

**THE WILLIAM BREMAN JEWISH HERITAGE MUSEUM  
ESTHER AND HERBERT TAYLOR  
JEWISH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF ATLANTA  
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

**MEMOIRIST:** SROCHI MAIER SROCHI  
**INTERVIEWER:** ANN SCHOENBERG  
**DATE:** OCTOBER 22, 2001  
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**LOCATION:** ATLANTA, GEORGIA

<Begin Tape 1, Side 1>

**INTERVIEW BEGINS**

**SCHOENBERG:** This is Ann Hoffman Schoenberg interviewing Stanley Maier Srochi at his home in Atlanta, Georgia, 820 West Paces Ferry Road, on October 22, 2001. This interview is being done for the Jewish Oral History Project of Atlanta, co-sponsored by The American Jewish Committee, The Atlanta Jewish Federation, and The National Council of Jewish Women. Mr. Srochi, I am going to ask you to please tell me who in your family came to the United States first. You can start with either your mother's family or your father's family.

**SROCHI:** I don't know who came first. I believe both, my mother's side and my father's side came to the United States in the 1880s.

**SCHOENBERG:** What part of Europe did they come from?

**SROCHI:** My maternal grandfather came from an area that I believe was part of Russia at the time, Courland. C-O-U-R-L-A-N-D [German: Kurland]. I believe my maternal grandmother . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** His name was?

**SROCHI:** Lewis. L-E-W-I-S. Hirsh. H-I-R-S-H.

**SCHOENBERG:** You said his name had originally been . . .

**SROCHI:** Yes, there are several family stories that the name in 1900 was Hirschovitz because it appeared on the list of members of the AA [Ahavath Achim].<sup>1</sup> That would document

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<sup>1</sup> Ahavath Achim was founded in 1887 in a small room on Gilmer Street. In 1901 they moved to a permanent building at the corner of Piedmont and Gilmer Street. In 1921, the congregation constructed a synagogue at Washington Street and Woodward Avenue. The final service in that building was held in 1958 to make way for construction of the Downtown Connector (the concurrent section of Interstate 75 and Interstate 85 through Atlanta). The synagogue moved to its current location on Peachtree Battle Avenue in 1958. Rabbi Abraham Hirmes was the

it. Whether they spelled it right or not, I don't think so. My grandmother, my mother's mother [Lottie Hirsh], came from Riga.

**SCHOENBERG:** In Latvia.

**SROCHI:** On that side, I was *Litvak*.<sup>2</sup>

**SCHOENBERG:** You said you don't remember her maiden name, but she did come to the United States from Europe?

**SROCHI:** Yes, all of my grandparents were European born.

**SCHOENBERG:** Your father's family?

**SROCHI:** My grandfather, my father's father, [he] called himself a Galitzianer.<sup>3</sup> He was from an area that was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It's really part of Poland. It was near Krakow [Polish: Kraków].

**SCHOENBERG:** [Do] you know the name of the town?

**SROCHI:** It was something like Jalapole [sp] is all I can tell you. Many years later in 1950, I went to Europe with him and we found a kosher<sup>4</sup> restaurant. The owner, I think, was from the same little town. That's as close as I can come.

**SCHOENBERG:** Your grandmother on that side was also from that part?

**SROCHI:** I think she was from the same area, but I can't really be sure.

**SCHOENBERG:** What were their names?

**SROCHI:** I think her name was Haber. H-A-B-E-R.

**SCHOENBERG:** And her first name?

**SROCHI:** She was Dora.

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first rabbi of the then Orthodox congregation. In 1928 Rabbi Harry Epstein became the rabbi and the congregation began to shift to Conservatism, which they joined in 1952. Cantor Isaac Goodfriend, a Holocaust survivor, joined the congregation in 1966 and remained until his retirement. Rabbi Epstein retired in 1982, becoming Rabbi Emeritus and Rabbi Arnold Goodman assumed the rabbinic post. He retired in 2002. Rabbi Neil Sandler is now the rabbi. (2015).

<sup>2</sup> '*Litvak*' refers to Lithuanian Jews or Jews with roots in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: (present-day Belarus, Lithuania, Ukraine, and the northeastern Suwalki region of Poland). The term is sometimes used, especially in Israel, to cover all Orthodox Jews who follow a "Lithuanian" (Ashkenazi and non-Hasidic) style of life and learning, whatever their ethnic background.

<sup>3</sup> Galician Jews or Galitzianers are a subdivision of the Ashkenazim geographically originating from Galicia, from western Ukraine and from the southeastern corner of Poland.

<sup>4</sup> *Kosher/Kashrut* is the set of Jewish dietary laws. Food that may be consumed according to *halakhah* (Jewish law) is termed 'kosher' in English. Kosher refers to Jewish laws that dictate how food is prepared or served and which kinds of foods or animals can be eaten. Food that is not in accordance with Jewish law is called '*treif*.' The word 'kosher' has become English vernacular, a colloquialism meaning proper, legitimate, genuine, fair, or acceptable. Kosher can also be used to describe ritual objects that are made in accordance with Jewish law and are fit for ritual use.

**SCHOENBERG:** And your grandfather Srochi?

**SROCHI:** He was Morris Srochi. They originally lived in New York and came to Atlanta in the early 1890s.

**SCHOENBERG:** What brought them to Atlanta?

**SROCHI:** The family story is my paternal grandfather is a baker by trade. He had been a baker as a young boy in Poland. He told me a story one time that his employer wanted him to work, I think, all night. They had a big order or something. He wanted to go home, so the owner of this bakery hid his shoes. There was snow on the ground, but he didn't know my grandfather. He walked home barefoot. The way he got to Atlanta, supposedly, he saw an ad [advertisement] in a Yiddish language paper in New York for a position for a baker in New York, and he could make more money in Atlanta. The family story is that he was making \$3 a week in New York. He came to Atlanta for \$3.50. So, the Srochis came south for 50 cents.

**SCHOENBERG:** They can get you cheap. Fifty cents went a lot further.

**SROCHI:** It went a long way in those days.

**SCHOENBERG:** Right. Did he have family when he came here? Were his children born here?

**SROCHI:** My father [Abram David Srochi] was the only one who was not born in Atlanta on my father's side. His two brothers and his sister, I think, were all born in Atlanta.

**SCHOENBERG:** Would you like to name all of those people, please?

**SROCHI:** Yes. I think I could do that. On the Srochi side, on the paternal side, my father had one sister, Birdie. B-I-R-D-I-E. Srochi Cohn.

**SCHOENBERG:** K-O-R-N?

**SROCHI:** C-O-H-N. She married J. Sam Cohn [Joseph Sam]. He had two brothers.

**SCHOENBERG:** Was Birdie her legal name?

**SROCHI:** Birdie was her real name.

**SCHOENBERG:** Did she have a Hebrew name?

**SROCHI:** If she did, I did not . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** You never heard it.

**SROCHI:** I did not know it. That was my Aunt Birdie. My father had two brothers. Jacob Srochi, who had two children, Alan Srochi and Robyn Srochi Estroff. E-S-T-R-O-F-F. He had a younger brother, Sidney Srochi, who had one son, Ronald Srochi. Ronnie Srochi.

**SCHOENBERG:** [Do] all these young people live here?

**SROCHI:** No. Just Robyn Estroff and I are the survivors of the third generation.

**SCHOENBERG:** On your mother's side, you said she was one of several.

**SROCHI:** My mother [Sophie Hirsh] was born in Atlanta in 1887. She was the oldest of nine children.

**SCHOENBERG:** So you had lots of aunts and uncles growing up?

**SROCHI:** [I] had lots of aunts and uncles. My mother had five brothers.

**SCHOENBERG:** What were their names?

**SROCHI:** Herman. "Hymie" as he was known, who is very well-known in the community. Leo Hirsh. Leo, of the five brothers, he was the odd ball. He was the one that got married.

**SCHOENBERG:** He's the only one of the five brothers who married?

**SROCHI:** [He] got married. She had four bachelor brothers who were very attentive to all their nephews and nieces and spoiled us royally. The other brothers were, named in order I think were Hymie, Jake, Leo, Abram, and Harry.

**SCHOENBERG:** The sisters?

**SROCHI:** My mother had two sisters, actually three sisters. They lost one of the sisters, Clara. [She] died in 1921 at the age of 16. She had two sisters, Florence and my Aunt Pauline Hirsh Fine.

**SCHOENBERG:** I was going to ask.

**SROCHI:** She is the mother of three children, Lowell, Larry, and Loretta. They were into the 'L's.

**SCHOENBERG:** Did you other aunt marry?

**SROCHI:** Yes. My Aunt Florence [Hirsh] married Ben [Benjamin E.] Marks from North Carolina. She had one son, Henry [S.] Marks. Henry is a history professor. He has written several books that I know of. The only thing about being in one of Henry's books, you have to be dead. He's written a book on a Jewish subject of who was who in Florida and who was in Alabama. I told Henry I wasn't anxious to be in his book.

**SCHOENBERG:** I can understand that. You will pass for the time being anyway. That's cute. Where does he teach?

**SROCHI:** In Alabama. He lives in Huntsville, Alabama. His wife is also a teacher.

She is Martha Katz. She has a sister, [Dr.] Nanette Wenger.

**SCHOENBERG:** [Do] you want to start with yourself now and get yourself born and get your siblings born. We'll get through all the births. You were the eldest child in your family?

**SROCHI:** No. I'm the baby of my family. I had one brother and one sister. My brother was Morton Harold Srochi. He was born April 18, 1922. My sister, Myrtle Claire Srochi, was born July 17, 1923.

**SCHOENBERG:** [Is] she married?

**SROCHI:** She married Jacob Levin from Lorain, Ohio, in 1952. She lived in Ohio. Unfortunately, Jay died in 1965. After another year or two in Ohio, Myrtle came back. Moved back to Atlanta.

**SCHOENBERG:** Both she and your brother have passed away now?

**SROCHI:** Yes. Both my brother and sister have passed away. My brother died in 1981 and Myrtle in 1985.

**SCHOENBERG:** Growing up, you and I talked a moment ago when I asked you where your family was living when you were born. Do you want to tell the interview?

**SROCHI:** This is before really I have any memory. I think we were living on Jackson Street, which was in the area just off of Boulevard near the Georgia Baptist Hospital complex. At a very early age, a few years later, I think in the 1920s, just a year or two later, we moved to Saint Louis Place. We were living there, I know, in 1928. I know this is hard to believe, [but] I remember Election Day in 1928.

**SCHOENBERG:** You were only two years old.

**SROCHI:** I was two years old.

**SCHOENBERG:** They must have had something very memorable going on.

**SROCHI:** Well, it was. I'll tell you the story. I had some sort of a gland operation under my arm. I still have the scar to prove it. What I really remember, I got to come home in my grandfather's automobile and I got to ride on the jump seat. I think it was a Buick or Cadillac or something. It had two jump seats like you might get in a big cab in Europe or someplace. That was very memorable. I came home, and I don't think they projected elections in those days, but I do remember that they had the radio on and [Herbert] Hoover was beating Al Smith.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The United States presidential election of 1928 was the 36<sup>th</sup> presidential election. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover (1874-1964) was nominated as the Republican candidate and gained electoral victory. New York Governor Alfred E. Smith (1873-1944) was the Democratic nominee.

**SCHOENBERG:** You recall that? I guess that was something that your family approved of because you told me that even your grandfather seemed to . . .

**SROCHI:** That I don't know. I don't think at that time or maybe ever [that] they had any real strong feelings about it. That probably came later when the bakers started tangling up with the unions.

**SCHOENBERG:** You told me at one point before we actually started this interview that even your grandfather had told you some years later that he had voted Republican.

**SROCHI:** He told me had voted for [William] McKinley.<sup>6</sup> He did tell me that. You have to remember at that time in the south up until the middle of 1940s in Georgia, we had what was known as the White Primary.<sup>7</sup> Most of the blacks voted Republican, those that were allowed to vote, until probably 1936. There's a great story that this black minister in Chicago [Illinois]. [He] turned Abraham Lincoln's picture to the wall. He said, "Father Abraham, we've been loyal for 70 years." You know, he wanted to keep those checks coming.

**SCHOENBERG:** That is a great story. Your birthday? I don't think we said it.

**SROCHI:** February 11, 1926, right between Thomas Edison and Abraham Lincoln.

**SCHOENBERG:** Did you . . . how do I phrase this? Since you were the youngest child, were you spoiled?

**SROCHI:** I'm sure I'm sure my siblings thought so anyway. Probably royally. Much beyond my desserts.

**SCHOENBERG:** I don't know that is necessarily true, but usually the youngest does get some sort of priority. Do you want to tell me now about your growing up years? Tell me what life was like in Atlanta when you were young and who were some of your associates?

**SROCHI:** Most of my memories, boyhood memories, are really sort of compressed between the time I was maybe 6 and 11 years old. I lived [at] 1218 Oxford Road. It was sort of like a little League of Nations. Next door to the right of our home, if you came out of our home and turned right, there was a Catholic family, the Carver family. C-A-R-V-E-R. They all went to

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<sup>6</sup> William McKinley (1843-1901) was the 25<sup>th</sup> President of the United States from March 4, 1897 until his assassination in September, 1901. McKinley was the last president to have served in the American Civil War.

<sup>7</sup> White primary was a legal device once employed by some Southern states which prevented African Americans from exercising their right to vote in a meaningful way and limiting the ability of African Americans to play a part in the political process. By means of the white primary device, African Americans were disenfranchised without official state action and protection under the Equal Protection Clause. White primaries were established by state legislatures in many Southern states after 1890 and existed until the late 1960s.

Marist [School]. Two of the boys were about my age. They were both good athletes. They had an older brother who was a fine golfer. He was already at Georgia Tech [Georgia Institute of Technology]. His best friend, I believe, was a guy named Charlie Yates, who was very well known in Atlanta and was British Amateur champion in 1938. The boys used to get out and swing their golf clubs and dig up Mr. Carver's lawn. He didn't take too kindly to that.

**SCHOENBERG:** I'm sure of that.

**SROCHI:** Next door to the Carters lived the Duke family. That's Paul Duke, who later became an authentic 1946 all-American football player at Georgia Tech.

**SCHOENBERG:** And not a bad developer either.

**SROCHI:** Right. He had the foresight to marry Jean Fraser, whose father was Carlyle Fraser and the founder of Genuine Parts Company.

**SCHOENBERG:** That helped, I'm sure.

**SROCHI:** Anyway, we were all very close knit. Next to them there were two other boys. This is a good story. They were the Paynes. P-A-Y-N-E. Their father was Dr. J. Harvey Payne. He was a dentist. His office was in the Hurt Building.

**SCHOENBERG:** Very good. Do you think he went into dentistry on purpose?

**SROCHI:** Actually, the two boys were both dentists. Harvey and my brother, Morton, went out for the football team at Druid Hills High School when they got to high school. Harvey was about 6' 4". Morton was maybe 5' 9". They were a couple of kids, of course, and they went down to a sporting goods store to get their football shoes. The clerk supposedly asked them, he said, "Are you boys sure you're on the football team?" I have a lot of memories of those days. We took our shoes off when we got out of school in June and we didn't put them back on until we went back to school in September.

**SCHOENBERG:** Did you go fishing in the Peavine Creek?

**SROCHI:** I don't recall fishing that much. My dad put in a little pool in our back yard, but he didn't put a whole lot of water in it. Mrs. Duke asked him one time, since Paul always like to do things head first, she would put more water in the pool.

**SCHOENBERG:** [To] keep him from crashing into the bottom?

**SROCHI:** Then there was another family. The Guys lived across the street on the corner of North Decatur [Road] and Oxford. Mr. [James Samuel] Guy. Dr. Guy. J. Sam Guy was head of the chemistry department at Emory University. His wife, Mrs. Guy, was the

daughter of Judge John [Slaughter] Candler, which meant that the uncles were the Bishop Warren [Akin] Candler and Asa Griggs Candler. She was first cousin, of course, of all of Asa's children, of which he had a bunch.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. You started to tell me about Bishop Candler, who lived right around the corner from where you lived.

**SROCHI:** Yes. I can remember as a kid before I was even in school that I would wander up into his rose garden, and he would be padding around in his house slippers feeding his pigeons. Of course, I had no idea who this man was.

**SCHOENBERG:** He was the man responsible for bringing . . .

**SROCHI:** Bringing Emory University to Atlanta. He is commonly . . . he was probably one of the most important churchmen, certainly in the south.

**SCHOENBERG:** Certainly in the United Methodist Church.

**SROCHI:** He was the national figure.

**SCHOENBERG:** Did he have children as well? Anybody that you interacted with?

**SROCHI:** No, not to my knowledge. Though, I think there was quite a story at the time. I think he married a much younger woman late in life.

**SCHOENBERG:** This was semi-scandalous?

**SROCHI:** Yes.

**SCHOENBERG:** Were there Jewish families also living in Druid Hills in those years?

**SROCHI:** There were two Jewish families that lived fairly close to us. The Herzog family. They had two children, Richard Herzog. Richard is still living. He had a younger sister, who is Virginia [Herzog] Hein. You may know Virginia.

**SCHOENBERG:** I do. Yes.

**SROCHI:** She's a professor, too, I believe. Later, the Clein family moved in onto Oxford. They lived across the street.

**SCHOENBERG:** Is that C-L - . . .

**SROCHI:** C-L-I-N-E, I think. I'm not really sure. C-L-I-N-E or C-L-E-I-N.

**SCHOENBERG:** Were they members of The Temple<sup>8</sup> or members of AA?

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<sup>8</sup> The Temple, or 'Hebrew Benevolent Congregation,' is Atlanta's oldest Jewish congregation. The cornerstone was laid on the Temple on Garnett Street in 1875. The dedication was held in 1877 and the Temple was located there until 1902. The Temple's next location on Pryor Street was dedicated in 1902. The Temple's current location in Midtown on Peachtree Street was dedicated in 1931. The main sanctuary is on the National Register of Historic

**SROCHI:** I think the Herzog's were members of The Temple. I think the Cleins were probably members of the AA, but I'm not sure.

**SCHOENBERG:** From the start, was your family always part of the AA congregation?

**SROCHI:** Yes. On both sides of my family. My grandfathers were members of the AA in 1900. I believe, at least on the Srochi side. We were members prior to that. My father told me one time he could remember going to services over the police station when they were on Decatur Street.

**SCHOENBERG:** Just in a store front or something?

**SROCHI:** Yes, in a room.

**SCHOENBERG:** For the benefit of the tape, the kitty has decided to join us on the tape, practically on the machine.

**SROCHI:** She could really give you the inside story of all this.

**SCHOENBERG:** We were talking about your family being at AA from almost the outset then of the founding of the congregation. The congregation was founded in . . .

**SROCHI:** In 1887. Of course, that was Orthodox<sup>9</sup> at least until the 1940s.

**SCHOENBERG:** At that point, they associated themselves with the Conservative movement.

**SROCHI:** There was a transition period. Today they would be, I guess, designated as Conservative.<sup>10</sup>

**SCHOENBERG:** Which rabbi do you remember? How far back can you remember?

**SROCHI:** I came up in the generation that identifies with Rabbi Harry [H.] Epstein.<sup>11</sup> He is the rabbi. There is no other.

**SCHOENBERG:** What was he like when you were a kid? Did you idolize him? Were you in awe?

**SROCHI:** More awe. He was not the type that a youngster probably would associate. He was admired for his intellect and his speaking ability. He had a very pronounced presence, a

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Places. The Reform congregation now totals approximately 1,500 families (2015).

<sup>9</sup> Orthodox Judaism is a traditional branch of Judaism that strictly follows the Written *Torah* and the Oral Law concerning prayer, dress, food, sex, family relations, social behavior, the Sabbath day, holidays and more

<sup>10</sup> A form of Judaism that seeks to preserve Jewish tradition and ritual but has a more flexible approach to the interpretation of the law than Orthodox Judaism. It attempts to combine a positive attitude toward modern culture, while preserving a commitment to Jewish observance. They also observe gender equality (mixed seating, women rabbis and *bat mitzvahs*).

<sup>11</sup> In 1928 Rabbi Harry Epstein (1903-2003) served as the rabbi of Ahavath Achim from 1928 to 1982. Under his leadership the congregation began to shift to Conservatism, which they adopted in 1952. Rabbi Epstein retired in 1982, becoming Rabbi Emeritus and Rabbi Arnold Goodman assumed the rabbinic post.

very strong presence. He demanded and got respect.

**SCHOENBERG:** But you didn't, certainly, as a child, feel that he was your friend? You didn't feel comfortable going up and just talking to him?

**SROCHI:** Yes. I would talk to him, but it was more of a relationship that one might have with a teacher in a grade school. Maybe if you get older, certainly you get to the college level, it's a little different level. As a child, it was more like going into the court room and view the judge.

**SCHOENBERG:** When you were *bar mitzvahed*?<sup>12</sup> Were you *bar mitzvahed* at AA?

**SROCHI:** I was *bar mitzvahed* in the AA in February, 1939.

**SCHOENBERG:** At that time, where were they located?

**SROCHI:** They were located at the corner of Washington [Street] and Woodward Avenue.

**SCHOENBERG:** [Can] you tell me anything about when you went to *shul*<sup>13</sup> at that location? I mean, when you were a kid, did you all sit in services.

**SROCHI:** Yes. The Srochis had a bench. At the time, of course, the seating arrangements were such that our mothers and our sisters were in the balcony. That situation existed at the time I was *bar mitzvahed*. Sometime in the 1940s, the women were allowed to come downstairs, but they still were sort of sitting in the back of the bus, in the back of the auditorium.

**SCHOENBERG:** Was there a *mekhitza*?<sup>14</sup> Was there like a separation?

**SROCHI:** I don't know that there was a physical separation. There probably was. The ushers apparently knew whatever the arrangements were. I never recall as long as the synagogue was on Washington Street. It was there through the High Holy Days<sup>15</sup> in 1957. I

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<sup>12</sup> Hebrew for 'son of commandment.' A rite of passage for Jewish boys aged 13 years and one day. At that time, a Jewish boy is considered a responsible adult for most religious purposes. He is now duty bound to keep the commandments, he puts on *tefillin*, and may be counted to the *minyan* quorum for public worship. He celebrates the *bar mitzvah* by being called up to the reading of the *Torah* in the synagogue, usually on the next available Sabbath after his Hebrew birthday.

<sup>13</sup> *Shul* is a Yiddish word for synagogue that is derived from a German word meaning "school," and emphasizes the synagogue's role as a place of study.

<sup>14</sup> *Mekhitza* is a divider between men and women in a synagogue. Sometimes it is simply a physical separation between the two sexes, such as a room divider or curtain. It is found predominantly among Orthodox synagogues.

<sup>15</sup> *Rosh Ha-Shanah* [Hebrew: head of the year; i.e. New Year festival] begins the cycle of High Holy Days. It introduces the Ten Days of Penitence, when Jews examine their souls and take stock of their actions. On the tenth day is *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. The tradition is that on *Rosh Ha-Shanah*, G-d sits in judgment on humanity. Then the fate of every living creature is inscribed in the Book of Life or Death. Prayer and repentance

don't recall that my mother or any of the Srochi women ever sat on the bench.

**SCHOENBERG:** Interesting. Did you have to pay for your bench?

**SROCHI:** Probably. Way back, my grandfather bought a brick. They sold bricks when the synagogue . . . I'll tell you about that. I know that my grandfather was a strong financial supporter of the AA. In 1920, he bought either the first brick or one of the first bricks. That's the way they did fundraising for that facility. I also know that during that period and on into the late 1930s, certainly, they auctioned . . . they held auctions on the High Holy Day. They auctioned the *aliyahs*.<sup>16</sup> Apparently a number of times he was the high bidder for the *neilah*,<sup>17</sup> which is, I guess, like the principal. The *neilah* would come towards the end of the *Yom Kippur*<sup>18</sup> service. Apparently around 1938 or 1939, they decided not to auction that honor any longer, so they gave Morris Srochi that honor for life. He was what was known as the *neilah* man. He stood *neilah* on into his 90s when he died.

**SCHOENBERG:** How old was he when he died?

**SROCHI:** He died in 1960. I think he was probably around 91 or 92 years old. He did live long enough to see the AA move from Washington Street to Peachtree Battle Avenue. Apparently it was a common practice to auction *aliyahs*. I believe it's still done in some of the synagogues in Atlanta.

**SCHOENBERG:** Were your contemporaries pretty observant as children or did you gather outside the building during, for instance, during the High Holy Days? Were you pretty much told you would sit in services?

**SROCHI:** I would not really call us observant. My grandfather, particularly my maternal grandfather, was very observant. Once the service was technically over and most of the people left, that's when the real observant people got down to business. They got rid of the riff raff, and they got down to the serious praying. Anyway, on my mother's side, my grandparents

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before the sealing of the books on Yom Kippur may revoke these decisions.

<sup>16</sup> *Aliyah* in Hebrew means 'ascent' or 'going up.' An *aliyah* is the calling of a member of a Jewish congregation to the *bimah* for a segment of reading from the Torah. It is considered a great honor. The person who receives the *aliyah* goes up to the *bimah* before the reading and recites a blessing thanking G-d for giving the *Torah* to the Jewish nation. After the reading, the recipient then recites another concluding blessing. *Aliyah* is also the immigration of Jews from the diaspora to Israel. It is one of the most basic tenets of Zionism.

<sup>17</sup> *Neilah* is the fifth and final prayer of *Yom Kippur* services, the most sacred of the yearly liturgy.

<sup>18</sup> Hebrew for 'Day of Atonement.' The most sacred day of the Jewish year. *Yom Kippur* is a 25 hour fast day. Most of the day is spent in prayer, reciting *yizkor* for deceased relatives, confessing sins, requesting divine forgiveness, and listening to *Torah* readings and sermons. People greet each other with the wish that they may be sealed in the heavenly book for a good year ahead. The day ends with the blowing of the *shofar* (a ram's horn).

lived on the south side on Washington Street. On into about 1940 [or] 1941 maybe, I went to services, particularly the *Yom Kippur* service. We didn't go home. We went to my grandmother's.

**SCHOENBERG:** And that's where you broke the fast?

**SROCHI:** A lot of us were in that position. The old synagogue, the Washington Street synagogue, was right on the street, on the corner. There was no off-street parking or anything. There was a small drugstore on the opposite corner. The Fulton High School was directly across the street. Anyway, it gave us a chance to visit our grandmothers and sometimes go with our friends to visit their relatives.

**SCHOENBERG:** The elderly still stayed in the Washington Street neighborhood? Many of them?

**SROCHI:** Yes. On my mother's side, they lived on Washington Street near the Shearith Israel.<sup>19</sup> They lived there during the 1930s. Sometime in the late 1930s, they moved a little further south almost to the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Washington Street, within a block or so of what is now Turner Field and the old Atlanta Stadium.<sup>20</sup> There was one of the early delicatessens, [S.J.] Gold Delicatessen. It was on Georgia Avenue right off of Washington Street. There was another delicatessen on Washington Street, Siegel's [Kosher Market]. That's Louis Siegel's father. [Max Siegel]. Louis and Morris Siegel. There's a great story that Louie tells about his brother Morris. Moshe. He was a sports writer for, I believe, *The Washington Post*. He came down here with a guy pretty well known, named Rocky Marciano. Somebody was opening an Italian restaurant here, and the two of them came down for the opening. Morris stopped in to see his father at the deli, and they had lunch there. That night, he asked his father if he knew who he had met. He says, no, but he remembered that he ate two corned beef sandwiches. Maybe that's what made Rocky a great fighter.

**SCHOENBERG:** All that good Siegel corned beef. That's wonderful. I bet he ate a full meal

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<sup>19</sup> Founded in 1904, Shearith Israel began as a congregation that met in the homes of congregants until 1906 when they began using a Methodist church on Hunter Street. After World War II, Rabbi Tobias Geffen moved the congregation to University Drive, where it became the first synagogue in DeKalb County. In the 1960's, they removed the barrier between the men's and women's sections in the sanctuary, and officially became affiliated with the Conservative movement in 2002.

<sup>20</sup> Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium served as the home ballpark for the Atlanta Braves baseball team for 31 seasons from 1966 to 1996. In 1997, the Braves moved less than one block to Turner Field. It was built to serve the 1996 Summer Olympics. The Braves played their final game at Turner Field on October 2, 2016. In 2016, Georgia State University bought the ballpark and redesigned it for a college football stadium. The Braves played their first game in 2017 in their new home stadium, SunTrust Park, located in Cobb County, a suburb north of the city.

at dinner, too.

**SROCHI:** They probably had a full meal at this restaurant.

**SCHOENBERG:** Big Italian thing. That's a good story. Were there a lot of kids your age growing up? A lot of Jewish kids?

**SROCHI:** Yes.

**SCHOENBERG:** Did you all belong to clubs?

**SROCHI:** We had clubs. Later, as we got older, 13 or 14, we joined AZA [Aleph Zadik Aleph for Young Men]. But when we were 11 or 12 years old, we weren't quite as organized. I grew up with a bunch of kids. Fortunately, a lot of them are still around. Leon Charles Goldstein, Alvin Greenberg. My cousin Jack Hirsh. Lester Cohen, Stanley Tenebaum.

**SCHOENBERG:** You had a whole gang.

**SROCHI:** Jarvin Levison came here from Tennessee. He came a little later. There was Jack Kaler, whose brother Irving was one of the early presidents of AZA. He was very active and became involved in politics and a prominent lawyer.

**SCHOENBERG:** Did you participate in activities at the [Jewish] Educational Alliance?<sup>21</sup>

**SROCHI:** Since I was sort of a north side boy, I did play a little basketball there.

**SCHOENBERG:** Go ahead and tell the story about the Educational Alliance.

**SROCHI:** I was a north side boy. I was not really known around by the locals who hung around the old Educational Alliance on Capitol Avenue. A buddy of mine and I were over there, who was also a north side boy. Out of discretion, I won't mention his name. He is very prominent, and his father was even more prominent. We were walking down the hall, and some of the regulars behind us muttering about a "little Christ child."

**SCHOENBERG:** You had to make yourself known.

**SROCHI:** I also had an earlier experience at Educational Alliance that my cousin Jack Hirsch tells me about. He has a photograph of his mother, my mother, and maybe 30 or 40 other young women holding their babies on the steps of the Alliance. This was a "Better Baby

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<sup>21</sup> The Jewish Educational Alliance operated from 1910 to 1948 on the site where the former Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium was located. The JEA was once the hub of Jewish life in Atlanta. Families congregated there for social, educational, sports and cultural programs. The JEA ran camps and held classes to help some new residents learn to read and write English. For newcomers, it became a refuge, with programs to help them acclimate to a new home. The JEA stayed at that site until the late 1940s, when it evolved into the Atlanta Jewish Community Center and moved to Peachtree Street. It stayed there until 1998, when the building was sold and the center moved to Dunwoody. In 2000, it was renamed the 'Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta.'

Contest.” I have no idea who won.

**SCHOENBERG:** That's what I was getting ready to ask.

**SROCHI:** But it was not I.

**SCHOENBERG:** I just wanted to know.

**SROCHI:** I was a loser even back then.

**SCHOENBERG:** I just wonder what kind of criteria they used, don't you?

**SROCHI:** That, I don't know. Probably who was the fattest.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes, that probably would have . . .

**SROCHI:** Everything that is bad for you now was good for you then.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. Eat something, honey. You aren't fat.

**SROCHI:** Yes. Clean your plate.

**SCHOENBERG:** It's the old story. What was it? The children in Europe are starving. Finish everything on your plate.

**SROCHI:** Starving Armenians.

**SCHOENBERG:** That too. Starving Armenians. The schools you went to.

**SROCHI:** I started school in 1932 at Druid Hills School. It went all the way from elementary through high school. At that time, the schools in DeKalb County were 11 years. I went to Druid Hills through the fifth grade. In 1937, we moved from 1218 Oxford Road to 843 Springdale Road, which was in the city, so I went to a city school. I went to Hiram [High] School for one year, sixth grade. Seventh, eighth, and ninth I went to Bass Junior High.

**SCHOENBERG:** Down in Inman Park.

**SROCHI:** In fall of 1941, I went to old Boys' High School.<sup>22</sup> I graduated from Boys' High School in 1944.

**SCHOENBERG:** Right in the middle of World War II.

**SROCHI:** Right. My first year. December 7 was Pearl Harbor. The next day, Monday the 8th, we had a joint assembly with our bitter rivals who were right next door, Tech High School. Boys' High and Tech High were like the Hatfield's and the McCoy's. They were very bitter enemies. But for about an hour, which was the length of time that it took Franklin

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<sup>22</sup> Boys' High School was founded in 1924 and is now known as Henry W. Grady High School. It is part of the Atlanta Public School System. It has had many notable alumni, including S. Truett Cathy, the founder of Chick-fil-A. It is located in Midtown Atlanta.

[D.] Roosevelt<sup>23</sup> to make his famous “Day of Infamy” Speech and the Congress to declare war, Boys’ High and Tech High declared peace. As soon as that assembly was over, we were fighting on two fronts. Boys’ High and Tech High and United States against the . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** Against the Germans.

**SROCHI:** The Japanese, because we didn't declare war on Germans until about three days later.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. That's true. That's amazing. Tell me about your career in high school.

**SROCHI:** My career in high school. I had quite a few memories. I was going to say I was unfortunate enough to take Latin but fortunate now. I had a professor, Professor Wilson. L.P. Wilson. The boys called him “Lucius Publius Wilson.” He set us straight the first day. He said, "Boys" . . . somebody asked him I think if he ever gave an A. He said, "Yes, I have given an A." Somebody asked him when, and he said, in 1912. Of course this was 1941. We figured our chances of making an A in that class were sort of slim to none. But it was a great experience. He would call on you to recite. If you didn't have the answer on the tip of your tongue, he'd say, next man. Next man up. He was a tough taskmaster but a great role model. I remember practically all of the teachers there. We had some . . . it was a fine. It was a public school, but it was really a prep [preparatory] school.

**SCHOENBERG:** That was an unusual.

**SROCHI:** It's an unusual school even though the school sort of went away and the whole system changed after World War II. After the 1947 graduating class the following fall, the schools became more neighborhood oriented.

**SCHOENBERG:** They also were co-educational.

**SROCHI:** Also were gender integrated. Desegregation didn't come until 20 or 25 years later. There was a dual school system in Atlanta, I guess, until the late 1960s and 1970s.

**SCHOENBERG:** Right, but Boys’ High and Girls’ High as well were quite unusual.

**SROCHI:** They were very fine schools. They had . . .

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<sup>23</sup> Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945) was the 32<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States and a central figure in world events during the mid-twentieth century, leading the United States through a time of worldwide economic crisis and war. Popularly known as ‘FDR,’ he collapsed and died in his home in Warm Springs, Georgia just a few months before the end of the war. He was a Democrat. FDR was an avid horse rider and enjoyed an active early life. He was diagnosed with infantile paralysis, better known as polio, in 1921, at the age of 39. Despite permanent paralysis from the waist down, he was careful never to be seen using his wheelchair in public, and great care was taken to prevent any portrayal in the press that would highlight his disability.

**SCHOENBERG:** Excellent standards.

**SROCHI:** We had graduates who went to Ivy League schools, local schools, and a lot of very well-known people in Boys' High. It still has an active alumni association. Every other year we have a reunion. I have been a board member for [Atlanta] Boys High [School] Alumni Association. We still get 400 to 500 people to turn out for these. I really think I associate more with my high school graduation than I do with my college. In fact, I don't think I ever went to a ceremony when I graduated. I did go to my law school graduation, I think.

**SCHOENBERG:** You said one of the things that you did in high school that you never have regretted was to have taken ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps].

**SROCHI:** ROTC. I didn't know at the time that as soon as I got out of high school I was going to be toting a rifle that was going to be loaded and there was a possibility that people were going to be shooting at me with live ammunition. I was a little bit ahead of the game. It wasn't all new to me when I was inducted into the [military] service after my high school days were over.

**SCHOENBERG:** You were inducted where? Down at Fort McPherson?

**SROCHI:** In Atlanta. Fort McPherson. In July, 1944. This was exactly, I think, one month after D-Day, which was June 6, 1944. I was inducted July 6, 1944.

**SCHOENBERG:** Were many of your classmates with you at the time?

**SROCHI:** Yes. There were about three of us. Boys from my class of 1944 who went to Sheppard Field, Texas, together.

**SCHOENBERG:** You trained initially?

**SROCHI:** One of them was an all Southeastern High School football player.

**SCHOENBERG:** Who was that?

**SROCHI:** Butch Buffet [sp].

**SCHOENBERG:** Did you initially train for the [United States] Army Air Corps?

**SROCHI:** Yes. I was at Sheppard Field from July, about two and a half months. [I] went through basic there and then was sent to Truax Field, Wisconsin, which was Madison, Wisconsin. I got up there before the snow started flying in the fall of 1944. I got to go to University of Wisconsin football games and see the campus there at the university. A lot of very attractive co-eds. I remember it well. I was in Madison until, I think, February or March of the following year, 1945. Then I was transferred to the infantry. [I] went back to Texas for basic

infantry training.

**SCHOENBERG:** This time they were going to . . .

**SROCHI:** I was there. I have a very vivid memory of coming in the field on April 12, 1945. The cooks had brought our dinner out in these huge pots. They said, "Did you know President Roosevelt . . ."

<End Tape 1, Side 1>

<Begin Tape 1, Side 2>

**SCHOENBERG:** This is Ann Hoffman Schoenberg introducing the second side of the first tape of an interview with Stanley Srochi on October 22, 2001, in his home. He was just in the middle of talking about President Roosevelt's death and how he heard about it. He was a member of the Armed Forces at the time. If you will go ahead now.

**SROCHI:** The evening after the president's death, we had field exercise. It was a terrible stormy Texas night. Torrential rains. I remember when we finally got through. It was called bivouac. We were sleeping in pup tents. Two-man pup tents. The rain was so heavy that I think every ant in Texas tried to get into our tent and get out of the rain. After that bivouac, I got the only furlough I ever got while I was in the army. I came from Sheppard Field, Texas, which was Wichita Falls. [I] came back on the train to Atlanta. I was in Atlanta for about a week or ten days. I had orders to report to Fort Meade, Maryland. I caught the crescent out of Atlanta. Went to Washington and got to Fort Meade. This was right at the tail end of World War II. [I] got off the train in Washington, and there were headlines [and] photographs of [Benito] Mussolini<sup>24</sup> hanging upside down. Just a lot of things going on. While I was at Fort Meade, my parents came up from Atlanta and my sister Myrtle, who was supposed to be taking her final exam at Wellesley [College]. They came down to see Stanley. At times like that, you don't talk about it. It could be, without trying to be melodramatic, it could be the last time. Fortunately, it all worked out. While I was at Fort Meade, the Germans surrendered. May 8, 1945. Our group had orders to report to Camp Stoneman [Pittsburg] California. That entailed a cross-country train ride. We left for about four and a half days. You did see a lot of country and a lot of people on this troop train.

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<sup>24</sup> Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) was an Italian politician, journalist, and leader of the National Fascist Party. He ruled Italy as Prime Minister from 1922 until he was ousted in 1943. He ruled constitutionally until 1925, when he dropped all pretense of democracy and set up a legal dictatorship. He was known as '*Il Duce*.' Mussolini was captured and executed near Lake Como by Italian partisans on April 27, 1945.

**SCHOENBERG:** How about girls?

**SROCHI:** I recall going through Dodge City, Kansas. I had only seen Dodge City in the cowboy movies before. Places like Pueblo, Colorado, and the Mohave Desert [Nevada]. We finally got to Camp Stoneman in the middle of the night. They gave us every shot known to man at the time and put us in a barrack. We had about three or four hours [of] sleep. When we woke up in the morning, nobody could move their arms because we were all full of tetanus shots and various other sundry shots. I was at Camp Stoneman for a short time. Then one morning, they put us on a ferry boat and gave us box lunches. We went down the [San Francisco] Bay from Richmond, California, to San Francisco. We got off the ferry boat. [American] Red Cross ladies gave us a donut and cup of coffee. We got on a troop ship on May 25, 1945, and sailed out under the Golden Gate Bridge. Twenty-one days later, on June 16, 1945, we arrived in Manila Bay [Philippines].

**SCHOENBERG:** I guess you knew where you were headed by then.

**SROCHI:** Then [we] went to what was known as replacement depot. I was assigned to the 43rd Infantry Division. Before the liberation of the Philippines, it had been the site of the Japanese prison camp. I believe the book that is very popular now and on the best seller list. *Ghost Soldiers*. I think those soldiers or those prisoners were held at Cabanatuan [Philippines]. The 43<sup>rd</sup> Infantry before the war had been part of various New England National Guard units. I was assigned to F Troop 103rd Infantry [Regiment] with the Maine [Army] National Guard. The way they got us up in the morning, they had Rudy Vallee singing the *Maine Stein Song*.

**SCHOENBERG:** What did they make of you as a southern boy and a Jew boy at that?

**SROCHI:** A lot of the original guys either had been wounded, killed, sent home, ill, or injured were Canadian or French-speaking.

**SCHOENBERG:** French Canadian?

**SROCHI:** Some of them were still left in the division. The three regiments, the three main groups of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, our commanding general was a man named [Major] General Leonard F. Wing. The division was known as "Winged Victory." The 103<sup>rd</sup> was Maine. I'm not really sure of the other numbers, but they were New Hampshire and Vermont. I think one of the, either colonel or brigadier general, a man named [Ernest W.] Gibson was later Governor of Vermont. We were in training to invade Japan. Supposedly, our division was going to hit Japan on November 1, so we fully supported the dropping of the atomic bomb. Let me put it that way.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. I can see that.

**SROCHI:** Better them than us.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. I can see that you had something really invested in that decision.

**SROCHI:** I did not claim to be a disinterested party.

**SCHOENBERG:** You came back when?

**SROCHI:** I came back . . . my division went to Japan.

**SCHOENBERG:** You did go?

**SROCHI:** We went to Japan. We were part of an Army of occupation. We were on the troop ship out in the [Pearl] Harbor at the time the Japanese were surrendering to General [Douglas] MacArthur on the [U.S.S.] *Missouri*. We didn't know what was going on out on the *Missouri*, but we figured they were surrendering. A day or two later, we landed. This has always been amazing to me that I never heard of a single instance involving any American personnel and a Japanese civilian. That's always been amazing to me. I can remember a few days after surrender, being on a train with just hundreds of Japanese. I believe I was the only G.I. [Government Issue: A member of the United States armed forces] on the train. I don't know how I got myself in that position. I had maybe a propensity for that. That's just the way it was.

**SCHOENBERG:** Nobody made a move?

**SROCHI:** I was in Japan until August of the following year, which was 1946. [I] was sent back home again on a troop ship to Seattle, Washington. [I] went to Fort Lewis [military base], Washington, by train to Fort Sam Houston, Texas and was discharged at San Antonio [Texas], Fort Sam.

**SCHOENBERG:** To come home?

**SROCHI:** I came home in August of 1946. The next month I started back to school at Emory University along with a lot of others.

**SCHOENBERG:** What did you major in? Other than girls, what did you major in?

**SROCHI:** I didn't get around to that until later. I was never really precocious except maybe certain memory traits. I took a lot of history [and] political science courses. I was sort of aiming to go to law school, which I did. I did manage to graduate in about three years and started law school. [I] took about six months off and went to law school. It was during that interval that I went to Europe with my grandfather. He wanted to go back to post-war Poland. We spent some time in Paris trying to get visas to get into Poland. It was controlled by the

Russians then and for many years thereafter, but we were unsuccessful. We did manage to get to Israel in the summer of 1950. I have some vivid memories of all that. I was actually in Israel when the Korean War started.

**SCHOENBERG:** You weren't recalled, were you, into the army?

**SROCHI:** No, but my timing for once was pretty good because I had made a commitment for another three years when I was discharged. I don't know, I guess I was pretty gung ho. I certainly don't regret it. [I] wouldn't have, hopefully, regretted going back into the service during the Korean War. My term of enlistment expired in August of 1949, which was about ten months before the Korean War started.

**SCHOENBERG:** You graduated from Emory Law School but you never used your law degree to practice law?

**SROCHI:** [I] never practiced law, but I found that it was certainly very beneficial in just about any career that one wants to pursue, particularly business, real estate. Anything of that nature.

**SCHOENBERG:** You graduated from law school in 1953?

**SROCHI:** I was in the class winter of 1952.

**SCHOENBERG:** And then?

**SROCHI:** A month or two later, I got into the family business. That's when I went to work for the Atlanta Baking Company.

**SCHOENBERG:** You've got to tell me all about this family business.

**SROCHI:** Atlanta Baking Company. My grandfather, Morris Srochi, was a baker by trade. He was a very sturdily built man. He was of modest height. He was probably no more than 5'6 1/2" or 5'7", but he had very muscular hands from kneading. That's k-n-e-a-d-i-n-g.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes.

**SROCHI:** Kneading money.

**SCHOENBERG:** Kneading dough.

**SROCHI:** He needed money, too. One of the great family stories is that my grandfather was a very proud man, and he was not about to ask anybody for any credit. The way the family stayed in the baking business, my grandmother was the one when it came around to negotiating with the trades to buy supplies. If they borrowed money, she was the one that did it.

**SCHOENBERG:** She was the negotiator?

**SROCHI:** She was the business woman. She was sort of Mrs. Outside, and he was Mr. Inside. The baking business, as we know it, did not exist before World War I. Most of the bakeries were retail type neighborhood bakeries, very similar to what you still have in most of Europe. People go to the corner bakery to get their bread. They don't go to the supermarket. Most of the sales were all from a horse and wagon, and they delivered bread. Most of the customers were Reform Jews, so-called German Jews, who lived on the south side on Pryor Street, in that general neighborhood. A block or two off of Washington.

**SCHOENBERG:** What kind of bread did they bake? How much did it cost?

**SROCHI:** I can tell you how much it cost. What they did, they sold a little metal coin.

**SCHOENBERG:** Like a token?

**SROCHI:** Like a token. They were 30 for \$1. That's three and one-third cents for a loaf of bread. They would not only deliver the bread, but they would hand deliver it to the door. The bread itself was not sliced, and it was not wrapped. This didn't come until many years later. I guess is where the term "the greatest thing since sliced bread" came into play. Modern commercial bakeries probably didn't come into being somewhere between 1915 and 1918. Somewhere in that period. It was more of a retail business until that time. Later, as the bakery expanded, they had salesmen who delivered bread to the home. One of the inner family stories is that my father communicated with my mother when he was courting my mother through the salesman who would deliver notes, maybe before any of them had telephones. That's one of the stories.

**SCHOENBERG:** So he wooed her.

**SROCHI:** One of my favorite stories is that my father and his brother would run, what we called, a route. It was around the old, what is now, the [Richard B. Russell] Federal Building. It was the old terminal station. There were mostly saloons. They went in to talk to the customer. If they stayed longer than the horse who was pulling the wagon thought they ought to stay, he just pulled up stake and went to the next customer. They always knew where he was because they would just follow him around the route. They used to say that the horse knew the route better than some of the salesmen did.

**SCHOENBERG:** When they first started baking bread, your grandfather, was he making kosher bread or not really?

**SROCHI:** I don't know if technically it was kosher from the standpoint in a technical

sense.

**SCHOENBERG:** That's what I wondered.

**SROCHI:** I don't know that. I do know that later, when the bakery was a pretty large and growing concern, [it] converted from a typical loaf of bread made with lard. In fact, the best loaf of bread is probably made with lard. Maybe I shouldn't be saying this, but that's probably a fact. We converted to vegetable shortening. It cost probably about a \$250,000 a year. It made us feel better then.

**SCHOENBERG:** To stop using *treif*<sup>25</sup> in your . . .

**SROCHI:** Yes. I don't know that anybody . . . One of the rabbis used to call my cousin Alan [Srochi] and say, "Alan, is the bread still kosher?"

**SCHOENBERG:** Were you making white bread or were you making all kinds of bread?

**SROCHI:** The principal product was always, to a commercial bakery, white bread, but we did over a period of time develop various . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** Other products.

**SROCHI:** What was known in the trade as specialty bread, like so-called diet bread. Roman Meal, for instance, was one of our products.

**SCHOENBERG:** Really? You developed that?

**SROCHI:** It was a franchise product out of Tacoma, Washington. There were others over the period of years.

**SCHOENBERG:** Were there many Jewish families who were in the baking business?

**SROCHI:** There were some. I think there was a Schlesinger [sp] family and the Taylors.

**SCHOENBERG:** Here locally?

**SROCHI:** The Taylor Baking Company was the name of it. There was a Jewish-owned bakery in New Orleans later. In the south, we were probably maybe the only major commercial bakery. Most of the Jewish bakers were more specialty bread, maybe just for the restaurant trade or retail type sold through delicatessens.

**SCHOENBERG:** Your first job, when you went back as a child. Did you ever work down at the store, first of all, or down at the place, whatever you called it?

**SROCHI:** Except for hanging around my brother . . . my brother and Paul Duke had a

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<sup>25</sup> Food that is not in accordance with Jewish law such as pork or foods that are not prepared according to *kosher*.

drink stand in front of the Duke's home on Oxford Road. I spent a lot of time down there, drinking more than I was selling, I am sure.

**SCHOENBERG:** I was going to say, that was before the days of Kool-Aid. What were they selling? Lemonade?

**SROCHI:** We sold what was known as belly washers. I guess they were probably 16-ounce bottles. They were huge. During the [Great] Depression, there were some families that made their own soft drinks. They bought the bottles and they had ways of sterilizing them and mixes and things. If you had 12 to 14 kids, you had to be inventive.

**SCHOENBERG:** I was going to say, there were people doing that up in the hills, too, and they were inventive in using it.

**SROCHI:** I guess you are talking about some of our moonshine friends.

**SCHOENBERG:** That's right. My grandfather was in the bottling business.

**SROCHI:** So you know about that?

**SCHOENBERG:** I have some history in that area.

**SROCHI:** There is a great story that may or may not be true. It has nothing to do, particularly, with being Jewish or anything. It's possible that a Georgia moonshiner won World War II. You may ask how that happened. The story is that [Sir] Winston Churchill<sup>26</sup> came to the United States in 1931-1932 to promote one of the books that he had written. He was run down by a taxicab on Fifth Avenue in New York. Fortunately, he was just injured and spent a little time in the hospital. Apparently, he just looked the wrong way because in England they drive on the . . . they think we drive on the wrong side of the road. We think they drive on the wrong side of the road, but he was run over there. He came to Atlanta to promote his book. He came over a weekend. There was no way Mr. Churchill, the Lord Churchill, could exist for a whole weekend without a drink. Whoever was handling his book tour, got hold of some moonshine. Fortunately it didn't kill him.

**SCHOENBERG:** It's a good thing.

**SROCHI:** Who knows, if he had met his demise through a Georgia bootlegger, England just might have up and surrendered in 1941.

**SCHOENBERG:** Amazing.

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<sup>26</sup> Winston Churchill (1874-1965) was the Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1940 to 1945 and again from 1951 to 1955.

**SROCHI:** The 1940s.

**SCHOENBERG:** What about your jobs, literally, at the bakery? What did you end up doing once you graduated?

**SROCHI:** I did a lot of the sales reports and communicated with the sales department how the sales were going.

**SCHOENBERG:** Was your father the president at this time?

**SROCHI:** He was the president of the company. Each of us had sort of a little separate niche to stay out of each other's way. My father, he bought the flour and certain ingredients. As he got older, that was his principle role. My Uncle Sidney, he liked the packaging end of it and advertising. My Uncle Jake, he handled the money. What bakers did, they used the mills. I think I've told you about [Rodney] Milling Company, maybe was one of them. Your biggest mills, of course, were from the flour. Whoever supplied your flour that was the main ingredient that went into the bread. What you would do, you would use the flour mill's money until you were ready to pay him instead of going to the bank and getting short-term financing.

**SCHOENBERG:** They carried you?

**SROCHI:** Uncle Jake would write the checks. He just wouldn't send them out until he was doggone ready. Later, I was involved in a number of advertising campaigns because the bakery converted principally from its brand to Sunbeam [Bread] in the late 1950s or early 1960s. At that time, we were members of the Sunbeam Quality Bakers of America [Cooperative]. QBA. They provided various services for independent bakeries, which enabled the independent to compete with the chain baker.

**SCHOENBERG:** Sort of like the IGA [Independent Grocers Alliance] was for the grocers.

**SROCHI:** Yes. For grocers, bulk buying and advertising materials. I would deal with the local media, and I got to know quite a few people involved in radio [and] television.

**SCHOENBERG:** Anybody special?

**SROCHI:** One guy that is still around is Paul Raymon. Paul was like general manager of what was then WAGA [television station] at the time. I did meet other people. I met a famous lady golfer, Louise Suggs, and various people.

**SCHOENBERG:** Tell the story about when you were looking for a model for some advertising.

**SROCHI:** One of the specialty breads that came along was very successful. But generally, specialty breads had sort of a short life. They were heavily promoted and they got a lot of attention and a lot of sales. People went back . . . the public went back to normal buying habits. Hillbilly Bread campaign was built around sort of like Li'l Abner type. The salesmen wore old tattered clothes and hillbilly hats. Obviously, you had to have a Daisy Mae. So, we went down to the local Playboy Club, and we selected Daisy Mae. That was sort of my job. They said somebody had to do it. I believe I was . . . no. I was not the only bachelor. There was one other bachelor at the time. I was older, so I was senior. I guess I pulled my rank. Anyway, we appeared on the cover of one of the bakery trade papers.

**SCHOENBERG:** That's a cute story. How did your company's buyout happen? I mean, in what year were they bought out and who did the buying out?

**SROCHI:** The Atlanta Baking Company was bought out or purchased by, what is now, Flowers Industries [Flowers Foods]. At the time, in 1967, it was controlled by two Flower brothers. William H. [Howard] and [Joseph Hampton] Flowers. It was about two years before the Flowers went public. It is now a publicly-traded company on the New York Stock Exchange.

**SCHOENBERG:** At the time they bought it, [were] they were still privately held?

**SROCHI:** It was still privately held. They did have several branches.

**SCHOENBERG:** Was Sunbeam one of their brands?

**SROCHI:** Yes. That was principally one of the reasons they bought us because they were, in effect, buying not only a bakery. They were buying property and buying equipment and buying a trademark. They were buying territory. They were already in South Georgia. The main plant was in Thomasville, Georgia. They came up about as far as Macon. This gave them access to north Georgia, the Atlanta Metro area. Also, they hooked up with a bakery that they had over in the eastern part of Alabama. Opelika, Alabama.

**SCHOENBERG:** Was your father still actively involved in this sale?

**SROCHI:** He was not that active at the time. He was already about 80 years old.

**SCHOENBERG:** So it was really . . .

**SROCHI:** His generation. They were getting along. My Uncle Jake, he was about six years younger than my father. He was already into his 70s.

**SCHOENBERG:** They were thinking of retiring?

**SROCHI:** They were thinking of retiring. They all had other interests.

**SCHOENBERG:** Was there anybody in your generation who was against the sale?

**SROCHI:** If they were, they kept their mouths shut. I don't think there was any vocal opposition.

**SCHOENBERG:** I mean, you were still a family-owned business.

**SROCHI:** One for all and all for one.

**SCHOENBERG:** You all made the decision?

**SROCHI:** All. What do they say? All stay together or hang together or something like that.

**SCHOENBERG:** Or hang separately. The rest of the family, did they . . . you've gone into real estate?

**SROCHI:** Yes. Actually, all of the brothers had various real estate interests.

**SCHOENBERG:** Already?

**SROCHI:** In addition to their interest in the Atlanta Baking Company. It was a relatively easy transition. My father's youngest brother, Sidney, bought a plating company over on Howell Mill [Road] and Fourteenth Street.

**SCHOENBERG:** What is the name of that?

**SROCHI:** I'm not sure, but I believe it may have been the Simmons.

**SCHOENBERG:** Estes Simmons?

**SROCHI:** Estes Plating Company [Estes-Simmons Silversmiths, Inc.].

**SCHOENBERG:** Does he still have an interest?

**SROCHI:** He operated that until his death in 1977. Unfortunately, his only son died, I think, in 1970. My cousin, Alan, he stayed with Flowers maybe for a short time just to help them get integrated. He was involved in a number of real estate and other types of ventures after that.

**SCHOENBERG:** The company you have now, what's the name of your company?

**SROCHI:** We operate under various, what you call, S corps [corporation]. We have four or five of them. We do property management, just in house. We don't do any outside management.

**SCHOENBERG:** You are managing your own properties?

**SROCHI:** Yes. Over the years, we've owned all types of properties. We are in the process of selling off all of the apartments, the more labor-intensive properties.

**SCHOENBERG:** Do you have industrial and retail?

**SROCHI:** Not that much. Most of our properties now, I'd guess you would classify as commercial or retail type properties.

**SCHOENBERG:** Anything that we would know? I mean, any property that's particularly well known?

**SROCHI:** I guess the two best-known properties . . . we own the Buckhead Marketplace, which is on West Paces Ferry [Road], half block off of Peachtree [Road]. It is three streets right at Paces Ferry Place and Irby [Avenue]. We own the Rock Springs Shopping Center at the intersection of Piedmont [Avenue] and Cheshire Bridge [Road].

**SCHOENBERG:** Is that where Artlite [Office Supply Company] is?

**SROCHI:** Artlite is one of our tenants. It is an interesting family business. Maybe you ought to interview them sometime.

**SCHOENBERG:** That is a Jewish family also?

**SROCHI:** It is a Jewish family.

**SCHOENBERG:** What is their name?

**SROCHI:** Light. L-I-G-H-T. The father was Arthur Light. Unfortunately, Arthur is deceased.

**SCHOENBERG:** That's the origin of the name? I didn't realize that.

**SROCHI:** They named the company Artlite. It's strictly a family business. I think it's all second . . . I know the mother is still alive. I don't believe she's active in the business anymore, but it's a second-generation business.

**SCHOENBERG:** Someone told me that you at one time owned a hotel.

**SROCHI:** Yes, the family. My father owned the Jefferson Hotel, which is now part of Underground Atlanta. It's on the southwest corner of Pryor and Alabama Streets. Jefferson Hotel was built in 1930. It was the last hotel built in Atlanta to be classified as a hotel, not a motel but a hotel, until I think the Riviera [Hotel] was built in the 1950s.

**SCHOENBERG:** I just saw something about that property which is now called the [Atlanta] Cabana, or had been called the Cabana, changing hands.

**SROCHI:** They had some Jewish connection. At the time my father bought the property in 1950, the operator was Jake Abel [Jacob Abelson]. Jake, in his younger days, had been a prize fighter. Professional prize fighter. One of his claims to fame was that he had fought

a famous Jewish lightweight champion, Benny Leonard.<sup>27</sup> I don't know if you ever heard of Benny Leonard. Occasionally, Benny would visit Atlanta and he would come and see Jake. They had lunch or something, probably at the Mayfair Club.

**SCHOENBERG:** I was going to say at Siegel's delicatessen.

**SROCHI:** Jake's daughter was Sonia Abelson. Sonia married Ben Rabinowitz. If you ever read the *[Atlanta] Jewish Times*, you probably know that they made *aliyah* and have lived in Israel for many years. Ben was our tenant there after Jake died or Jake retired.

**SCHOENBERG:** At the hotel you're talking about?

**SROCHI:** That was the period between, in the 1950s, until maybe the middle 1960s somewhere. Jake and Ben, I think, stayed in the hotel business, but he leased a Rodeway Inn, I think, out on Briarcliff Road somewhere. A few years later, he made *aliyah*.

**SCHOENBERG:** I'm looking at my watch, and it's getting kind of late. I'm thinking we're at about the bottom of this tape. Maybe I'll wait. I'm reserving the right to come back because we didn't even begin to talk about your wife or a lot of other things, so we will do that.

<End Tape 1, Side 2>

<Begin Tape 2, Side 1>

**SCHOENBERG:** Ann Schoenberg interviewing Stanley Srochi on March 6, 2002, for the Jewish Oral History Project of Atlanta, co-sponsored by The American Jewish Committee, The Atlanta Jewish Federation, and The National Council of Jewish Women. This is the second tape, the first side. We did our previous taping in October. One little detail that I would like to bring up before we get up into the rest of this tape is we discussed all about the bakery, which was the Srochi family business. I realized we never talked about where it was located. If you would, Mr. Srochi, where did it start to begin with?

**SROCHI:** The business started out of their home wherever they happened to be living at the time.

**SCHOENBERG:** Which was?

**SROCHI:** It would have been on the south side. I know that approximately in 1905, they were living on Mitchell Street.

**SCHOENBERG:** Mitchell and approximately what crossing?

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<sup>27</sup> Benny Leonard (born Benjamin Leiner; 1896-1947) was a Jewish American professional lightweight boxer and is widely considered one of the all-time greats.

**SROCHI:** Near Northside Drive, maybe two or three blocks from what is now the Georgia Dome.

**SCHOENBERG:** And then?

**SROCHI:** Then they moved. I know that in the World War I era, they lived on Angier Avenue. They were living there in 1917 when the Great [Atlanta] Fire<sup>28</sup> took place. I think they lost . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** Their house?

**SROCHI:** I think their home was damaged.

**SCHOENBERG:** Angier is right near the Sears Building or City Hall East?<sup>29</sup> In that area?

**SROCHI:** Yes. Angier is not too far from the [Atlanta] Civic Center. Forrest, old Forrest [Boulevard], now Ralph McGill Boulevard. It runs back toward Parkway Drive and Boulevard.

**SCHOENBERG:** Was that a particularly heavy Jewish populated area?

**SROCHI:** That I don't know.

**SCHOENBERG:** Of course it was before you were born.

**SROCHI:** At the time, I don't think it was. I think the predominant Jewish area, certainly World War I era and on into the early 1920s, was on the south side. Washington Street, Pulliam [Street], Pryor, Atlanta Avenue. In that district.

**SCHOENBERG:** Kind of the Summerhill [area].

**SROCHI:** I know a few years we lived in the West End. They may have been the only ones in West End.

**SCHOENBERG:** I think there were Jewish families, living, kind of scattered in some places

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<sup>28</sup> The Great Atlanta Fire of 1917 began just after noon on Monday, May 21, 1917. It blazed all day and was finally brought under control by 10 p.m. This fire started in a warehouse at Fort and Decatur Street and rapidly spread. It burned whole blocks of homes so quickly that people couldn't even get anything out of the buildings. Soldiers arrived to dynamite buildings to try to stop it. Fire fighters came from cities in Tennessee (Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Nashville), Jacksonville, Florida, Greenville, South Carolina, and across Georgia including Rome, Augusta, Macon, Newnan, Marietta, Griffin, Gainesville, and Savannah. The area continued to burn and smolder for a week. 300 acres had been burned, 1,938 buildings were destroyed, and 10,000 people were made homeless. Property loss was \$5,500,000. See Atlanta and Environs, Franklin Garrett, Volume II, page 700 to 706 for details.

<sup>29</sup> The Sears Building was an eight-story building built in 1926 at 675 Ponce de Leon Avenue. It served as a warehouse facility and retail store for Sears and Roebuck for decades. It overlooked the grandstands and the baseball diamond of the Atlanta Crackers, predecessors to the Atlanta Braves. The City of Atlanta purchased the building in the late 1980s for office space and the building became known as City Hall East. After decades of declining occupancy, the building was sold to a developer who reopened it in 2012 as Ponce City Market, a mixed use residential, office and retail space.

because they owned small businesses and lived near their businesses.

**SROCHI:** Yes, the grocery stores. It was not unusual for the family that owned the grocery store to live over the store.

**SCHOENBERG:** Of course, you weren't living on Angier because you weren't born at that time, but you don't remember any of the stories about the fire?

**SROCHI:** No, except I think, unfortunately, the family dog crawled under the house. I think they lost the dog. I do remember hearing that story. I think they went from Angier . . . they stayed in the neighborhood. They lived on the corner of Piedmont, which now would be the northwest corner of the Atlanta Civic Center.

**SCHOENBERG:** Like where Renaissance [Park] is?

**SROCHI:** I think they may have even kept a cow, even though it was just two blocks from Peachtree Street.

**SCHOENBERG:** That was not unusual in those days, I don't imagine. It's interesting. That whole area was sort of known as "Buttermilk Bottom." Did you know that? Have you ever heard that?

**SROCHI:** Yes. "Buttermilk Bottom" was an area east of Peachtree. The reason Peachtree is Peachtree is because that was on the high ground. It was easier to detect one's enemies on the high ground rather than on the lower. It was the area east of downtown. The downtown area of Peachtree . . . Georgia Tech, even to this day, is referred to by some of the older sports writers as the "flats" because Peachtree is on the high ground. As you go either east or west, you go down.

**SCHOENBERG:** Natural watershed. The family was living over on the east side of town?

**SROCHI:** They lived on . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** They had a bakery over there?

**SROCHI:** They lived on Piedmont. At one time, they even had a small grocery store on Piedmont just south of what now is Ralph McGill Boulevard. The family story is that Asa Candler, Sr., owned the store and came to the store once a month to collect his rent, which was all of \$67.

**SCHOENBERG:** Not surprising. Mr. Candler was very frugal. I'm sure he wanted to make sure he got his rent.

**SROCHI:** My grandfather and my grandmother moved to the corner of Fairview

[Road] and Moreland [Avenue], I think, in 1922 or 1923. He lived there until his death in 1960.

**SCHOENBERG:** That's a long time. Fairview is what is today? Memorial Drive?

**SROCHI:** Fairview is one block south of the intersection of Ponce de Leon [Avenue] and Moreland.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. I know what you're talking about.

**SROCHI:** Anyway, it's right on Moreland. It's Moreland as you go south, and it's Briarcliff . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** Briarcliff as you go north.

**SROCHI:** When you get north of Ponce de Leon, it's Briarcliff. He lived on the corner of Moreland and Fairview.

**SCHOENBERG:** I do know where Fairview is. Now I remember.

**SROCHI:** The house is on a hill. A red brick house.

**SCHOENBERG:** Fairview is a nice street.

**SROCHI:** One Sunday we stopped there on the way home from Sunday school. I guess I was too young probably to read the sports page then. Maybe I was looking at the comic section. I released the brake, and the car starts rolling down, what seemed to me to be Stone Mountain. I had the presence of mind to turn the wheel, but I went into my grandmother's rose garden. I paid the price.

**SCHOENBERG:** I bet. At least you didn't kill anybody, including yourself.

**SROCHI:** I'm not sure. I think they might have traded me for the roses.

**SCHOENBERG:** I doubt that. How old were you at that point?

**SROCHI:** I was probably seven years old. Six or seven.

**SCHOENBERG:** [You] shouldn't have been sitting in the car.

**SROCHI:** It would have been 1933 or 1934. Somewhere in there.

**SCHOENBERG:** [You] shouldn't have been sitting in the car alone. I bet they didn't let you do that again.

**SROCHI:** My father . . . When I was born, we lived on I think Jackson Street. It is just a couple of blocks from the Georgia Baptist Hospital, but I was born in Piedmont Hospital.

**SCHOENBERG:** Was he in the grocery business then or was he already doing the bakery?

**SROCHI:** No. They were in the bread business. This photograph here <Stanley gestures to a picture> This was probably about the time he was married in 1921. My parents

were married in April of 1921.

**SCHOENBERG:** He had started the business?

**SROCHI:** Yes. They had actually been in the bread business since the 1890s in various forms, but they had reached the wholesale level . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** By the early 1920s?

**SROCHI:** At this point. They relocated the bakery on 165 Bailey Street. It is a one block street that runs off of Fair Street, just off the intersection of Fair and Northside Drive.

**SCHOENBERG:** I know exactly where that is.

**SROCHI:** I think they bought the Bailey Street property in 1917 and enlarged it over the years. In 1925 they had a grand opening. They had reached a point where they had a brand name product, which was BAMBY Bread. There were BAMBY Breads all over the south at the time. BAMBY was an acronym, I guess, what you would call an acronym. "Best American Made Bread Yet," or something.

**SCHOENBERG:** What a neat idea.

**SROCHI:** It had nothing to do . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** With Bambi the deer.

**SROCHI:** It had nothing to do with [The] Walt Disney [Company], as far as I know. It pre-dated Walt Disney.

**SCHOENBERG:** I was going to say, it was long before Walt Disney.

**SROCHI:** Anyway, a bakery still exists on that same site.

**SCHOENBERG:** Is it in Castleberry Hill? In that kind of area?

**SROCHI:** It's close.

**SCHOENBERG:** It's right on the edge there.

**SROCHI:** Yes, I think it's Walker Street, which is one block east of Northside Drive. By the way, my father went to the Walker Street School, I guess, in the late 1890s maybe on into the early 1900s. That school is long, long gone.

**SCHOENBERG:** Because that whole . . .

**SROCHI:** That's a neat thing, too. Some developer . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** That whole area has taken off and become so popular as loft apartments.

**SROCHI:** It has reverted a hundred years.

**SCHOENBERG:** Back to residential. Yes. Eventually the bakery . . . is that the last location

of your bakery? That was the permanent location?

**SROCHI:** That was the location of the bakery at the time the family sold Atlanta Baking Company to the Flower Brothers in 1967.

**SCHOENBERG:** Have they maintained a bakery facility? You said it's still a bakery?

**SROCHI:** It's still there. It's been expanded, I'm sure, many times.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes, but it's still the Sunbeam Bread?

**SROCHI:** It's still in that location.

**SCHOENBERG:** Very good. Now that we've taken care of the Sunbeam Bread business and the location of the factory, what I would like to do, because we didn't really have time to do it the other day, is to go back and talk about all of your aunts and uncles in depth. There's really no one left in the family who can share the information that you can about aunts and uncles, and you have this wonderful photo.

**SROCHI:** On the Srochi side, I have only one of my first cousins is still with us. That's my cousin Robyn Estroff. This is her father Jacob Srochi <pointing to a photo>.

**SCHOENBERG:** Why don't you start with the eldest child. Is that your dad?

**SROCHI:** My dad was the oldest son.

**SCHOENBERG:** He was born in what year?

**SROCHI:** He was born in New York City in 1887 and was brought to Atlanta when he was approximately three or four years old, which would have been maybe 1891. The family story is the bakery started in 1892. My grandfather, I think I may have told you in our previous session, was a baker by trade. He came to this country in the 1880s. [He] settled in New York and worked in New York as a very young . . . he was a boy actually. He worked in bakeries in part of Poland that was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He was in some area near Kraków. He referred to himself as a Galitzianer.

**SCHOENBERG:** As I remember, you told me he came down here for a raise of some pittance, like 25 cents an hour or something.

**SROCHI:** Yes. That's sort of the story. Not [25 cents] an hour, I think a week.

**SCHOENBERG:** A week.

**SROCHI:** The story is that he sees an ad in a Yiddish paper, Jewish language paper, advertising for a baker in Atlanta, Georgia. They are offering \$3.50 a week, so he came down here. That was \$3.50. He had been making \$3 dollars in New York.

**SCHOENBERG:** There you go. Fifty cents.

**SROCHI:** The Srochis came south for a lousy 50 cents, which was not so lousy in those days.

**SCHOENBERG:** You're right. Your dad. We kind of talked about your dad and your sisters and brother.

**SROCHI:** He came here many times. We would be riding around Atlanta looking at property, doing one thing or the other. He would tell me about [how] he could recall riding on a bread wagon with his father in the 1890s, five or six years old, taking bread and going up to somebody's door, knocking on the door, and delivering the bread. I doubt if he was selling at the time, although he was a very good salesman.

**SCHOENBERG:** Did they have a horse-drawn wagon?

**SROCHI:** Horse-drawn wagon. Supposedly, we had either the first or one of the first motor-driven vehicles in the City of Atlanta, which appropriately was a Stanley Steamer. Either Stanley Steamer or White Steamer. I'm not sure of that.

**SCHOENBERG:** Do you know what year they got that?

**SROCHI:** I think that would have been approximately 1907. It's only 95 years ago. Only yesterday.

**SCHOENBERG:** Just around the corner. It's amazing. We've talked about your immediate family. You certainly told me the names of your siblings. Why don't you tell me about your dad's siblings.

**SROCHI:** Tell you about my father?

**SCHOENBERG:** You want to talk about your dad some more? That's great.

**SROCHI:** You tell me what you want me to tell.

**SCHOENBERG:** All I remember you telling me about him was that he was built like a baker. He was strong and he could really knead the dough.

**SROCHI:** He was short.

**SCHOENBERG:** He had a lot of strength in his arms and hands.

**SROCHI:** He did. So did my grandfather. My grandfather developed that from kneading bread by hand. He pre-dated the automated equipment. He was making bread by the loaf not by the thousands. When people came to the bakery, a lot of them were disappointed because they expected to see some little old gray haired lady, you know, playing around with a

little pile of dough.

**SCHOENBERG:** That's funny. What was his personality like?

**SROCHI:** He was in some ways shy, but in a business sense, he was aggressive. He had a lot of self-confidence. He didn't back down from anybody or anything. He took a lot of chances in his business career.

**SCHOENBERG:** That's obvious.

**SROCHI:** He probably intimidated some people that didn't know him well, but if they stayed around long enough, I think they all respected him.

**SCHOENBERG:** Did he kind of have a shell? In a business, a professional setting, was he kind of gruff on the outside when he was really kind of mush on the inside?

**SROCHI:** Yes, the first impression he came across that way. The real estate people that dealt with him, one of the old-timers told me a story about him after he passed away. He called him one day about a piece of property. The old-timers, they didn't need consultants. They didn't need to have property appraised. They had enough self-confidence and enough knowledge that they just knew the market. Of course, the market was smaller in those days. This gentleman tells my father about this piece of property. Sight unseen on the phone, my father made an offer on the property. The agent, he says, "He ain't going to take that. He paid more than that for it." Pop said, "Just because some damn fool buys a piece of property, doesn't mean he's going to make a profit on it." I think that sort of illustrates . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** His tactics and his business acumen.

**SROCHI:** I'll tell you this. He was wonderful with children and animals. He loved animals. He had Billy goats when he was a boy. Pigeons. Dogs. Before the automobile, he bought the horses for the bakery, for the business. He would tell the story about he would go out to the packing house district, which is now the site of our fanciest and most expensive restaurant, the Bacchanalia [Restaurant] at Fourteenth and Howell Mill. He buys this horse, and they put it on the route. In a couple of days, the horse would develop what he called a whistle. A wheeze. He would take it back to the seller, and he'd say, "Son, you bought this horse, you know, let the buyer beware." Father, even though he was probably 20 years old, said, "Well, I'm only 16 years old." He was short enough he looked like a kid, I'm sure. They'd say, "Well, take another one." So Pop says the next one would be just as bad as the first one. What that proves is the same thing exists today except that it's used car salesmen.

**SCHOENBERG:** Instead of used horses. Pretty cute. What was your mother like?

**SROCHI:** I would say everybody that knew her referred to her as a lady. I think even looking at the portrait over there, <Stanley points to a picture> she was a lady. She was the matriarch of her family. She was the oldest of nine children. She had four bachelor brothers. She had a much younger sister, my Aunt Pauline Fine. Mrs. Lowell Fine, who is a mother and past president of the [Atlanta Jewish Community] Center<sup>30</sup> here. She was sort of a surrogate mother for my Aunt Pauline. I think she was well-respected. Well-liked.

**SCHOENBERG:** Was she educated?

**SROCHI:** She was very tender to all of us and very protective of her grandchildren, I guess like most grandmothers, but I don't think she was as demanding as the stereotypical Jewish grandma. She was a wonderful cook [and] homemaker.

**SCHOENBERG:** Did you all have one night when everybody, the whole family gathered? On *Shabbat*<sup>31</sup> or something?

**SROCHI:** It was sort of a tradition that the brothers, the bachelor brothers, very rarely ate at home. After World War II, they lived much closer to the younger sister, my Aunt Pauline. They probably were there three nights a week, but they had dinner with us, typically, on a Friday night at least once a month and maybe every other week.

**SCHOENBERG:** Where did they live in relation to you?

**SROCHI:** The Hirsh side lived on, my earliest memory is, Washington Street near the old Shearith. They lived within a block of the Shearith Israel Synagogue.

**SCHOENBERG:** They didn't belong there, though. Did they belong to AA?

**SROCHI:** No. They belonged to the AA. I think I told you.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. That's what I thought.

**SROCHI:** Both of my grandfathers were members of the AA in 1900.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. On that list.

**SROCHI:** On that handwritten list. I think both of them had their names misspelled.

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<sup>30</sup> Atlanta Jewish Community Center was officially founded in 1910, as the Jewish Educational Alliance. In the late 1940s it evolved into the Atlanta Jewish Community Center and moved to Peachtree Street. It stayed there until 1998, when the building was sold and the center moved to Dunwoody. In 2000, it was renamed the 'Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta.'

<sup>31</sup> *Shabbat* (Hebrew) or *Shabbos* (Yiddish) is the Jewish day of rest and is observed on Saturdays. *Shabbat* observance entails refraining from work activities, often with great rigor, and engaging in restful activities to honor the day. *Shabbat* begins at sundown on Friday night and is ushered in by lighting candles and reciting a blessing. It is closed the following evening with the recitation of the *havdalah* blessing.

**SCHOENBERG:** Go ahead. We're doing your father's family. I got you off on your mother and then we got into her family by osmosis. The next born child after your dad?

**SROCHI:** <Stanley points to a picture> This is my Aunt Mamie [Katz]. She was the youngest sister of Dora Srochi. [She] was Morris Srochi's wife and the mother of A.D. [Abram David], Murray, Jake, and Sidney Srochi. I think my grandparents brought her to this country. I'm not sure of the date, probably around 1900.

**SCHOENBERG:** After they moved here?

**SROCHI:** She has a grandson who could fill you in on that side of the family.

**SCHOENBERG:** What was her married name?

**SROCHI:** The grandson is Ivan Millender. Ivan has written about Oakland Cemetery.<sup>32</sup> He's very knowledgeable. He's more knowledgeable on the Srochi side maybe than I am.

**SCHOENBERG:** We'll hit him up then. And the next person?

**SROCHI:** Aunt Mamie had an interesting life. She was, unfortunately, widowed. I think her husband was killed in some sort of an accident. At one time, she lived in Washington, D.C. She had one daughter, Esther Millender, who is married to Sam Millender. They lived in Dalton, Georgia. About the time they were married, it must have been around 1930, they lived with both my Aunt Esther and my cousin Sam. Lived there for the rest of their lives. Sam lived on, I think, into the 1980s. Esther died in 1981.

**SCHOENBERG:** What was their business?

**SROCHI:** Dalton had a very thriving Jewish community.

**SCHOENBERG:** What was their business? The Millender's?

**SROCHI:** Sam Millender operated a so-called dry goods store, probably into the 1960s and maybe even 1970s. He later got into some area of the carpet business, not as a manufacturer, but sort of as what you would call somebody in the trade. Maybe . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** A jobber?

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<sup>32</sup> Oakland Cemetery, founded in 1850, is located less than a mile from the heart of downtown Atlanta. Many notable Georgians are buried at Oakland including Margaret Mitchell, author of *Gone with the Wind*; Joseph Jacobs, owner of the pharmacy where John Pemberton first sold Coca-Cola as a soft drink; Bobby Jones, the only golfer to win the Grand Slam, the United States Amateur, United States Open, British Amateur and the Open Championship in the same year; as well as former Georgia governors and Atlanta mayors. Oakland is an excellent example of a Victorian-style cemetery and contains numerous monuments and mausoleums that are of great beauty and historical significance.

**SROCHI:** [A] jobber or sold materials. That type of thing.

**SCHOENBERG:** A supplier.

**SROCHI:** Most of the time they were in Dalton, he ran a store. I was in the store several times. I remember going up there shortly after I got out of the service in 1946 and got a couple of white shirts, which were very hard to come by at the time.

**SCHOENBERG:** Let's move on to the next person in that picture. Who is an uncle?

**SROCHI:** That person is Morris Srochi. We have talked about him. I believe he was born somewhere [in the] late 1860s or early 1870s. He was a baker by trade and was a very determined, proud man. One of the family stories is that some young associate of one of the local banks came to the bakery one day and said, "Mr. Srochi, we've got a lot of money down at the bank. We would love to lend you some." Most people jump on an opportunity because people won't lend them money. My grandfather, they said, drew himself up to his full 5'5" or whatever he was and said, "Young man," he says, "I lend money. I don't borrow."

**SCHOENBERG:** Great. Smart man. Very good if you can do it. Not everybody can say that.

**SROCHI:** Anyway, he was very . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** Did he get into real estate?

**SROCHI:** Very good business man. He had a lot of determination. He was not very outgoing, which may have been sort of characteristic of men of his era and background. He was very devoted to the synagogue. He was very close to the rabbi.

**SCHOENBERG:** Was this Rabbi [Harry] Epstein?<sup>33</sup>

**SROCHI:** Rabbi Epstein. Maybe the . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** . . . his predecessor?

**SROCHI:** Previous rabbi. You have to remember Rabbi Epstein came to Atlanta in 1928.

**SCHOENBERG:** And was here forever.

**SROCHI:** The rabbis before him were sort of transient. They had a whole series of them, but he stuck. He stayed around a while.

**SCHOENBERG:** Just a while.

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<sup>33</sup> In 1928 Rabbi Harry Epstein (1903-2003) served as the rabbi of Ahavath Achim from 1928 to 1982. Under his leadership the congregation began to shift to Conservatism, which they adopted in 1952. Rabbi Epstein retired in 1982, becoming Rabbi Emeritus and Rabbi Arnold Goodman assumed the rabbinic post.

**SROCHI:** He stayed about 50 some years, at least. He's still here. By the way, he's supposed to be in the synagogue on Monday. They're going to have some sort of dedication in honor of Mrs. [Reva] Epstein,<sup>34</sup> who died last summer.

**SCHOENBERG:** The next person in the picture?

**SROCHI:** This picture is my Aunt Birdie. Birdie was sort of a character. She was childless. She was married. One time, they were probably the only Jewish couple in a place called Florala, Alabama, which is on the Florida-Alabama line. If you ever go down to Destin [Florida], you may go through Florala. Her husband, my Uncle Sam, he was what they would have called a "card." We have some film of him with various paraphernalia you might see in a circus or something. He had a dry goods store. Shortly after Hugo [Lafayette] Black<sup>35</sup> was appointed to the [United States] Supreme Court in the late 1930s . . . Sam died in December 1941 shortly after Pearl Harbor. He knew I was interested. I was sort of a political junky before people knew what junkies were. He told me the story about Senator Black [who] came in his store during one of his campaigns and said, "Mr. Cohn, I hope you will support me." Uncle Sam said, "Well, I don't think I can, Senator." He said, "Why not?" He said, "Because you're a member of the Ku Klux Klan."<sup>36</sup> Senator Black said, "Don't pay any attention to that, Mr. Cohn," he said, "When you're in politics, you have to do a lot of things." That's a true story.

**SCHOENBERG:** Isn't that something.

**SROCHI:** It was a true statement.

**SCHOENBERG:** That's true. Yes. I quite agree. It's still the case, unfortunately. Fortunately, nobody is belonging to the KKK, hopefully.

**SROCHI:** Birdie and Sam lived in Florala mostly during the 1920s. In the early 1930s, they came back to Atlanta and lived on Moreland Avenue, right across the street from her parent's home. I'm sure they had something to do with bringing their daughter back from the

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<sup>34</sup> Reva (Rebecca) Chashesman Epstein (1905-2001) was the well-educated daughter of an Orthodox rabbi. Her family immigrated to Chicago, Illinois, from Poland after World War I. In 1929, she married Rabbi Harry Epstein.

<sup>35</sup> Hugo Lafayette Black (1886-1971) was an American politician who served as a Democratic United States Senator and represented Alabama in the Senate from 1927 to 1937. He also served as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from 1937 to 1871.

<sup>36</sup> The Ku Klux Klan (or Knights of the Ku Klux Klan today) is a white supremacist, white nationalist, anti-immigration, anti-Jewish, anti-Catholic, anti-black secret society, whose methods included terrorism and murder. It was founded in the South in the 1860s and then died out and come back several times, most notably in the 1920s when membership soared again, and then again in the 1960s during the civil rights era. When the Klan was re-founded in 1915 in Georgia, the event was marked by a cross burning on Stone Mountain. In the past it members dressed up in white robes and a pointed hat designed to hide their identity and to terrify. It is still in existence.

wilds of south Alabama.

**SCHOENBERG:** Sure. She never had children?

**SROCHI:** After Sam died, she lived in the Biltmore Hotel<sup>37</sup> for many years. She could probably, if she were alive, tell us a lot of stories about what went on.

**SCHOENBERG:** Was the Biltmore that residential? I didn't realize that it had permanent residents, or was it that site?

**SROCHI:** Yes. I don't think she ever had an apartment there. I think she was just a resident at the transient part of the hotel, just had a room there. There was . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** There were some apartments.

**SROCHI:** In the back area, the east side was residential like apartments. A lot of upper crust lived there. The widows lived there. I think it was a haven for the widows at the time.

**SCHOENBERG:** I didn't realize that. Interesting. I know there's a portion . . .

**SROCHI:** There was a social aura about living at the Biltmore. A lot of activities, a lot of major functions were at the Biltmore.

**SCHOENBERG:** When did she die?

**SROCHI:** The Candler widow? She was the owner.

**SCHOENBERG:** The widow of the son who built the Biltmore?

**SROCHI:** Yes, the one who had an unfortunate demise at the hands of the South Georgia cow.

**SCHOENBERG:** That was a very funny. Why don't you tell that story. I think it's very funny.

**SROCHI:** That was Birdie. My Aunt Birdie died in 19 . . . All four of Morris and Dora Srochi's children died in 1970s, so it was sort of strange that my father reached his 90s. Even though he was the oldest, he was the survivor. He died in 1979. Birdie, I think, about 1973 [1974]. She was actually the first to go. Jake in 1975. Sidney in 1977.

**SCHOENBERG:** Tell me about Jake.

**SROCHI:** He was the mechanical one in the family. He had a faculty for that. He

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<sup>37</sup> Built in 1924, the Biltmore Hotel and Biltmore Apartments was a type of apartment hotel popular during the 1920s. The Biltmore Hotel and Apartments were the focal point of Atlanta's business and social life for almost 60 years. It was developed by William Candler, son of Coca-Cola executive Asa Candler, with Holland Ball Judkins, and John McEntee Bowman. It is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

was what you would call today the CFO. The chief financial officer. He worked with the mechanic staff at the bakery. Jake didn't believe in going to the bank to borrow money. We borrowed money from the flour mills. In other words, you paid them when you wanted to pay them.

**SCHOENBERG:** You were working on their money?

**SROCHI:** If you had enough clout with them, they wanted to keep your business. I guess they factored that into the price of the flour. Jake, he was very mechanical. He worked with the equipment. [He] worked with the people that serviced the equipment.

**SCHOENBERG:** From whom did you buy your flour?

**SROCHI:** Various people. I think I may have mentioned. Didn't you tell me you had some connection with Kansas City?

**SCHOENBERG:** That's where I was born.

**SROCHI:** We bought flour from a lot of different mills. I have a particular memory of the Rodney Milling Company, which was out of Kansas City.

**SCHOENBERG:** That's the Uhlmann family.

**SROCHI:** I think was owned by or controlled maybe by a Jewish family, the Meyers family. Elder Mr. Meyers was a friend of my father's.

**SCHOENBERG:** I think I may have asked you. Excuse me. I'm sorry, did you finish your sentence? I thought you were finished.

**SROCHI:** No. I was just saying that they had a personal relationship with the Meyers family. Generally, the relationship was not with the mills themselves but the so-called flour broker. It's like if I want to buy GM [General Motors] stock today, I'd call a broker. I don't go directly to the president of GM and say, "Hey, I want to buy 100 shares of your stock." The relationships were with the flour brokers. In the case of Rodney, the relationship extended to the . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** The actual family.

**SROCHI:** What I would call the manufacturer or producer or supplier itself. Generally, the relationships were with either the brokers [or] the manufacturer's rep. Everybody had a manufacturer's rep. You've probably heard . . . You may not be a sport fan, but you've heard of Sid Luckman.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Sidney Luckman (1916-1998) was an American football quarterback for the Chicago Bears of the National

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes.

**SROCHI:** Sid Luckman played football at Columbia [University]. He was probably one of the two or three greatest quarterbacks certainly in his era. He played with Chicago Bears. Later in his business career, he was a representative for various packaging companies. He used to come to the bakery and make a pitch. They talked football for 45 minutes. The last 10 minutes, they'd sign off on the order for the next, you know . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** Write an order.

**SROCHI:** For the next \$250,000 worth of Roman Meal paper.

**SCHOENBERG:** Isn't that something. It shows you what gets you through the door is what is important.

**SROCHI:** Uncle Jake married, I think, around 1928. His wife came from Savannah. She was Sara Bernstein. They had two children. Their daughter Robyn. She had an older brother, Alan Srochi, who died at about 58 in 1991. Alan left four boys. He has four sons, all of whom live here.

**SCHOENBERG:** Did anybody stay with Flowers? Did anybody stay with the company?

**SROCHI:** Alan stayed with Flowers for a short time, sort of a transition period.

**SCHOENBERG:** I just wondered.

**SROCHI:** I think Alan left of his own volition. I never did quite know the full story. Alan did stay with the bakery, with Flowers for a short time. Generally, when people buy companies out, they make announcement they're buying them for all their great personnel, and a couple of years later, they're all gone. That's just the nature of the beast.

**SCHOENBERG:** When did your family get involved in real estate? Obviously that was long before you sold the bakery.

**SROCHI:** I think they were probably almost always involved in real estate. I think of the brothers, my father had the greatest interest in real estate. I think in some ways the bread business is sort of a mundane. [It] can be a mundane business, though it could be a pretty tough business. It's very competitive because you're fighting for shelf space. It's a pricing situation and all kinds of things. Really, buying flour and buying real estate was more things that he enjoyed the most.

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Football League from 1939 through 1950. During his twelve seasons with the Bears, he led them to four NFL championships.

**SCHOENBERG:** There was more challenge to it.

**SROCHI:** Yes. One of the stories is during the [Great] Depression, these real estate salesmen . . . things were tough. They'd come over to the bakery and talk to my father for a couple of hours, give him some ideas about what was going on in the marketplace. He'd give them a couple loaves of bread. If he hadn't made any money that day, at least he came home with . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** Something to eat.

**SROCHI:** . . . a couple loaves of bread. He could tell his wife that he had been out hustling. That probably paid off over the long haul. He had a lot of very important relationships, not only in the baking business but also in the real estate business.

**SCHOENBERG:** The kind of real estate he was buying, was it raw land?

**SROCHI:** No. He was more oriented toward income type property. I don't know that he had to buy land and hold it. You either got to inherit it [or] sitting on it some way. Acquiring property that is not generating a whole lot of taxes. You have to be able to hold it. He was oriented more toward income type properties that he was familiar with.

**SCHOENBERG:** Income producing.

**SROCHI:** He was familiar with the inner city. The downtown area.

**SCHOENBERG:** So he bought things like hotels? Apartments?

**SROCHI:** Yes. Over the period of his life, he bought many properties that maybe he had seen as a young man. I think he told the story a couple of times. Maybe this was before, but you've got to remember that the automobile didn't come into common use until he was maybe 20 years old or even older. Maybe 25.

**SCHOENBERG:** More than that.

**SROCHI:** Typical mode of transportation was either a horse-and-wagon or . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** Streetcar.

**SROCHI:** Or a bicycle.

**SCHOENBERG:** Maybe a streetcar?

**SROCHI:** Apparently, he did a lot of riding on a bicycle. Just riding around seeing things, maybe he later was able to acquire it one way or another.

**SCHOENBERG:** So you did own those kinds of properties? The hotels? Apartments?

**SROCHI:** He was very decisive one way or the other.

**SCHOENBERG:** Did you have industrial property?

**SROCHI:** If he wanted to buy something, he bought it when he could. When it was available. In the same way, if he decided to sell something, he sold it. He didn't call the board of directors or anything or ask anybody. He just did it.

**SCHOENBERG:** It was his property to do with as he wished. Was he holding property, though, in conjunction with some of the other brothers?

**SROCHI:** Yes, they had.

**SCHOENBERG:** Have a corporation?

**SROCHI:** In a family relationship, they owned properties in Florida together.

**SCHOENBERG:** What part of Florida?

**SROCHI:** Daytona Beach. My grandfather had a home in Daytona. My Uncle Sidney, that was his favorite place. I can't tell you how many properties he owned in Daytona over a period of time.

**SCHOENBERG:** You mean your Uncle Sidney?

**SROCHI:** Sidney and Helen. They usually spent a couple of months in the summer in Daytona. They loved to go to auctions. They went to auctions here. They were collectors before people knew what collectors were and used the term.

**SCHOENBERG:** What did they collect?

**SROCHI:** They collected just about anything. Furniture. Helen collected, what I call mugs. I don't know if they were . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** Are you talking about steins?

**SROCHI:** Yes, maybe steins.

**SCHOENBERG:** The fancy ones?

**SROCHI:** The painted . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** The German kind?

**SROCHI:** German steins.

**SCHOENBERG:** Beer steins.

**SROCHI:** I call them beer mugs.

**SCHOENBERG:** Sounds okay with me.

**SROCHI:** I think steins are probably more accurate.

**SCHOENBERG:** Elegant.

**SROCHI:** Yes, more elegant, certainly.

**SCHOENBERG:** Where did they live when they were in town here?

**SROCHI:** Jake lived . . . my earliest memory of Uncle Jake and Aunt Sara, they lived on Emory Road, which is not too far from Emory University. They lived about halfway between Oxford and Briarcliff. [Do] you know that area?

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes, and your Uncle Sidney?

**SROCHI:** In about 1936, Jake moved to 823 Springdale Road.

**SCHOENBERG:** Same neighborhood basically.

**SROCHI:** Came back actually closer to town.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes.

**SROCHI:** Came into the city of Atlanta. Emory is in DeKalb County.

<End Tape 2, Side 1>

<Begin Tape 2, Side 2>

**SCHOENBERG:** This is Ann Hoffman Schoenberg continuing the interview with Stanley Srochi on March 6, 2002. This is the second side of the second tape of the Jewish Oral History Project interview. I'm sorry. We were midsentence.

**SROCHI:** Uncle Jake moved to Springdale Road from Emory Road in 1936. He lived there until the late 1950s. My Aunt Sara died in 1952. I think we discussed earlier. He had two children. Alan, who was in the [United States] Air Force in the early 1950s. [He] went to the University of North Carolina. [He] finished up at Emory through the [Goizueta] Business School there.

**SCHOENBERG:** And came into the business?

**SROCHI:** Alan married in 1957, as well as his sister. Both of the children married in 1957, I think. I'll have to check. He was then a widower and moved to the Slaton Manor Apartments [Condominiums] sometime around late 1950s. Early 1960s.

**SCHOENBERG:** And your last uncle there <Ann points to a photo>. Uncle Sidney.

**SROCHI:** Uncle Sidney was married to Helen Smullian from Atlanta. An Atlanta family, the survivor of whom is Bernice Orenstein [Max Orenstein]. Helen had . . . I think there were three Smullian girls and I believe two boys, Herbert and Abe [Aubrey]. Helen and Sidney were married at the Atlanta Women's Club on Peachtree Street in 1932. I had the honor of being a train bearer.

**SCHOENBERG:** A train bearer. I hadn't heard anybody do that.

**SROCHI:** Yes. My partner was Helen's niece. The daughter of Helen's sister, Jenny Flower [sp]. I think the two of us we were talking or something and wasn't following. Helen probably almost pulled . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** The whole thing off her head?

**SROCHI:** Yes.

**SCHOENBERG:** How old were you then?

**SROCHI:** I would have been six years old.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. Really funny.

**SROCHI:** That was as close as I came to a wedding until I got myself married in 1953.

**SCHOENBERG:** Such a chicken. You can't blame it on the veil. So we've got Sidney getting married.

**SROCHI:** He married in 1932. He lived in an apartment [at] 904 Ponce de Leon Avenue. The apartment actually belonged to the family at the time he was married until about 1939. He moved to Fairview Road, but on the Lullwater [Road] end of it, all the way down Fairview almost to Ponce de Leon. His home backed up to Harris family estate, the [Arthur] Harris, who were the owners of the Atlanta Paper Company.

**SCHOENBERG:** He died young?

**SROCHI:** Sidney lived there until about 1960 [until] my grandfather's death. I think he moved in with my grandfather for a period of time. After my grandfather's death, he and my Aunt Helen bought a home on Valley Road.

**SCHOENBERG:** Here we are. We're up to sort of modern times. I want you to tell me about your marriage, or about your romance. I don't know what you want to call it. Here you were, a free-floating bachelor, cavorting with playboy bunnies who were acting as models for the bread company. I have to say.

**SROCHI:** It was all business, unfortunately. What we were trying to do was sell Hillbilly Bread.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. Right.

**SROCHI:** You say, "A likely story."

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. That's true. You said somebody had to do it. It was dirty work but

somebody had to do it.

**SROCHI:** It was so successful. We almost ruined the white bread business.

**SCHOENBERG:** All right. So how did you meet?

**SROCHI:** We met . . . I met a cousin of Joan's, the former Sue Joel, whose mother is Dorothy Selig. I was sort of the one who Sue would call to entertain, what we call a business to hire <unintelligible> women.

**SCHOENBERG:** I hope you were dating women, not men.

**SROCHI:** Yes. These were all women. I entertained a few of her friends. Then one day, Sue calls me and says, "I've got a cousin in Richmond, Virginia." The connection between Sue and Joan is Sue's mother. No, Sue's mother's mother. Sue's grandmother, Bertha Selig, was a sister to Joan's father. Anyway, I've got this cousin in Richmond who is a widow. She'd been a widow since, I think, 1968, and she's coming down to visit me. One thing and another. She came down.

**SCHOENBERG:** Are you available?

**SROCHI:** Joan came down, I think, over Labor Day weekend. I had the nine o'clock slot. I often say that I was the guy they selected to take an all night dinner.

**SCHOENBERG:** Figured you got the money. You can do it.

**SROCHI:** Well, I don't.

**SCHOENBERG:** Did somebody take her to lunch the same day?

**SROCHI:** That, I don't know. I do know that I was the last one of the day. I was scheduled [for] 8:00 or 8:30. Something like that. We did go out to dinner. Sue had a date, and the four of us went out to dinner at the old [The] Tango [Restaurant] on Peachtree [Road] in The Plaza Towers. That's where the menu was on a record.

**SCHOENBERG:** On a record? A recording?

**SROCHI:** No. The old style deck of records. Round with a hole in it. They had the menu printed on it. The name of the restaurant was The Tango. It was a fine restaurant.

**SCHOENBERG:** Is this the Peachtree Towers that are right there? That are still there?

**SROCHI:** Peachtree and Lakemoore [Drive].

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes.

**SROCHI:** Peachtree Plaza is still there but the restaurant is long gone.

**SCHOENBERG:** I was going to say, I don't remember a restaurant there.

**SROCHI:** Anyway, we met just over that weekend. That would have been September of 1977. That's the first time I met Joan. Then Joan came back, I think, that spring. My sister saw Joan at the old Standard Club<sup>39</sup> and said you should have called Stanley. Joan's story is that she wasn't going to call some guy just to take her to dinner. Anyway, when I found out she had been here, I called her. The next couple of times she came, we would meet. I think she was particularly impressed by the fact that one night as some kind of game I took her over to our old neighborhood around Highland School right off of North Avenue and Highland Avenue and back over around Piedmont Park and <unintelligible> circle. That area [was] where Joan had grown up. She didn't know anybody that knew that area and could remember what used to be there.

**SCHOENBERG:** She grew up here in Atlanta?

**SROCHI:** Joan tells people that she's native, but she was born in Pittsburgh [Pennsylvania].

**SCHOENBERG:** What years?

**SROCHI:** Her parents brought her here when she was 11 months old. She did grow up here. She went to Highland School. She went to the Girls' High [School].

**SCHOENBERG:** What was her maiden name?

**SROCHI:** Printz. P-R-I-N-T-Z. Her father was David Printz. I think the Printz were in the dress business. The famous company in Cleveland [Ohio] was Printz-Biederman [Company], one of the better-known dress manufacturers in that era. I think there's a photograph of the Printz-Biederman factory in one of the [Jewish] Federation<sup>40</sup> sort of coffee table books, if you ever have access.

**SCHOENBERG:** Is that what her father did? He was part of the family business?

**SROCHI:** He was apparently a very knowledgeable and very educated man. One of the stories is that he studied in France with Erte [Romain de Tiroff].<sup>41</sup> They exchanged correspondence with ideas in the margins of their letters, but nobody had the presence of mind to

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<sup>39</sup> The Standard Club is a Jewish social club that started as the Concordia Association in 1867 in Downtown Atlanta. In 1905, it was reorganized as the 'Standard Club' and moved into the former mansion of William C. Sanders near where the former Turner Field is located. In the late 1920s the club moved to Ponce de Leon Avenue in Midtown Atlanta. Later, the club moved to what is now the Lenox Park business park and was located there until 1983. In the 1980s, the club moved to its present location in Johns Creek in Atlanta's northern suburbs.

<sup>40</sup> There are Jewish federations in most major cities. Their function is to fundraise for the Jewish community centrally and disperse it throughout the Jewish community (locally, nationally, and internationally) rather than each Jewish institution trying to raise money individually.

<sup>41</sup> Romain de Tiroff (1892-1990) was a Russian-born French painter, who called himself Erte after the French pronunciation of his initials. He was one of the foremost fashion and stage designers of the early twentieth century.

keep them. They didn't know.

**SCHOENBERG:** Who were these wonderful sketches?

**SROCHI:** That he was going to be famous. Like some kid writing you a letter [who] may be president of the United States.

**SCHOENBERG:** Got to hold on to everything.

**SROCHI:** It's a little scary.

**SCHOENBERG:** Her dad was involved in the business.

**SROCHI:** She came here a couple of times. We sort of dated.

**SCHOENBERG:** Were her parents gone by the time you met?

**SROCHI:** Yes. Both her parents. She lost her mother when she was only 12 years old, in the late 1930s. Her father died when Joan was in her early 20s in 1948. She was married in 1948 and lived in Atlanta for a short time. Lived in Texas. They lived in Wichita Falls, Texas. It's rather ironic that I, my brother, and one of my uncles, all spent some time in Sheppard Field, Texas, which is in Wichita Falls, and they lived in Dallas. She became friends with some of the Marcus family. I think even persuaded Stanley Marcus to buy cookies from a maiden aunt of hers who made them, I guess in her kitchen, and they sold these things. Apparently they were wonderful. They sold them for \$25 a box in 1952.

**SCHOENBERG:** That was expensive.

**SROCHI:** They must have been good.

**SCHOENBERG:** I was going to say, I don't know what they tasted like, but they must have been fantastic if anybody would spend that kind of money in 1952. Wow.

**SROCHI:** She was married to Alan Perretz, who was in the ladies dress business, retail end of it. He was also with an outfit called Goldray [sp]. I think a sort of situation where they had, how do you describe it, where people in effect, independent business people, owned a particular segment of a store. Like a shoe department.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes, like the departments. The fur department or something.

**SROCHI:** Which was fairly common.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. It was at one time.

**SROCHI:** I don't know that it is today.

**SCHOENBERG:** No. I don't think so.

**SROCHI:** Joan jokes that she married two guys that both loved Hickey Freeman suits.

Except I had to buy mine. I think Alan, they gave them to him. I think he was in the business.

**SCHOENBERG:** My dad liked Hickey Freeman too. I know exactly what you're talking about.

**SROCHI:** Joan visited here a couple of times. Finally I got my nerve up and went to Richmond.

**SCHOENBERG:** Had you met her children by then?

**SROCHI:** She came down here. Yes. I had met all of the children. I was sort of complimented when one of the boys told his mother, he said, "I can't call him Mr. Srochi. He's a young man." That impressed me, even though he was lying because I was already in my 50s at the time.

**SCHOENBERG:** You were old enough to marry his mother, in any case.

**SROCHI:** I thought you were going to say old enough to know better.

**SCHOENBERG:** No. That's very cute.

**SROCHI:** Anyway, Joan came down here over New Year's [Eve], not Christmas. [She] came here after Christmas but before New Year's in 1978 or 1979. That's when we got engaged.

**SCHOENBERG:** You were married when?

**SROCHI:** We were married in May 13, 1979. Unfortunately, I lost my father in February of 1979, but my mother was still around.

**SCHOENBERG:** To finally see you married.

**SROCHI:** To see her baby boy get married.

**SCHOENBERG:** They had probably given you up for a lost cause.

**SROCHI:** I would think so. I had probably given myself up, but I'm not sure I would have categorized it as a lost cause.

**SCHOENBERG:** Here you are 30 some years later. Apparently it worked.

**SROCHI:** Actually it's 23.

**SCHOENBERG:** Excuse me. Twenty some years later.

**SROCHI:** It will be 23 years in May.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes.

**SROCHI:** If we make it to our Golden Wedding Anniversary, we'll each be 103 years old. Two old twins. Even 25 would be an accomplishment.

**SCHOENBERG:** No, not hardly. Tell me about the kids. You've got step kids.

**SROCHI:** The oldest is my stepdaughter, Connie Perretz Dierks. She grew up in . . . was born in Texas. I think she was born in Wichita Falls in 1952. She has just turned 50 years old. She grew up in the various cities that they went through. They lived in Charlotte [North Carolina] just a few years in sort of the middle 1950s until 1957 or 1958. I think they went to Richmond. Most of her life she lived in Virginia. One of her claims to fame is that she was in the first class that accepted women at the University of Virginia. While she was there, she met inspiring student named Peter Dierks, who is now known as Dr. Peter Dierks. [He] is a microbiologist. He's got I don't know how many post-doc degrees.

**SCHOENBERG:** How does he spell his name?

**SROCHI:** D-I-E-R-K-S. The only thing that we're not fond of about Peter is that apparently he is a descendant of General George Meade.<sup>42</sup>

**SCHOENBERG:** Oh dear. Bad inheritance.

**SROCHI:** Other than that he's a heck of a guy. He's at the University of Virginia. They married in 1975. I assumed Connie had graduated by then. Peter was probably still in graduate school. He was on the staff at the University of Virginia and taught there. By the time we were married . . . this was before they had any children, they went to Zurich, Switzerland. He taught and studied at the University of Zurich. Took care of all of his test students and things. He told me one time, he was working on some holiday, he said that these little creatures that he . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** Little critters?

**SROCHI:** Yes. They didn't know about these holidays. They had to be tended to at all times.

**SCHOENBERG:** Scientists don't have holidays. You know that. Research scientists.

**SROCHI:** Anyway, Joan and I both went over to visit them in the fall of 1979, the year we were married, and visited them in Zurich. [We] traveled around in Switzerland and actually went to Florence, Italy with them. Joan went back in 1981 when Connie had her first child. Our eldest grandson, Eric Michael Dierks, was born in Zurich.

**SCHOENBERG:** How many children do they have now?

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<sup>42</sup> George Meade (1815-1872) was a U.S. Army general and civil engineer who served as commander of the Union Army of the Potomac during the Civil War (1861-1865). Meade achieved victory at the Battle of Gettysburg, where his army repelled repeated assaults by General Robert E. Lee.

**SROCHI:** They had two children. Eric, who is a junior at the University of California, Berkeley.

**SCHOENBERG:** Not a bad school.

**SROCHI:** He is very artistic and, I think, probably will end up an architect. One of the family jokes is, his avocation is that he is a glass blower. I asked him a few times, how do you spell this? We have . . . I'll show you some of his work. He is very . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** I was going to say, don't knock glassblowing, if you've ever seen [Dale] Chihuly.<sup>43</sup>

**SROCHI:** Yes. I do not knock it. Some years ago we were at the Pendleton School in North Carolina, if you're familiar with that. As part of the tour, they took us to some famous glassblower's . . . it's really his home, but he used it as a studio. On an upper shelf, I thought I saw what was a "Bama" strawberry jam jar that had been put up there. Maybe they used it for iced tea. I said, "How much is this?" The guys says, "\$10,000." Anyway, we've got Eric, who . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** Who is doing his thing out there.

**SROCHI:** Yes. He's doing his thing in California. He says he's taking . . . He loves to ski. On his father's side, he's got a New England Dierks in New Hampshire. They were in the ice cream business back then. They all ski. He was a very good skier. He's taking a double major, skiing in [Lake] Tahoe [California]. I always thought Tahoe was a more swimming and gambling.

**SCHOENBERG:** I thought it was gambling for sure. His sibling?

**SROCHI:** They have a daughter, Karen, who I think just turned 16 or 17. I think she's a junior in high school. Her claim to fame is that she is a very good diver. She's a competitive diver at the state and regional level.

**SCHOENBERG:** Where do they live?

**SROCHI:** They live now in Yardley, Pennsylvania.

**SCHOENBERG:** He's teaching as well as . . .

**SROCHI:** The story there is that in 1990, the father, Dr. Peter Dierks, decided if he

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<sup>43</sup> Dale Chihuly (1941- ) is an American glass sculptor and entrepreneur. He was introduced to glass while studying interior design at the University of Washington. He continued his studies at the University of Wisconsin and Rhode Island School of Design, where he later established the glass program. His work is included in more than 200 museum collections worldwide. He has been the recipient of many awards.

was going to educate his children and maybe plan for his retirement, take care of his financial situation, he needed to . . .

<Interruption in tape>

**SROCHI:** [He] came back from Switzerland. I think he came back about 1983 or 1984. He was there maybe four years. He went back to teaching microbiology at the University of Virginia. I recall him saying . . . Apparently most of his best students were Oriental. Not only did he have to teach them a very complex subject, but he had to deal with the language.

**SCHOENBERG:** Barriers.

**SROCHI:** I don't think that's the reason he decided to leave the educational field. I think he just decided it was either now or never. They left Charlottesville [Virginia]. When they came back from Switzerland, of course, it was before Karen was born. Karen was born in Charlottesville. Eric, the older, the boy, the son, my step-grandson . . . I don't call my grandchildren "steps." I don't think they know that they're "step." I hope not, anyway. She was born in Charlottesville.

**SCHOENBERG:** In Virginia.

**SROCHI:** It's a great town.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. I have two sons who went to school there. I know all about Charlottesville.

**SROCHI:** You know all about it?

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes.

**SROCHI:** We've got another one of my grandsons, [the] one that lives in Richmond, [he] is going there. He'll be a freshman this coming fall.

**SCHOENBERG:** Good. It's a wonderful place.

**SROCHI:** He took a job with American Cyanamid [Company].

**SCHOENBERG:** So he's in industry.

**SROCHI:** In the agricultural division. They looked over the area. His office was in . . . he's still in Princeton, New Jersey. They decided to buy, settle in Yardley, which is just . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** Not far away.

**SROCHI:** South of the New Jersey state line. They're just really four minutes from Trenton [New Jersey], which is not really the garden spot of the world, but Princeton is a great area. Anyway, Peter worked for . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** That's where they live now?

**SROCHI:** American Cyanamid, in the agricultural division. I think he told me one time his bunch was trying to save the cotton crop in Texas. I think one of the important things they do, they try to make the various pest controls environmentally . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** Safe?

**SROCHI:** Acceptable or safer.

**SCHOENBERG:** Probably trying to use . . .

**SROCHI:** At least pass regulation.

**SCHOENBERG:** Hopefully.

**SROCHI:** Instead of poisoning the little critters, they cause them . . . maybe what happens to some of us, just to age rapidly.

**SCHOENBERG:** Or also some of them have a sterilization feature.

**SROCHI:** They may do that, but I think this was sort of an aging process.

**SCHOENBERG:** Aging process. Yes. Interesting.

**SROCHI:** After a few years at American Cyanamid, [they] sold out to American Home Products.

**SCHOENBERG:** That's who they are now?

**SROCHI:** Then maybe two years ago, a German company bought his division.

**SCHOENBERG:** I was going to say, his German from Zurich then . . .

**SROCHI:** He's got to make some career decisions either to stay with the German company or maybe to go somewhere else. I think they really want to stay in Yardley because that's sort of a . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** Good area?

**SROCHI:** They want Karen to be able to finish high school where she is [and] not to move her. In the meantime, her mother really deserves a lot of credit for her diving career because she takes her down to Philadelphia [Pennsylvania], which is a 70-mile round trip, three times a week.

**SCHOENBERG:** To train?

**SROCHI:** She trains at La Salle University [with] some famous diving coach there.

**SCHOENBERG:** What about the other children? Joan has another child?

**SROCHI:** The next oldest to Connie is Bruce Perretz. Bruce is the one who stayed in

Richmond. He still lives in Richmond. Bruce is an architect. He went through the five-year course at Virginia Tech [Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University] in Blacksburg [Virginia], so he's a Hokie.

**JOAN SROCHI:** They call them Hokies.

**SCHOENBERG:** By the way, this is Joan. The other voice you're hearing now is Stanley's wife, who has just joined us. We are talking about her children and grandchildren. I guess it's appropriate.

**SROCHI:** Bruce has three children. He married. Connie was married in 1975, I believe. That was before my entrance into the family. Bruce was married in 1982. We had already been married a few years. He married Mary Hughes [sp], a young lady he had met at Virginia Tech. She was in the forestry school, right?

**JOAN SROCHI:** Yes.

**SCHOENBERG:** And they have . . .

**SROCHI:** They have three children. They have two boys and a girl.

**SCHOENBERG:** Are they in college?

**JOAN SROCHI:** Not yet.

**SROCHI:** The two boys, The oldest is David Perretz. He's a young man who is graduating from high school this spring.

**SCHOENBERG:** And going on to Virginia.

**SROCHI:** He's already been accepted to the University of Virginia. He is a fine student. His ambition is not to be president but to really pull the strings and write the speeches.

**SCHOENBERG:** To be the man behind the throne.

**SROCHI:** The man behind. The one who doesn't get excoriated in the press every day on oddball Fox News. *A Drudge Report*.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. And the next one?

**SROCHI:** His next one is Alex Perretz. By the way, David is our six-footer. He's 6'3" or 6'4", but on his mother's side, his mother was one of nine children. That's strange that she's one of nine children. My mother was one of nine children. She comes from not only a large family numerically but also a large family physically.

**SCHOENBERG:** Size wise.

**SROCHI:** Her baby brother played college football and was tackle. [He is] usually is

the biggest guy on the team, and he's one of the smaller members of the family.

**SCHOENBERG:** Then their daughter?

**SROCHI:** Their daughter, Margot. Some way they hung my middle name on Margot. She is Margot Maier Perretz. She's what, 14? She'll be 14.

**JOAN SROCHI:** She's the youngest.

**SCHOENBERG:** Are there others?

**SROCHI:** She's still going into high school.

**SCHOENBERG:** Are there others?

**JOAN SROCHI:** No.

**SCHOENBERG:** That's it?

**SROCHI:** No. We've got Joan's baby, Scott Perretz.

**SCHOENBERG:** Forgot about him.

**SROCHI:** He graduated from high school in Richmond and went to the University of Georgia. [He] went through the accounting program. Passed the CPA [certified public accountant] examination. [He] went to the University of Virginia and got a master's in accounting. For a year or two after we were married, he lived in Atlanta. So we saw more of him than we did the other children at the time. Connie was living in Switzerland and Bruce was still . . .

**JOAN SROCHI:** In Richmond.

**SROCHI:** He was out of school. He was sort of a young guy working in somebody's architectural office.

**JOAN SROCHI:** You have to serve an apprenticeship for three years before you can take the architectural test, which I think is so unfair.

**SROCHI:** Anyway, Scott is on his second marriage. He married the first time to a New York girl and had two children, a daughter Alissa, who will be 20 in July. She has a younger brother, who just turned 16. Jordan. Jordan thinks he's going to be the Jewish Tiger Woods.

**SCHOENBERG:** I hope so.

**JOAN SROCHI:** Wouldn't that be nice.

**SROCHI:** He's a very fine golfer for his age. He has had a lot of . . .

**JOAN SROCHI:** Advantages.

**SROCHI:** Very determined. Very motivated kid. He goes to the [David] Leadbetter Golf Academy.

**JOAN SROCHI:** Huh-oh.

**SCHOENBERG:** Problem?

**SROCHI:** That's our baby. That's Tabby.

**SCHOENBERG:** This is the kitty we're talking about now. The kitty just entered the room. You've probably been hearing her on the tape.

**SROCHI:** Just over a year ago, or a year and a half ago, Scott remarried. He's expecting a child this summer. So that will be number eight.

**SCHOENBERG:** That's great.

**SROCHI:** We just need one more for a baseload.

**SCHOENBERG:** You've got a basketball team and a few subs.

**SROCHI:** Yes. We've got three subs, and I'll coach.

**SCHOENBERG:** There you go. Where were we going to go from there? We did talk, briefly, about your mother's family. I know you did tell me something about the uncles before when we talked before. I know what I wanted you to talk about. I wanted you to talk about the relationship of the family to the AA synagogue. We never did talk about your family involvement in the Tenth Street property and all of that.

**SROCHI:** I guess the relationship starts with the fact that we're East European Jews. Both of my grandfathers came from Orthodox<sup>44</sup> backgrounds. The AA was essentially, as I understand it, Orthodox until certainly the World War II era, either just before or just after, when it joined the Conservative movement. My maternal grandfather was maybe more knowledgeable, for want of a better term. [He] actually, studied the . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** The Talmud and Torah?

**SROCHI:** He was more of what they might have called a yeshiva buff. He spent more time there. My Grandfather Srochi was there on all the holidays and that sort of thing. I don't know that he was there every Friday night. I don't know that he was there for every morning service. I sort of think that my mother's father, my Grandfather Hirsh, was. I can recall that some of the holidays when the service was over and everybody was leaving, I'd see him with a

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<sup>44</sup> Orthodox Judaism is a traditional branch of Judaism that strictly follows the Written *Torah* and the Oral Law concerning prayer, dress, food, sex, family relations, social behavior, the Sabbath day, holidays and more.

group of his cronies. They'd be in the corner, and they were going to get down to the serious stuff then when everybody else left.

**SCHOENBERG:** They were going to really start davening?<sup>45</sup>

**SROCHI:** Yes. Get rid of the riff raff. I can recall some of the *seders*<sup>46</sup> at my Grandfather Hirsh's home. You didn't touch any food until about 9:30. I do remember sitting there [thinking] "boy, when are we going to eat?"

**SCHOENBERG:** Is this ever going to be over? He didn't skip a page, not a sentence?

**SROCHI:** No. My Grandfather Srochi, he was sort of . . . at least later, he was sort of the rabbi's go-to guy. You know, when you wanted something, and you wanted it quick.

**SCHOENBERG:** Didn't want to have to go get a vote.

**SROCHI:** Yes. Go get a vote and go see a dozen people or two dozen. He was motivated and responsive and, I guess, able to do it. One of the family stories is that he had a visit from an IRS [Internal Revenue Service] agent later in his life. They were trying to determine how he could give away so much money with the income, I guess, he was reporting at the time. Anyway, apparently he did convince him it was . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** It was legit.

**SROCHI:** It was legit. He was giving away maybe what these people today call their 401(k)s, their stock.

**SCHOENBERG:** He wasn't putting it away. He was giving it away.

**SROCHI:** Some of that is in the article you have. It was in the AA bulletin. He was involved when the Washington Street *shul*<sup>47</sup> was dedicated in 1920. He was advanced enough in the world to be able to participate some, I guess at a pretty good level, at the time in that project. You asked about Tenth Street. We were already outgrowing the *shul*. In my day, when I started Sunday school in the early 1930s, the classes were held in the vestry room in the lower level, what people refer to now as the basement. The lower level of the synagogue. Over a period of time, we outgrew the available space in the synagogue. They rented space in a nearby school,

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<sup>45</sup> The act of reciting Jewish liturgical prayers during which the prayer sways or rocks lightly.

<sup>46</sup> *Seder* (meaning "order" in Hebrew) is a Jewish ritual feast that marks the beginning of the Jewish holiday of Passover. It is conducted on the evening of the fifteenth day of *Nisan* in the Hebrew calendar throughout the world. Some communities hold *seders* on both the first two nights of Passover. The *seders* incorporate prayers, candle lighting, and traditional foods symbolizing the slavery of the Jews and the exodus from Egypt. It is one of the most colorful and joyous occasions in Jewish life.

<sup>47</sup> *Shul* is a Yiddish word for synagogue that is derived from a German word meaning "school," and emphasizes the synagogue's role as a place of study.

which was Crew Street School. Crew Street runs north and south and is one block east of Washington Street, between Washington and Capitol Avenue. Crew Street School was probably maybe four or five blocks from the synagogue.

**SCHOENBERG:** Close enough.

**SROCHI:** In the middle to late 1930s, it was already, what we would call today, a pretty rough area. We held the Sunday school at Crew Street for several years. By that time, most of the membership had gravitated to the north side of town, basically, the northeast side of town. So, they began to look for some facility, one that would accommodate the growing membership and also would be more convenient for the parents to chauffeur the kids back and forth. My father and a man named Meyer Rich, who was also the president . . . [he] may have been the president at the time or was later the president of synagogue . . . they found this particular location on Tenth Street. [It] would have been west of Piedmont Park . . . was available. It was just east of Piedmont. It was a very good location, and they acquired the property. [They] did all the proper fundraising and, I think, dedicated the Tenth Street facility, which was known as the AA Educational [Center Library] Building. The services were still . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** Still held downtown?

**SROCHI:** As far as I know, [they] were still held on Washington Street. I don't recall, though I think they held auxiliary services over there if there was an overflow. Basically, it was an educational facility. It was dedicated in 1940. My grandmother, my father's mother, Dora Srochi, died in the summer of 1939. The family wanted to honor my grandmother, so they funded the [Srochi] auditorium. The educational center. That was the first Srochi Auditorium. Somewhere, I think Joan may have seen it. We've got these films of maybe the dedication dinner and some meeting there. All the ladies have hats on. Every one of them.

**JOAN SROCHI:** That's what they used to do.

**SCHOENBERG:** And gloves.

**JOAN SROCHI:** Then when they stopped doing that and picked up on the blue jeans, the whole country went decadent.

**SCHOENBERG:** I was going to say. The other thing they had on was girdles.

**JOAN SROCHI:** Yes.

**SCHOENBERG:** You weren't seen in public without your girdle on.

**JOAN SROCHI:** Right.

**SROCHI:** Yes. The big topic of conversation before the holidays was always how the weather was going to be, because it was before the days of air conditioning. Is it going to be hot?

**SCHOENBERG:** What are you going to wear?

**SROCHI:** Yes. What you are going to wear? They took a lot of pride in what they wore. Most of them still wore hats to the synagogue.

**SCHOENBERG:** By all means.

**SROCHI:** By that time, most of the women either sat upstairs or in the back of the main level at the Washington Street *shul*.

**SCHOENBERG:** Really? They were still sitting separate?

**SROCHI:** They didn't have really integrated seating until sometime in the 1950s.

**SCHOENBERG:** Is this after you moved?

**SROCHI:** At the AA.

**SCHOENBERG:** Was that after you moved to the new building on Peachtree Battle [Avenue]?

**SROCHI:** I think we had integrated seating at the new building. The first services were held on Peachtree Battle in 1958.

**SCHOENBERG:** But you had already integrated by then?

**SROCHI:** Yes. I mean we were already <unintelligible> by then. We were a little more hip by then.

**SCHOENBERG:** I would hope so. So you have honored your mom or your grandmom . . .

**SROCHI:** Yes.

**SCHOENBERG:** It was your grandma.

**SROCHI:** It would have been my maternal . . . I'm sorry, my paternal grandmother.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. So you honored her with . . .

**SROCHI:** We'll say the first Srochi Auditorium.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes, and the current version, which is at Peachtree Battle?

**SROCHI:** At the AA. That was sort of a transition. The Tenth Street Building was sort of a transition building. It was used from 1940, I guess, until they opened the new synagogue in 1958. You're looking at a period of 15, 16, or 17 years. As an aside, Myrtle, whom you knew, taught at the AA. She became a teacher at the AA nursery school, she and Janice

Paradies Shoob. Janice's father was also a past president. I. J. [Isaac J.] Paradies was a past president of AA. Joan actually worked for him at one time.

**JOAN SROCHI:** Yes, sure did. Real nice. He was a nice man. He had a book on his desk that was backwards all the time. I didn't know. It was always upside down and backwards. So every day that I'd do his desk and straighten it, I'd turn it the other way. Finally, he said to me one day, "Are you Jewish?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, don't you know we read from the back of the book." I said, "It never occurred to me."

**SROCHI:** He told you to quit fooling with his book, didn't he?

**JOAN SROCHI:** He sure did. Drove me crazy, but he never said anything for months.

**SCHOENBERG:** That's funny.

**JOAN SROCHI:** I just didn't know.

<End Tape 2, Side 2>

<Begin Tape 3, Side 1>

**SCHOENBERG:** This is Ann Hoffman Schoenberg interviewing Stanley Srochi on March 6, 2002, for the Jewish Oral History Project of Atlanta, co-sponsored by The American Jewish Committee, the Atlanta Jewish Federation, and the National Council of Jewish Women. We are now starting the first side of the third tape. I need to have you talk once more. Unfortunately, we ran out of tape and I was remiss. You need to talk to me again about moving the Srochi Auditorium, finding the property, and talking about the various properties that you looked at, actually, prior to Peachtree Battle.

**SROCHI:** All right. It was sort of in the early to middle 1950s. The synagogue was still located at the corner of Washington and Woodward Avenue. We have an educational building on Tenth Street just east of Piedmont Avenue. I think the synagogue would have been moved anyway. At that time, the interchange for the freeway system was being planned and, apparently, the synagogue was right in the middle of it. I guess it was fortunate from all sides that we needed a new facility. The state needed the property for the freeway system. It all worked out. The membership by this time had largely moved to the north, northeast, [and] to a lesser extent to the northwest, primarily northeast side of town. There was political play as to the location. People naturally wanted it closer to their home, so they might prefer one location as opposed to another location which was a little further away. The synagogue purchased several pieces of property prior to the acquisition of the present location at Northside Drive and

Peachtree Battle, all of which were sold at a modest profit. The most serious purchase was what is now Monroe Drive, where the Piedmont Road exit is, [where] the northbound exit off of I-85 is located. Later, [it] was the site of the Stein Printing Company. In fact, I think the synagogue sold the property to Stein Printing. There was some sort of arrangement there. The Peachtree Battle location had been looked at but supposedly was not available. When it did become available in the middle 1950s, it was acquired pretty rapidly with very little opposition. The first services were held in the new synagogue in 1958. It was, I would say, about a two-year building project. [It] started sometime . . . the site works probably started in 1956 or 1957.

**SCHOENBERG:** How many people does the synagogue accommodate? The main sanctuary?

**SROCHI:** A rough number, in the sanctuary is probably in the low 3,000 range.

**SCHOENBERG:** I knew it was a lot. We talked just briefly about the fact that you had integrated the seating, men and women, prior to 1945 – 1950.

**SROCHI:** Certainly, by the time I was *bar mitzvahed* [in] 1939, the women members . . . my mothers and sisters were required to sit in the so-called balcony, in the upper level. Sometime in the 1940s, they couldn't sit on the main level but in the rear of the main level.

**SCHOENBERG:** Was there a *mechitza*? Was there an actual wall?

**SROCHI:** That, I can't really answer. I would say behind the *bimah*<sup>48</sup> in the Washington Street *shul* was in the middle of the synagogue. It was, I'm sure, in the rear of the *bimah*. I can't tell you exactly what the demarcation line was.

**SCHOENBERG:** You can't remember that anymore?

**SROCHI:** How that was negotiated. That was probably as involved as negotiating with North Korea in the Korean War.

**SCHOENBERG:** You were talking about the fact that everyone wore hats. All the women made a big thing about what they were going to wear to services because there was no air conditioning.

**SROCHI:** That was largely going to be determined by "how is the weather going to be?" because it was long before the days of central air conditioning. Typically, the High Holy Days are in September. It can be pretty warm in this part of the country.

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<sup>48</sup> Hebrew for 'platform.' The *bimah* is a raised structure in the synagogue from which the *Torah* is read and from which prayers are led.

**SCHOENBERG:** Can be pretty warm in any part of the country.

**SROCHI:** It's usually during the World Series.

**SCHOENBERG:** That was the other thing. Did you all go sit in your cars and listen to your car radios?

**SROCHI:** You would either sit in a car or go to one of your grandparents who lived nearby to keep up with the game. The games were all daytime games then.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. I recall that.

**SROCHI:** They were big events, much more so than they are today. The world sort of stopped then.

**SCHOENBERG:** I do want you to tell the origin of the memorial that you've recently created for your own mother at the Zaban Park facility.<sup>49</sup>

**SROCHI:** The background is that I had been involved at the center, of course, at the layman's level since the late 1960s. [I] served on, particularly, the budget committee. [I was] actually was treasurer of the center for several years. It was a great job. There's very little to do. They never let you handle the money, and you didn't even have to sign the checks. It was a good position where you met a lot of great people and a lot of great activity. They had a very prestigious board and used to have tremendous turnouts.

**SCHOENBERG:** How large was the board?

**SROCHI:** I've been on the board for about 30 years since the early 1970s.

**SCHOENBERG:** How large was it?

**SROCHI:** The board?

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. How many people were involved?

**SROCHI:** [That] would come to a typical meeting, I'd say there'd be at least 40-45 people.

**SCHOENBERG:** That's a lot.

**SROCHI:** We would meet, of course, at the Peachtree . . . at the time. The only facility we had was the Peachtree. The later, meetings would be held at Zaban and [Shirley] Blumenthal [Park]<sup>50</sup> facility in Cobb County.

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<sup>49</sup> Zaban Park opened in 1979 and is home of the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta. Erwin Zaban, native Atlantan, philanthropist and community leader (1921-2010) donated money to the Jewish Home, for which the Zaban Tower is named.

<sup>50</sup> The Shirley Blumenthal Park opened in 1989 as part of the Atlanta Jewish Community Center.

**SCHOENBERG:** You said Bernie Howard was instrumental in getting you involved.

**SROCHI:** Yes, Bernie was. I think at that time Bernie was president, around late 1960s. He sort of paved the way. He got me interested, as he did a lot of people. He brought a lot of people into center work. That, again, is typically the way people get involved in various activities. That's how a lot of the, what I call kids, would come on the board and be sort of junior members and later end up as presidents of the center.

**SCHOENBERG:** Sure. That's how it happens. So you decided, as a family, that you wanted to honor your mother.

**SROCHI:** You would have the Capital Funds Campaign here, which were raising funds to be allocated to various Jewish facilities and Jewish organizations. I was involved in that. I had made a pledge to the fund. I had not, at the time, designated any honorarium or anything. This particular program . . . I was approached about the program. It was something I was really interested in because I saw it as a vehicle. [It] is not a one-time shot but an ongoing program that could be expanded, improved, and hopefully it will be. It has very fine leadership. There's a great young lady who is director.

**SCHOENBERG:** What's her name?

**SROCHI:** Suzanne Hurwitz [sp].

**SCHOENBERG:** The name of the project? We haven't named that project yet.

**SROCHI:** It was known as the Children's Museum. They were waiting for somebody, I guess, to fund the program. I'm really surprised it was around as long as it was. I'm happy that it was there long enough.

**SCHOENBERG:** It was available.

**SROCHI:** It was available when I finally made up my mind what I wanted to do. I was interested in it not only to honor my mother, but I saw it as a way to keep alive my mother's family name, the Hirsh name. That's the reason I requested that they use my mother's maiden name in the title of the facility.

**SCHOENBERG:** The project is an interactive museum?

**SROCHI:** It is interactive. You really need to go there to understand it. It's a children's playground in some sense, though that's not really the purpose of it. I'd say children as young as two or three years old . . . I have a two-year-old great-nephew, who was down here last fall and had a wonderful time there. Periodically, they have programs. They have several

programs planned for over the Passover season.

**SCHOENBERG:** Do they have a camping type, brief camping period for children school holidays, for instance, when the kids will be out of school?

**SROCHI:** They tie into holidays. They also do certain programs. I believe some of the Passover programs are going to be done in conjunction with Breman Museum. There's some joint activity. I think they have one program that you can take your choice, whatever is more convenient for you.

**SCHOENBERG:** Go to one or the other?

**SROCHI:** One or the other.

**SCHOENBERG:** Have you been actively involved in the Breman or in Federation generally?

**SROCHI:** Primarily, I guess, as a contributor. At one time, I did do some fundraising. I had the pleasure of going with Bernie Howard on a number of occasions. Bernie would only let me go with him if I kept my mouth shut. Of course, there's nothing Bernie enjoys more than raising money for Jewish organizations.

**SCHOENBERG:** He was a wonderful person. Absolutely terrific. Great guy.

**SROCHI:** I knew Bernie before anybody else knew him, practically, except maybe Joy [Howard], and my sister, and some of the girls.

**SCHOENBERG:** How did you all meet?

**SROCHI:** Some of the girlfriends because he was in the service here at Fort McPherson. I saw all the fun Bernie was having being in the army and I was thinking I was going to be there in a year or two. It couldn't be all that bad. Of course, I didn't get to stay in Atlanta. Bernie eventually ended up in the Philippine Islands at the same time I did.

**SCHOENBERG:** Was he a couple of years older than you?

**SROCHI:** Yes. Bernie was about ten years older than I am.

**SCHOENBERG:** Can you think of anything else that you find or think of that is important, something about some of the people in the community or any other stories that you would like to share? You've got such a fund of associations and knowledge about so many people in this community.

**SROCHI:** Throw a name at me. I probably . . . Tell me somebody you want to know something about. I may know him.

**SCHOENBERG:** Tell me something about what you're up to today. You're doing real estate

stuff, I know. Who you doing it with?

**SROCHI:** I guess I'm a survivor today. I haven't been on TV, but . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** You're not eating bugs are you?

**SROCHI:** I'm at the stage of my life, I guess, I can do some of the things I want to do. [I] don't have too many restrictions.

**SCHOENBERG:** You're lucky enough to have good health.

**SROCHI:** I have a lot of good friends in my era who are still around. I have all these younger people who tend to keep you young [and] more abreast of what is really important and what is really going on. I've got six nephews and nieces. I've got three step-children and seven, soon to be eight, grandchildren. I've got some first cousins left. Many of their children call me Uncle Stanley.

**SCHOENBERG:** What are some of your current projects?

**SROCHI:** I guess most of them at this point are business related. As you get older, you tend to want to take care of some of your personal affairs. You know, we're all going. They say, if they cure one thing, we're all going to die of something. That's sort of a given and to sort of prepare for that. Hopefully make it easier for other people to get along without me. I'm not looking forward to that or leaving any time soon.

**SCHOENBERG:** No, but you're being wise.

**SROCHI:** I'm interested in current affairs. I think I know a lot more about it than the pundits who get paid to pontificate. They say they think I could do better than professionals, but I'm not sure that's . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** Have you ever been involved in politics in any way?

**SROCHI:** No. Not really. I wouldn't hold a public office.

**SCHOENBERG:** What about behind the scenes?

**SROCHI:** Yes, behind the scenes. If you could do it without leaving anything in print, I'd like to do that. I'd do like [William F.] Buckley<sup>51</sup> if I got elected to office. You know, he ran for mayor of New York. They asked him, they said, "Mr. Buckley, what would you do if you get elected?" He said, "The first thing I'd do is resign."

**SCHOENBERG:** I know that you're still involved in real estate. I seem to remember your

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<sup>51</sup> William Frank Buckley, Jr. (1925–2008) was a conservative American writer and political TV personality. He founded the conservative journal *National Review* in 1955.

telling me something about trying to get out of apartment management and that sort of thing?

**SROCHI:** Since I met with you last, we have managed to do that.

**SCHOENBERG:** So you don't have all of that?

**SROCHI:** [We] sold the last of our apartment property. [We're] completely out of the apartment area of the real estate business. In my opinion, that is the most hands-on, time-consuming, labor-intensive . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** It's labor intensive. Sure.

**SROCHI:** Type of . . . not that it hasn't been very good to us and very good to other people. It was just something that we felt we would . . . it's time to. What does the Bible say, there's a time to sow and a time to reap.

**SCHOENBERG:** There's a time for everything. Exactly.

**SROCHI:** It's time. I still enjoy the activity, the interaction, and people that I've met over the years in the business.

**SCHOENBERG:** Who are some of your business associates today? Are they mostly Jewish or not? Or a combination?

**SROCHI:** Sort of a combination. Most of the people that I'm dealing with directly are tenants of various properties. Over the years, I've had Jewish tenants, but I've had a wide array of tenants. I've had Koreans, Chinese, Indians. Not American Indians. I don't think we've had any of those yet.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. Eastern Indians.

**SROCHI:** I mean India Indians.

**SCHOENBERG:** Isn't it interesting how internationalized, how diverse the population of Atlanta is today?

**SROCHI:** Atlanta. It's amazing. It is amazing.

**SCHOENBERG:** I'm sure you've seen it more.

**SROCHI:** Last fall, Joan and I went out to the Asian market. If you've never been there . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** On Buford Highway?

**SROCHI:** You need to go out there. I saw more Japanese out there on a Saturday afternoon than I saw in Tokyo in about the year I was there after World War II.

**SCHOENBERG:** It's pretty amazing, isn't it? Every kind of food under the sun.

**SROCHI:** Things you didn't know existed are out there.

**SCHOENBERG:** Some things you'd just as soon not know about.

**SROCHI:** There's Hispanic. I've had Vietnamese tenants. Cambodian. You name it. I think I've mentioned we've had Hispanics. Plain old rednecks.

**SCHOENBERG:** [A] little bit of everything.

**SROCHI:** Most of them [are] fine people. Particularly the Koreans.

**SCHOENBERG:** They have a real work ethic.

**SROCHI:** I guess the younger generation will change, but they do their level best to honor whatever commitments they make. Some people will sign a lease without even looking at it. You know, they're only good to the . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** To the end of the month?

**SROCHI:** Yes, to the end of the month until they've got to pay next month's rent.

**SCHOENBERG:** Do you see a parallel there between the Jewish immigrants who came, like your family came?

**SROCHI:** Definitely. We had one tenant in a property we owned when it was folded into the Underground Atlanta project. He was a Korean gentleman. In fact, he invited me to go to Seoul, Korea, for the 1988 Olympics. He was an educated man and had a son that went to [The] Lovett School. I've had a South African tenant. He operated a restaurant building we owned downtown. He came here. Went to Cornell [University]. His children, I think, go to Pace [Academy]. [They] go to [The] Westminster [Schools]. There is a definite parallel that they may not want to run a restaurant. These kids may not want to run restaurants or run a clothing store or grocery store.

**SCHOENBERG:** They want to be engineers and architects.

**SROCHI:** They want to be professional people. They want to keep what they think of regular office hours. Of course, I've had a lot of lawyers over the years, a lot of Jewish lawyers and non-Jewish lawyers. [I] went to school with people who became judges.

**SCHOENBERG:** Janice Shoob's husband [Marvin], certainly.

**SROCHI:** I want to talk a little bit more about Boys' High School.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes, tell me.

**SROCHI:** Boys High School was a citywide school. It was before the days of integration. There were basically three or four citywide schools. There were not what you call

today neighborhood or regional schools. This, of course, was a white school. There was Boys' High, and there was Tech High [School]. They were located where the present day Grady High School is. Boys' High was on the Tenth Street side. Tech High was on the Eighth Street side. Boys High was more of a college prep school. A lot of the Tech High students also went to college. I guess Boys' High considered them like a trade school, like maybe the University of Georgia considers Georgia Tech. They call that the North Avenue trade school. Of course, some of them are pretty good trades.

**SCHOENBERG:** Not bad.

**SROCHI:** There was Girls' High [School]. There was a Commercial High [School]. A lot of the young Jewish high school students went to those four schools, to a lesser extent to Tech High than the other three schools. Practically all Jewish girls went to Girls' High. Very few of them went to the prep schools that were available, either Washington Seminary or the Napsonian School, which was sort of a forerunner of Westminster. It was a Presbyterian school. A very large percentage of the students at Boys' High were Jewish. The last year, the school was closed after the 1947 school year. The Boys' High still has an active alumni association. In fact, we're going to have a school-wide reunion, which we have every other year. My own class, the class of 1944, has a reunion every five years. The school-wide reunion will be held this April. Unfortunately, we're all in our 70s now. If you went to Boys' High School, you almost have to be in your 70s.

**SCHOENBERG:** [Do] you still have a good number?

**SROCHI:** I would expect we will have close to 500 people attending that. At my last class reunion, which we had in October, 1999, we had over 100.

**SCHOENBERG:** How many graduated with you? Do you remember?

**SROCHI:** Total?

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. Couple hundred?

**SROCHI:** The whole history of the school?

**SCHOENBERG:** No. I mean your class in 1944.

**SROCHI:** I would say probably around 300.

**SCHOENBERG:** I didn't know how big the classes were.

**SROCHI:** I can check that.

**SCHOENBERG:** Where were you in the class, academically?

**SROCHI:** I wasn't the best, but I probably wasn't the worse either. Actually, I don't think we had class rankings at the time. I was better in the social sciences than I was in the, what I would call, the physical or the technical. I guess I was better . . .

**SCHOENBERG:** You went to [University of] Georgia? Where did you go?

**SROCHI:** No. Right out of high school I went right into the service.

**SCHOENBERG:** And then?

**SROCHI:** When I came back, I went to Emory University. [I] went through the college in about three years. [I] even went in the summer. I think I went every summer except the summer of 1948. The reason I didn't go that summer was because I wanted to be able to listen to the 1948 convention, which was pre-television. The first television station in Atlanta didn't open until September, 1948.

**SCHOENBERG:** That was WSB?

**SROCHI:** In 1948. Anyway, I got an AB [Bachelor's] degree in the class of 1949 at Emory. The following year, I went to law school. I was in the law class of 1952.

**SCHOENBERG:** Did you run into any anti-Semitism at Emory? Because I just heard a story about someone who was in that same era who had some pretty rough experiences with Emory.

**SROCHI:** I didn't personally. The only time I really ran into, what I thought was anti-Semitism . . . I still remember on Oxford Road, maybe six [or] seven years, being called little Jew boy by one of my buddies. I may have told you a friend of mine. I better not name him. He is very prominent. We went over to the old Educational Alliance on Capitol Avenue, and those boys didn't know who the heck we were.

**SCHOENBERG:** That's because you didn't live in the neighborhood.

**SROCHI:** Yes. They followed us down the hall calling us little "Christ childs." The only real anti-Semitism I ran into was at the Jewish Alliance.

**SCHOENBERG:** Was in the Jewish community itself. That's interesting. No. Somebody had just told me about some experiences at Emory.

**SROCHI:** My mother used to say that the guys I was in the service with didn't think I was Jewish because I didn't smoke, drink, or gamble.

**SCHOENBERG:** Was that a sign of Jewishness?

**SROCHI:** That would make me a sign of a stereotype.

**SCHOENBERG:** Stereotypical.

**SROCHI:** What do you call it today?

**SCHOENBERG:** Profiling.

**SROCHI:** Stereotype. Profiling.

**SCHOENBERG:** Profiling, right. I was trying to think what you were referring to.

**SROCHI:** You frisk some 100-year-old little 5'1" blue hair, and you let 6' 9" [Osama] Bin Laden go right through because you've got a directive that says you can't do that [or] you're going to get in trouble.

**SCHOENBERG:** I think maybe we will call it a day. I don't know what we haven't talked about. If there's something we haven't talked about and I think about it, I'll call you.

**SROCHI:** You just call me.

**SCHOENBERG:** Thank you very, very much for participating.

**SROCHI:** Instant recall is a good method because you can get some response, but if you just ask somebody to come up with something out of the blue, it is a little more difficult.

**SCHOENBERG:** Yes. I will review this one and let you know. Thank you again.

<End Tape 3, Side 1>

**INTERVIEW ENDS**