family's from up in Ohio—and said it's a tremendous medical center. He will finish in June and be certified as a pediatric neonatologist, I guess. He's earning his own living now, [inaudible]. [Laughing.]

DR: He's not married yet.

MM: Not married yet. He's thirty-two, my baby, he's thirty-two. He's pretty much decided that he liked the teaching end, and he's done a lot of research. He's gotten a good offer in Little Rock, Arkansas, at the University of Arkansas, to be associate professor and, also, in the clinical side of it, he's going to be working, treating, and running the part of the department, so he'll be doing all right. He'll be living in Little Rock come June.

DR: All your kids have remained Jewish, and so far married and kept the faith in the family, but don't live in Sumter. [Laughing.]

MM: Don't live in Sumter, [inaudible]. That's one thing that worries me about the Jewish community of Sumter: we're not getting any new Jewish families and our kids are moving away [laughing.]. Right, Robert? [Laughs.]

RM: We're even losing the ones we got from the base, Cindy and Al Cohen.

MM: They are leaving?

RM: They're leaving, mm-hmm.

MM: Okay. They're a fine little couple.

RM: Yeah, they were real nice.

MM: For a while there we were holding our own. We have a little textile branch of our industry over on the eastern side of town—[ed.: sounds like "Cover"] Manufacturing and others—and they were bringing in managers that were Jewish. I don't know whether the Jews are getting too good for that; now none of the managers are Jewish at those textile plants anymore, the contracting plants, so we're not even attracting them on that side.

RM: I jumped on Richard because Florence got such a heavy influx of Jewish doctors. I asked Richard—who's a life member of Tuomey Hospital; I believe he's a life trustee or something—why didn't he get some Jewish doctors [laughs] in? He said they've had two or three that didn't stay.

MM: I think the problem sort of feeds itself. Most of them that come here, they want a Jewish background. We're not—we don't have enough Jews; we don't have a big enough religious school, and they just—if they're so inclined and want [inaudible]—

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RM: Sometimes their wives are disappointed with such a small town. They're looking for more things to do, I guess.

MM: It's sad. I love Sumter, but—I guess Robert's thought of that, and I've thought of that—we don't know what's going to happen to—

RM: I'm still praying for a turnaround, but it's hard to find [inaudible] will come.

MM: We had such a thriving community. Of course, years ago we had Jews in Manning and Bishopville—[inaudible]—

RM: Camden.

MM: —Camden, and those have decreased.

RM: Greeleyville.

MM: Yeah, we used to—the Fox girls. Marie [Fox Grossman] still lives there.

DR: And Sumter was the center?

RM: Right.

MM: Yeah, they would—they were within thirty miles. All of them were probably thirty miles or less from Sumter, and the parents were interested in their children getting a Jewish education.

RM: I guess we've got to close down.

DR: We've probably have worn you out.

MM: Well, I've worn you out. I apologize for talking so much.

RM: No, that's what we wanted.

DR: That's exactly what we wanted. It's a problem that's—it's obvious that this is going to—in the next few years something's either going to make or break with the congregation.

MM: I think it'll centralize in the larger communities. Is Charleston holding its own pretty well or what?

DR: If I had to guess—and that's all it would be—I would say the Charleston Jewish community is growing. I would say that.

RM: I know Columbia is, and I know Florence is, so why not Sumter?

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MM: Somebody told me that the—I was surprised that the Orthodox, which used to be the predominant one in Columbia, the one that Rabbi Karesh was [inaudible], is not as strongly [inaudible].

RM: I understood there's just a very few Orthodox families in Columbia.

MM: They went Conservative. I think most of those families have gravitated over to the Reform.

DR: The Tree of Life.

MM: Tree of Life. I'm right?

DR: I don't know that for a fact, but I certainly *hear* more about Tree of Life. It seems like that's [inaudible].

MM: Any time I can help you with anything, I can try to—

RM: [Inaudible] talk to Helen.

DR: That would be great.

RM: She's [inaudible]; she's coming back [inaudible].

DR: Yeah, if you could talk to Helen about any photographs or any other memorabilia—

MM: How far you want her to go back, like [inaudible]—

RM: As far as they can go. If they've got anything from anywhere that they can document [inaudible].

MM: Helen's got a lot of pictures that my mother had . . . she took over most of those when my mother and father passed away.

RM: Did I answer that correctly?

DR: Yeah, anything—

MM: I think we've got some pictures—they're right interesting, you know, with the almost 1900 dresses down [laughing] to the ground, big hats.

RM: [Inaudible.]

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DR: The one of your mother near the bakery? Near the horse?

MM: Yeah, we may find that.

DR: And the old store pictures.

MM: The really old one I've got is my mother and father, got a picture of them here.

[Tape interrupted.]

DR: That was your father.

MM: That was when they got married.

DR: This is a *wonderful* picture. This was in—in the 19—

MM: 1919.

DR: And he was what? Eight? [Inaudible], seven or eight?

MM: I always teased my father about wearing that tie [inaudible]. [Laughing.] And that's my sister and I when I was two years old. Believe it or not, I was a platinum blond with blue eyes.

DR: I believe it.

MM: My grandson, Eli, has blond hair and blue eyes like me.

RM: I never—you must have lost it pretty quickly.

MM: Yeah, I must. My eyes have gotten greenish-gray or whatever now. That was Helen and I; I was two.

RM: I can see Helen better than I can see you.

MM: [Inaudible] people don't realize—

DR: No, I recognize him.

MM: My hair was so silky thin. That was supposed to be a Buster Brown haircut, but my hair wasn't that thick.

RM: You've held your hair much better than your peers.

END OF TAPE