

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

MEMOIRIST: BESSIE ZABAN JONES
INTERVIEWER: DORIS GOLDSTEIN
LOCATION: ATLANTA, GEORGIA
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INTERVIEW BEGINS

<Begin Tape 1, Side 1>

GOLDSTEIN: This is Doris Goldstein. It is August 14. I'm speaking with Bessie Zaban Jones.

JONES: Actually, it's the 15th.

GOLDSTEIN: It is August 15. Excuse me. [Do] you want to tell me first about your parents, when they came here, what their names were?

JONES: My father came with my oldest brother in 1895.

GOLDSTEIN: From where?

JONES: From Austria.

GOLDSTEIN: Do you know where?

JONES: It was a village named Drohobycz [now part of Ukraine]. It was the part of Austria that had been taken away from Poland in the First Partition¹ in the eighteenth century. Though it was part of the Austrian Empire, substantially, it was Polish in spirit.

GOLDSTEIN: What language did they speak?

JONES: I suppose they spoke Yiddish, which everybody did. It was another village. There were about 18,000 people in it at the time.

GOLDSTEIN: How many Jews?

¹ The First Partition of Poland took place in 1772 as the first of three partitions that progressively ended the existence of the state of Poland by 1795. Growth in the Russian Empire's power was the primary motive behind this first partition. The area around Lodz was part of the Russian Empire until Poland regained its independence in 1918.

JONES: I should know that because in the Baedeker² of the period, which I studied, Baedeker was anti-Semitic. He put down the numbers of Jews wherever he went. I don't remember the exact number, but it must have been enough so that he called attention to it. He would warn travelers to stay away from the Jews because they would pester them and make them want to buy things and do things like that. My father came several years after my uncles.

GOLDSTEIN: How old was your father when he came?

JONES: He was 37.

GOLDSTEIN: So he was a grown man.

JONES: My brother . . . the passage record, which I have, said my brother was 9. I think he was older than that. He was probably 11.

GOLDSTEIN: Where was your mother from?

JONES: She was the same place.

GOLDSTEIN: What was her name?

JONES: Her name was Anna.

GOLDSTEIN: Anna what?

JONES: Springer. Her brothers had come here earlier. Three of them. They came around 1892, I think, because they appeared in the Atlanta Directory.

GOLDSTEIN: They came directly to Atlanta?

JONES: They came directly to Atlanta.

GOLDSTEIN: Do you know why?

JONES: No, I don't. I think either because one of the agencies may have suggested getting away from the East and crowded ghetto areas or else they may have known somebody who came here first. I don't know.

GOLDSTEIN: What did your father do in Austria?

JONES: He lived off the by-products of the oil field. The Standard Oil movement was in Europe at that time. It probably disrupted everybody's livelihood that depended on it. I don't know whether he peddled oil or some by-product, paraffin or naphtha. I don't know. The point is that we didn't ask questions about it so we don't know very much. What I have learned, I've

² Karl Baedeker (1837-1911) was a German publisher who issued a series of guidebooks for travelers. The guides, often referred to simply as "Baedekers," were founded in 1832. While his books are prized for accuracy in documenting travel sites, they contain Orientalist language.

had to get from other sources.

GOLDSTEIN: What did he do when he came to Atlanta?

JONES: He went into the furniture business eventually. He probably worked with my uncles in the beginning. As far as I know, he did not peddle.

GOLDSTEIN: Did your uncles come with him?

JONES: No. They came earlier.

GOLDSTEIN: So they were already here?

JONES: They were already here.

GOLDSTEIN: So that's why he came to Atlanta?

JONES: Yes.

GOLDSTEIN: What were their names?

JONES: Aaron Springer was the oldest. He was my mother's oldest brother. Then there was I. Springer,³ the youngest brother. There was a middle one that the directory called William, but it wasn't. It was Wolf. He ultimately went to Memphis [Tennessee]. Aaron and I. stayed here. Aaron stayed in the furniture business and, apparently, was not terribly successful. I have been going through the Atlanta directories from 1892 on. I got up through 1913. I found a number of changes of address for him, so that I gather he was either not successful or he was very restless.⁴ I don't know.

GOLDSTEIN: Where were some of the streets that he lived on? Do you remember?

JONES: First one, of course, is Decatur Street where all the Jews settled. He lived on Pryor Street. He lived on Whitehall Street. The last address that I remember of his was Whitehall, but I'm not sure that was the last address.

GOLDSTEIN: Springer is not what you would call a Jewish name.

JONES: No, it isn't.

GOLDSTEIN: Had it been changed?

JONES: My father's name had a 'C' in front of it. C-Z-A-B-A-N. That is like Czechoslovakia. I tried to trace that name. I found two names similar to it. One actually was near Prague, though, I don't think there was any connection there. The other one was a

³ Possibly Isadore Springer. Greenwood Cemetery records in Atlanta, Georgia, show an Isadore Springer (1864-1930).

⁴ Oakland Cemetery records in Atlanta, Georgia, show Aaron Harry Springer (1856-1913).

Hungarian name. Actually, one of my father's brothers did go to Hungary. So I don't really know the origin. After he had been here a couple of years, the 'C' was dropped. It became Z-A-B-A-N.

GOLDSTEIN: And he was David?

JONES: Zaban. Yes. My brother's name was Samuel. My mother's name was Ann.

GOLDSTEIN: When your father came, the family consisted of . . .

JONES: He just came with my one brother. Then he had to get enough money to send for her. He landed in Boston [Massachusetts] on Christmas Eve of 1895. As far as I know, he came directly to Atlanta without lingering. I hunted up the day. Christmas day was on a Wednesday in that year. He arrived on a Tuesday and probably came directly to Atlanta, but I don't know.

GOLDSTEIN: How long was it before he sent for your mother?

JONES: I've tried to trace her passage. She landed in Baltimore [Maryland], not Boston. Judging from my birth, which is 1898, and I'm the first child born here in this country, she arrived either in late 1897 or early in 1898. I haven't been able to trace her passage. A man in Baltimore, who did that kind of thing, I wrote to some years ago. He did try to trace almost every ship that came in at that period. He couldn't find her name on it. There are still possibilities, but I don't know that I'll hunt it up anymore.

GOLDSTEIN: Who else was born in Atlanta besides yourself? After yourself?

JONES: My younger brother Harry. Just us two.

GOLDSTEIN: So there was an older brother, your oldest brother.

JONES: My oldest brother.

GOLDSTEIN: What was his name?

JONES: Samuel. There were four children left and one on the way when my father left. The one who was on the way was born in 1896.

GOLDSTEIN: You were born in 1898. So one of your siblings was born in Europe after your father had already left.

JONES: That's right.

GOLDSTEIN: What is his name?

JONES: Her name was Esther.

GOLDSTEIN: Oh, it was a girl.

JONES: Yes.

GOLDSTEIN: Did she come also?

JONES: She came when my mother came. She was about a year old, a year and a half. That's why I figured that my mother came either late in 1897 or early in 1898. I'm just judging. I assume she began to get pregnant almost when she came over.

GOLDSTEIN: Where was your father living then in Atlanta?

JONES: He was in business on Decatur Street with my uncles. After a few years, two or three years, he moved to Auburn Avenue. All the family was here then, of course. After that, we moved to Courtland Street. After that, to Capitol Avenue. That is the last street that I lived on.

GOLDSTEIN: What kind of housing was it on Capitol Avenue? Was it a single house?

JONES: A single house. It was a very handsome house. It had been built by a man named Duncan who was in the grain business. It was quite beautifully built. Strangely modern in architecture. A center room with other rooms opening out on it. As he was in the furniture business, it was extremely well furnished. He also had a great passion for improving things, so that wherever we went, there were always interesting alterations. I don't remember exactly what he did. I do remember we put in a furnace, which it didn't have, and probably modernized some bathrooms or something. I really don't remember.

GOLDSTEIN: Where on Capitol Avenue was it?

JONES: It was 162.

GOLDSTEIN: Where would that be now?

JONES: It would have been . . . it's destroyed now. It was destroyed when the stadium⁵ was built.

GOLDSTEIN: The expressway and the stadium.

JONES: Yes.

GOLDSTEIN: In the 1950s. Late 1950s.

⁵ 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.

JONES: It was a very handsome house. It had, you know for that time, two bathrooms. One downstairs. One upstairs. Four bedrooms.

GOLDSTEIN: Was it a wooden house?

JONES: It was wooden with a slate roof. Had a lovely front yard. Because this man had been in the grain business, it had a stable. That's where my father kept the horses that delivered the furniture.

GOLDSTEIN: I've seen a bill. I think Laura [Zaban] Dinerman has a bill that says "D. Zaban & Sons Moving." Did he also do moving do you think?

JONES: No. That was a different one. That was my younger brother who went into the storage and moving business. That was what she showed. That storage truck was a moving truck. That had nothing to do with the business. My father sold his business in 1920.

GOLDSTEIN: What did he do then?

JONES: He retired, and he died in 1921.

GOLDSTEIN: How old was he when he died?

JONES: He was 62.

GOLDSTEIN: He was rather young by our standards.

JONES: Yes. My mother outlived him. She died at 68.

GOLDSTEIN: Not too much longer.

JONES: No.

GOLDSTEIN: Where is he buried?

JONES: In Oakland Cemetery.⁶

GOLDSTEIN: And your mother also?

JONES: She is.

GOLDSTEIN: Where did you go to school?

JONES: I went to school at Ivy Street School because we lived on that area. Courtland Street. Then [I went] to Crew Street School when we moved to Capitol Avenue. After that, I went to the Girls High School.

GOLDSTEIN: Do you remember other Jewish children at Ivy Street School?

⁶ Oakland Cemetery, founded in 1850, is located less than a mile from the heart of downtown Atlanta. Oakland is a Victorian garden cemetery and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The cemetery is the final resting place for Margaret Mitchell and many of Atlanta's most notable citizens.

JONES: There weren't many Jews in that school because it was not a Jewish neighborhood. When we moved on Courtland Street, there were no Jews on the street. It was a kind of lower middle class street. There was a boarding house on it and very modest cottages. Two or three brick houses on the other side of the street, so that it might have been better at one time. But there were no Jews on the street at that time.

GOLDSTEIN: But when you moved to Capitol Avenue . . .

JONES: When we moved away, there were still no Jews on that street.

GOLDSTEIN: What about on Capitol Avenue?

JONES: On Capitol Avenue, there were no Jews on the street when we moved on it. Later, Capitol Avenue became a Jewish Street.

GOLDSTEIN: What about the Crew Street School. I know that . . .

JONES: Crew Street. I don't remember, particularly, any Jewish children.

GOLDSTEIN: You remember a Pazol? What is her first name? Sarah Pazol. She went to Crew Street School. She may be a little bit younger than you are.

JONES: Everybody is younger than I am.

GOLDSTEIN: But I remember her telling me that she went to Crew Street School.

JONES: I was in the fifth grade when we moved there. I hated the transfer. Ivy Street School had all the kids from the north side, who were . . . you know, there were no private schools.

GOLDSTEIN: No.

JONES: We always thought private schools were for the dummies. At Ivy Street, our principal was Mrs. [Frances] Whiteside, who was the sister of Hoke Smith,⁷ the senator. I remember that I used to add very rapidly. I remember that she took me up to the eighth grade to compare my adding with the older pupils. Of course I was a runt, and they all laughed at me when I came into the room. But I beat them adding.

GOLDSTEIN: Do you remember any antisemitism?

JONES: No, I don't. My teachers were extremely nice to me because I was an avid learner and got acquainted with them on the outside. Mabel Mitchell. She was a cousin of

⁷ Michael Hoke Smith (1855-1931) was a politician and newspaper owner who served as United States Secretary of the Interior (1893-1896), 58th Governor of Georgia (1907-1909, 1911), and a United States Senator (1911-1920) from Georgia.

Margaret Mitchell. Her father was my father's lawyer. His name was Archie, I think. At least she had a brother named Archie. Mabel Mitchell became a friend of mine outside the school.

GOLDSTEIN: Did you stay home, for instance, for Jewish holidays?

JONES: Oh Lord, yes. A new rabbi came to town somewhere around 1907. I can't figure out the date. He apparently was so influential. His name was [Joseph] Levin.⁸ I detested him because he made my father more Orthodox than he had ever been. He was Orthodox, but he became very rigid, and he made our lives miserable. We had to take two days out each time. Of course, that was very hard on us at school.

GOLDSTEIN: Did you have any problems with the teachers for doing that?

JONES: No, except . . . in the class, there was a girl named Rosalyn Herman [sp].

GOLDSTEIN: Rosalyn what?

JONES: Herman, who was Reform Jewish. She would take but one day. On the second day, this evangelical teacher would give a lecture to all the kids saying, "Who is it that is not saved?" We didn't hear that, but Rosalyn reported it. We didn't have the nerve to report that to the authorities. It would have been a terrible thing if they had known of it, trying to indicate that the Jewish kids were not saved.

GOLDSTEIN: You and Rosalyn were the only Jewish kids in the school?

JONES: I don't remember any others. There must have been some.

GOLDSTEIN: What about when you went to Crew Street? Were there any other Jewish children?

JONES: This was Crew Street.

<End Tape 1, Side 1>

<Begin Tape 1, Side 2>

JONES: This woman's name was Mary Zachary [sp]. She was a rigid evangelist type but had this outward very sweet manner. Everybody thought she was lovely, but I remember she overheard me mention *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.⁹ She said, "Hush. We don't mention the name of that

⁸ Joseph M. Levin was born in Colelishok, Russia and was ordained as a rabbi at the age of 18. Rabbi Levin came to Atlanta in 1907 as spiritual leader at the Ahavath Achim Congregation. He was known as an emotional orator. He is recognized as an early leader of the Zionist movement in Atlanta.

⁹ *Uncle Tom's Cabin* originally appeared in serialized form in the antislavery newspaper *The National Era* in 1851 and was then published in book form in two volumes in 1852. It sold 300,000 copies in the first year and was translated into 37 languages. Written as an activist text denouncing the institution of American slavery in pre-Civil

book around here."

GOLDSTEIN: Had you read the book?

JONES: I had read it, but having no knowledge of how people felt about *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the South, I wouldn't have known that I shouldn't have read it. I read anything I could get my hands on.

GOLDSTEIN: Did you have any contacts with the blacks since we're talking about *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?

JONES: We always had black servants, though, we were poor. I mean, [we] didn't have much money, but we always had a black help. We had marvelous relations with them. In the notes I took for a book I was going to write, I took thousands of notes on Negroes. I don't . . . I could now use them differently, but I took them at a time when they were terribly mistreated. I remember the race riot of 1906.¹⁰ That's a very vivid memory.

GOLDSTEIN: What happened?

JONES: We were still living on Courtland Street then. It was a political campaign. It had nothing to do with the blacks. The two men that were running against each other were both . . . one was Hoke Smith. The other one was Clark Howell.¹¹ They were running for governorship. The only way they could get votes was to be anti-black, so every day there was a rape in the paper by some black man. It was never confirmed. The rednecks got awfully excited, and they began to riot. It was a very famous riot lasting three days. There is a thesis written about it at Emory [University]. A graduate student did a doctorate thesis on it. There is some information about it now, but in all the histories of Atlanta, it's overlooked somewhat. They've never dealt with it as it should have been.

GOLDSTEIN: Did you hear comments in the Jewish community about the riot?

War South, it was a controversial and revolutionary novel for the nineteenth century. It remains a controversial text that stands out in the struggle for social justice in the United States. While some scholars admire the book for its significant social vision and artistry, others argue the book's racism promotes misperceptions.

¹⁰ The Atlanta race riot of 1906 was a race riot that took place in Atlanta, lasting from September 22 to September 24. A mob surged through black Atlanta neighborhoods destroying businesses and assaulting hundreds of black men. The violence became so dangerous that the state militia was called in to take control of the city. The gubernatorial campaign between Hoke Smith and Clark Howell advocated disenfranchisement of all black voters in their respective newspapers, which fueled the riot.

¹¹ Clark Howell (1863-1936) was president and editor of the Atlanta Constitution and a director of the Associated Press. He served a 1-year term as a Fulton County Board Commissioner, member of Georgia House of Representatives (1886-1892) and Georgia State Senator (1900 -1904). Ancestors of Clark Howell were his father Evan Park Howell (1839-1905) and grandfather Judge Clark Howell (1811-1882).

JONES: No, but I remember it because my father's store used to keep open on Saturday night. They would come home on the streetcar. My brother lived with us. He was not married then. Yes, he was married, but he was still living with us for a year. We were awfully worried about their safety. We heard rioting on the street. The next day, because our house is built with a stone wall and quite away from the street, on our wood steps there was blood where some black had taken refuge against the mob. We heard the mob Saturday night. It lasted three days. Then a citizen's committee in Atlanta started up and determined that they would never have this happen again, and it never has. That is why Atlanta is a better place for Negroes and blacks than almost any other city.

GOLDSTEIN: We have been very blessed here with race relations, even at the height of it in the 1960s.

JONES: There has been some recurrence but nothing like that, and nothing like that stuff in Los Angeles [California] and Detroit [Michigan].

GOLDSTEIN: So you don't remember any involvement from the Jewish community in the riots?

JONES: No, I don't. This was something that we . . . that the whole community was disturbed by. I don't remember the subsequent two days. I just remember that Saturday night.

GOLDSTEIN: What finally quelled it?

JONES: The citizens got together and they stopped it, but the history of that race riot is extremely interesting and ought to be looked into by your files, really.

GOLDSTEIN: That's interesting.

JONES: By people who might remember it. There is historical material on it. The historical society, I'm sure, has it and that thesis at Emory.

GOLDSTEIN: Yes, by a student. When you lived in the other houses before you went to Capitol Avenue, were there blacks adjacent to where you lived?

JONES: No, not on the street. But around on Houston Street, Walter White's¹² family lived. You know about Walter White?

GOLDSTEIN: No.

¹² Walter Francis White (1893-1955) was an African-American civil rights activist who led the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) for almost a quarter of a century, 1931-1955, after starting with the organization as an investigator in 1918.

JONES: He was . . . they were practically albinos. They were very blond blacks. The father was a postman. There were several girls in the family. It was around the corner from Courtland Street. Walter White was a very famous black leader. We called them Negroes, of course, in those days. He was . . . I don't know whether he was the head of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People], one of the organizations for Negroes. He became a very famous leader. He will be in all the history books and in *Who's Who* and so on. He married a white woman.

GOLDSTEIN: That was against the law in Georgia then.

JONES: He was living in New York then. All those girls went to school. At that time, there were no high schools for blacks in Atlanta. They probably went to Spelman [College].¹³ Some of the white family girls went to college and became quite well known on their own.

GOLDSTEIN: Did you have any . . .

JONES: Very interesting family. No, we had no connection. I remember the father, who was a postman. I remember seeing those girls and their long albino blond hair sitting on their front porch.

GOLDSTEIN: You wouldn't have played with them?

JONES: No. They wouldn't have played with us.

GOLDSTEIN: I know that the Jewish community and the black community in those early years lived side by side, or back to back.

JONES: There certainly were on Decatur Street. The trade was black. They sold to blacks on Decatur Street.

GOLDSTEIN: What about in your father's store? Was his clientele mainly black?

JONES: He was at 158. I took all that from the directories. I've got all those things down, but I don't have them in front of me. Then he moved to Mitchell Street very early to get away from that neighborhood.

GOLDSTEIN: So was his clientele, even on Mitchell Street, mainly black?

JONES: Then he went into the furniture business. First, it was second hand. Then he announced it was only going to be new. It was obviously an installment business. You must

¹³ Spelman College is a historically black four year liberal arts college for women located in Atlanta, Georgia, founded in 1881.

remember that Atlanta, which had a big exposition in 1895, attracted many new people. Housing was developing. Many new people were furnishing housing. It was a very good time to be in the furniture

GOLDSTEIN: Was he fairly successful?

JONES: He was quite successful.

GOLDSTEIN: Would you say that you were middle upper class for the time?

JONES: We lived, what I would call, very respectably. We had a colored servant. We always . . . not a cook, but usually a maid of all work. Never without that, no matter what our income was. The relations with them were, I think, really superb. We had one very light colored man named Charlie Tyler [sp], who said, "My name's not Tyler, my name is Zaban." We adored him. He was the most skillful craftsman, furniture craftsman. He looked after the polishing and the refinishing of furniture. He was with us a very long time.

GOLDSTEIN: He worked in the store?

JONES: Yes. We had colored drivers for the delivery. We had one marvelous colored woman who had a magnificent voice. She used to sing. I took down . . . at the time of the *Titanic*,¹⁴ she used to sing a ballad about the *Titanic*. There was a New York man who came down and was so entranced by that, he made her sing it. I remembered it. So that later when I met Carl Sandburg,¹⁵ I sang it for him, and he put it in his song bag.

GOLDSTEIN: Is that right? You say that your family was Orthodox.

JONES: Yes.

GOLDSTEIN: Where did they get their kosher¹⁶ meat? Do you know?

JONES: I don't remember. I think a man used to call up . . . the butcher. He would call up and say, "Hello. Butcher." Then my mother would order on the telephone.

¹⁴ RMS *Titanic* was a British passenger liner that sank in the North Atlantic Ocean in the early morning of April 15, 1912, after it collided with an iceberg.

¹⁵ Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) was an American poet, writer, and editor who won three Pulitzer Prizes, two for his poetry and one for his biography of Abraham Lincoln. He was widely regarded as a major figure in contemporary literature.

¹⁶ 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.

GOLDSTEIN: She ordered her meat on the telephone?

JONES: Yes. I remember the bakery used to . . . I think the name was Taylor, the bakery. We used to get their rye and pumpernickel bread.

GOLDSTEIN: Where was it located, the bakery? Do you remember?

JONES: I don't remember. Though the house was Orthodox and we observed Passover¹⁷ with changes of dishes and all that, as all of us got older, the Orthodox service was just not adequate. I began to go to The Temple.¹⁸

GOLDSTEIN: Your family belonged to the AA [Ahavath Achim]?¹⁹

JONES: Yes.

GOLDSTEIN: Your father was the president?

JONES: He became a president.

GOLDSTEIN: Do you know what year it would have been?

JONES: On his picture, it says date uncertain. I'm dating it from the time that that rabbi must have come. As I told you, my father became more Orthodox then. I say more Orthodox because in the beginning, I think, he may have gone to his store on Saturday. After that, he didn't. My brothers did, but he didn't.

GOLDSTEIN: The store was open even though he wasn't there.

¹⁷ Hebrew: *Pesach*. The anniversary of Israel's liberation from Egyptian bondage. The holiday lasts for eight days. Unleavened bread, *matzah*, is eaten in memory of the unleavened bread prepared by the Israelite during their hasty flight from Egypt, when they had not time to wait for the dough to rise. On the first two nights of Passover, the *seder*, the central event of the holiday is celebrated. The *seder* service is one of the most colorful and joyous occasions in Jewish life. In addition to eating *matzah* during the *seder*, Jews are prohibited from eating leavened bread during the entire week of Passover. In addition, Jews are also supposed to avoid foods made with wheat, barley, rye, spelt or oats unless those foods are labeled '*kosher* for Passover.' Jews traditionally have separate dishes for Passover.

¹⁸ 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 Places. The Reform congregation now totals approximately 1,500 families (2015).

¹⁹ 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 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).

JONES: Yes. That's correct.

GOLDSTEIN: What about on the holidays? Was the store open?

JONES: On *Yom Kippur*²⁰ or *Rosh Ha-Shanah*,²¹ it was probably closed. I'm sure it would have been.

GOLDSTEIN: You went to the AA on . . .

JONES: In the early days, when he was still . . . I remember he had a pew not very far from the *bimah*.²² When I was very young, on the holiday, I would just go and sit with him. All the men around frowned to see a girl on the first floor because all the women, of course, were up above.

GOLDSTEIN: This was the Gilmer Street *shul*?²³

JONES: That's right.

GOLDSTEIN: On the corner of Piedmont and Gilmer?

JONES: That's right. I remember that.

GOLDSTEIN: You remember it?

JONES: Yes.

GOLDSTEIN: It wasn't very large, was it?

JONES: I suppose for the size of the congregation, it was adequate. I don't know. It was not a very good building. It didn't have any kind of social quarters, at all. No place to gather. I remember that on *Yom Kippur*, my mother used to burn one of those long candles that would last 24 hours. To us, it was very solemn. The children weren't supposed to have anything to do with it that day. We didn't have to atone for anything.

GOLDSTEIN: No. But didn't you go to the synagogue?

²⁰ 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).

²¹ *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 before the sealing of the books on *Yom Kippur* may revoke these decisions.

²² Hebrew for 'platform.' The *bimah* is a raised structure in the synagogue from which the *Torah* is read and from which prayers are led.

²³ *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.

JONES: No, on that day we didn't.

GOLDSTEIN: You stayed home with the maid?

JONES: I remember on one of those, I looked after my little nieces, who were small children. Their parents would go to service, and they needed a sitter.

GOLDSTEIN: What about on *Sukkot*?²⁴ Did your family build a *sukkah*?²⁵ Do you remember?

JONES: He may have. I don't know.

GOLDSTEIN: What do you remember about the rabbi? You say he was a fanatic?

JONES: He was supposed to be a learned one, but I remember his wife looked like one of those downtrodden, terribly neglected women with too many babies every year. I can remember seeing him walk down the street with her behind him, as if she were not fit to walk with him. That always made me think . . . I always regarded that as a sign of female inferiority.

GOLDSTEIN: He wasn't here too long, was he?

JONES: No. There were some . . . I think he was here until 1915, so the dates were. There was some row. I don't know what it was.

GOLDSTEIN: What do you remember about the service in the synagogue?

JONES: It was like a lot of those where everybody prayed at his own pace and noisy.

GOLDSTEIN: And hot?

JONES: I don't remember too much about that. I don't remember many times when I went. I just . . . I do remember that time that all the men frowned when they saw a little girl sitting with her father. I didn't stay very long, I guess. I don't know. But my father had me taught Hebrew.

GOLDSTEIN: Who taught you Hebrew?

JONES: There was a man named Rockbeil [sp]. I don't remember his first name. He was very learned. He was not an Atlantan to begin with. He used to come to the house. My

²⁴ One of the Harvest Festivals. It is seven days long and comes after the ingathering of the yearly harvest. It celebrates G-d's bounty in nature and G-d's protection, symbolized by the fragile booths in which the Israelites dwelt in the wilderness. During *Sukkot* Jews eat and live in such booths, which gives the festival its name and character.

²⁵ During *Sukkot*, Jews transfer their living quarters from the house to a *sukkah*, which is a makeshift booth whose roof is of branches or vegetation thin enough to let the rain in. People eat in the *sukkah* and many pious Jews sleep there. The *sukkah* is meant to remind Jews of the booths in which their ancestors dwelt when they wandered in the wilderness during the Exodus.

father wouldn't send me to Hebrew School.

GOLDSTEIN: What about your brothers?

JONES: They were probably all *bar mitzvahed*,²⁶ but I don't know.

GOLDSTEIN: They were older. You don't remember?

JONES: No. I don't know how that was done.

GOLDSTEIN: If your older brother was 11 when he came . . .

JONES: My niece, his daughter, says he told her that he was *bar mitzvahed* before he came.

GOLDSTEIN: At 11?

JONES: If so, they did it before he was 13.

GOLDSTEIN: I guess anything is possible.

JONES: I cannot reconcile the dates that I think I know. He died when he was 64 in . . . I'd have to check the date. But he was 11 in 1895. I'm certain because he couldn't have been 9, judging by the other dates. He was married in . . .

<End Tape 1, Side 2>

<Begin Tape 2, Side 1>

JONES: They were probably neighbors.

GOLDSTEIN: Kaplan with a 'C' or a 'K'?

JONES: 'K.' Her father was in the grocery business. She had a sister named Eva and a brother named Ralph.

GOLDSTEIN: Is that family still here?

JONES: I don't know.

GOLDSTEIN: You said they lived with you for a year or so.

JONES: Yes. They had their first child when they were living with us. That's my niece, whose old name is also Bessie.

GOLDSTEIN: Is she still living?

JONES: Yes, she's still living. She's 80 . . . She was born in 19 . . . She's only a few

²⁶ 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.

years younger than I am. She's 83 or 84.

GOLDSTEIN: Where does she live?

JONES: She lives in Chicago [Illinois].

GOLDSTEIN: She doesn't live in Atlanta anymore?

JONES: No. She moved. My brother and his family moved away from Atlanta and moved to Chicago. The daughters went to universities in the Midwest. Bessie went up to Chicago when I was there. I was a senior when she was a freshman. My other niece went to Wisconsin and transferred to Chicago. The other niece went to Wisconsin.

GOLDSTEIN: What about children of your other siblings?

JONES: My brother, Joel, had two children. He married a woman named Sadie Potsdamer [sp]. They were German Jews from Potsdam [Germany].

GOLDSTEIN: Here in Atlanta?

JONES: Yes. They were not originally from Atlanta. He had two children. Those two children are still alive. The daughter . . . wait a minute . . . the daughter is Evelyn Bedson [sp] She lives in Richmond [Virginia].

GOLDSTEIN: Do any of them live here in Atlanta now?

JONES: No. The son is called . . . he also lives in Richmond. He never married. Evelyn has two children. One is a lawyer whose office is in Maryland. She lives in Maryland. The other daughter lives in Washington.

GOLDSTEIN: Do you remember anything of relations between the German Jews at The Temple and . . .

JONES: I do. I remember it vividly because it was very sharply divided. I seem to bridge it in some ways, because one of my best friends is a girl named Claire Gershon, whose father was George Gershon. I used to go over and spend nights with her and so on. We were very good friends.

GOLDSTEIN: Where did she live?

JONES: She lived on Fourteenth Street. She was in my school class at Ivy Street School. I used to spend nights with her. I remember, also, she was in high school when I was there. Girls High School. She married a man named Fox. I think his name was Bert Fox. That was after I left Atlanta. I remember that I used to . . . when I was eating at the Gershon table,

Mr. Gershon would say, "You can't have butter because your father doesn't allow you to have it."

GOLDSTEIN: Because you were eating meat?

JONES: Yes.

GOLDSTEIN: Do you ever remember hearing discussions at your house or at this house about the relationships between the . . .

JONES: My oldest brother also bridged it. He was very influential in the Montefiore legal society. He had relations with Dr. [Rabbi David] Marx²⁷ and that group, but he never went to The Temple.

GOLDSTEIN: Did you ever go to The Temple?

JONES: Yes. I began to go to The Temple.

GOLDSTEIN: I mean when you were young, with your friend?

JONES: I was in high school when I went to The Temple.

GOLDSTEIN: What did your father say about . . .

JONES: They didn't mind.

GOLDSTEIN: You must remember something about the beginnings of the [Jewish Educational] Alliance.²⁸

JONES: I remember when it was built.

GOLDSTEIN: Because it was on Capitol Avenue?

JONES: Yes. I remember when it was built. I never used it much, but I do remember that my brother's club, which was the Don't Worry Club,²⁹ used to meet there. The director of it was a man named Leonard Grossman. You know, he was doing slumming, really, with these boys from across the tracks.

GOLDSTEIN: Did you consider yourself living across the tracks?

²⁷ Rabbi David Marx (1872-1962) was a long-time rabbi at The Temple in Atlanta, Georgia. He led the move toward Reform Judaism practices. He served as rabbi from 1895 to 1946. When he retired, Rabbi Jacob Rothschild took the pulpit that Rabbi Marx had held for more than half a century.

²⁸ The Jewish Educational Alliance operated from 1910 to 1948 on the site where the 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 1940's, 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.'

²⁹ The Don't Worry Club was founded in 1913. It was created by Eastern European Jews who were excluded from German-Jewish and gentile social clubs.

JONES: I think in a way, yes, I suppose. I'm sure the German Jews did.

GOLDSTEIN: Your friend on Fourteenth Street, what kind house did she live in? Fourteenth and what [street]? Do you remember?

JONES: It was probably not very far from Peachtree Street. I don't know. It was very nice. Mr. Gershon, by that time, was a very successful businessman.

GOLDSTEIN: What did he do?

JONES: I suppose it was wholesale dry goods or something. I never knew. I remember him distinctly. He had had a stroke. He had a kind of face that showed that he'd had a stroke. He had a very handsome son named Harry, whose wife, Rebecca, became a very active woman in American . . . all kinds of Atlanta social affairs.

GOLDSTEIN: Reb Gershon?³⁰

JONES: Rebecca Mathis Gershon.

GOLDSTEIN: Yes.

JONES: That was Harry's wife.

GOLDSTEIN: I remember meeting her.

JONES: I think she came from Tennessee.

GOLDSTEIN: I don't remember, but I remember her.

JONES: She became very well known. In the history that Mr. [Kenneth] Stein³¹ has written, he emphasizes antisemitism and says that the [Leo] Frank³² case did not change much, but it did.

GOLDSTEIN: What do you remember?

³⁰ Rebecca Mathis Gershon (known as 'Reb') (1889-1997) was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Her grandparents came from Germany. On a visit to Atlanta she met and later married Harry Gershon. Rebecca Mathis Gershon was involved in the life of the Jewish community of Atlanta including the National Council of Jewish Women, the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta, *Hadassah*, as well as in the Civil Rights Movement.

³¹ Kenneth Stein (1946-), author of *A History of the Ahavath Achim Congregation, 1887-1977*, published in 1978.

³² Leo Frank (1884-1915) was a Jewish factory superintendent in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1913, he was accused of raping and murdering one of his employees, a 13-year-old girl named Mary Phagan, whose body was found on the premises of the National Pencil Company. Frank was arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced to death for her murder. The trial was the catalyst for a great outburst of antisemitism led by the populist Tom Watson and the center of powerful class and political interests. Frank was sent to Milledgeville State Penitentiary to await his execution. Governor John M. Slaton, believing there had been a miscarriage of justice, commuted Frank's sentence to life in prison. This enraged a group of men who styled themselves the "Knights of Mary Phagan." They drove to the prison, kidnapped Frank from his cell and drove him to Marietta, Georgia where they lynched him. Many years later, the murderer was revealed to be Jim Conley, who had lied in the trial, pinning it on Frank instead. Frank was pardoned on March 11, 1986, although they stopped short of exonerating him.

JONES: I remember distinctly . . .

GOLDSTEIN: What do you remember about the Frank case?

JONES: I remember it very well. Curiously enough, this New Yorker that I told you about, who wanted this black woman to sing, was a man named E.B. Goodman [sp]. He came from New York. What brought him down here, I don't know. My father had a reputation of taking in strangers. Anytime there was a man who came to town that didn't know where to go or whom to see, they'd send him to my father. I don't know why. This man turned up at our house, and he got interested in my older sister. But he also got interested in the Frank case.

GOLDSTEIN: This was sometime after the Frank case?

JONES: This was 1912-1913. It was early on. We were living on Capitol Avenue. We moved there in 1911, so I know it was about then. He got interested in the legal aspects of this case, and he actually took me to the jail to see Leo Frank.

GOLDSTEIN: Had you ever heard of Leo Frank before?

JONES: Not, except in the case.

GOLDSTEIN: I mean before it all this.

JONES: They were German Jews. I had no relation with them. Her name was [Lucille] Selig.³³ And he took me there. Why he did it, I don't know. This man was a writer and a lawyer. He had been a lawyer. He told me later that he had presented evidence to Governor [John] Slaton³⁴ that had something to do with the . . .

GOLDSTEIN: The pardon?

JONES: Not the pardon. The . . .

GOLDSTEIN: He commuted his sentence.

JONES: I remember when that happened and the riots that were created.

GOLDSTEIN: You remember that?

JONES: Yes.

GOLDSTEIN: Was it anywhere in your neighborhood?

³³ Lucille Selig Frank (1888-1957) was Leo Frank's wife, an Atlanta native.

³⁴ John Marshall Slaton, or Jack Slaton, (1866-1955) served two non-consecutive terms as the Sixtieth Governor of Georgia. His political career was ended in 1915 after he commuted the death penalty sentence of Atlanta factory boss Leo Frank, who had been convicted for the murder of a teenage girl employee. Because of Slaton's law firm partnership with Frank's defense counsel, claims were made that Slaton's involvement raised a conflict of interest. Soon after Slaton's action, Frank was lynched. After Slaton's term as governor ended, he and his wife left the state for a decade. Slaton later served as president of the Georgia State Bar Association.

JONES: No. That was in the neighborhood of the Governor's mansion.

GOLDSTEIN: On Peachtree Street?

JONES: Yes.

GOLDSTEIN: Do you remember your father talking about the case while it was going on?

JONES: I remember that everybody was terribly depressed by it. I remember that . . . my mother used to buy apples from a peddler who used to come. She loved apples. We used to buy them all the time from these people, farmers, who would come around. I remember one farmer that came around and made some remarks attributing, believing that Frank was guilty. Made my mother angry and she wouldn't buy apples from him. That's all I remember about that. But it was a very gloomy time for Atlanta Jews. A very gloomy time.

GOLDSTEIN: You are disputing something that Ken Stein said in his book.

JONES: I do not believe . . . he says he does not think it made that much difference between the two divisions. I think it did make some . . .

GOLDSTEIN: You mean the divisions between the Germans and . . .

JONES: Between the Germans and . . . because they had to rally, you see. Even though it was a German Jew involved, they had to get involved in attempting to subdue antisemitism.

GOLDSTEIN: What do you think they did? What did they do to . . .

JONES: Dr. Marx was very active. He was what I call an antisemitic Jew, himself. I don't know whether you know that.

GOLDSTEIN: Yes, I've heard that.

JONES: He was violently anti-Zionist. When I was working on the research for the book I was going to write, I asked my niece Davee to go to see him, to get some information from him. He said that he had written a history of the Jews of Atlanta.³⁵ She asked if she could have a copy of it. He said, "No. If your aunt wants it, tell her to come to see me." He never would give it to her. But I used to go and listen to him because he's a wonderful orator. I remember once speaking to him, telling him that I was Sam's sister. He knew Sam, you see.

GOLDSTEIN: Did your parents think about leaving Atlanta after the Frank case?

JONES: Oh, no. They couldn't have.

³⁵ "History of the Jews of Atlanta." *Reform Advocate* 4 (November 1911).

GOLDSTEIN: Because I know that . . .

JONES: No. I don't know how many left. I really don't know anybody that left at that time. There must have been some.

GOLDSTEIN: I know that some people sent their families out of town during the case. During the trial.

JONES: No.

GOLDSTEIN: Do you remember when you heard that he had been lynched? Do you remember anything about that?

JONES: I don't know where I was then. He was lynched . . .

GOLDSTEIN: 1915. I think in August. In summertime.

JONES: I was here. I was still in high school, but I don't remember. The whole atmosphere was pretty awful. Of course, we knew who had agitated it. It was Tom Watson.³⁶ We knew that. Since that time I've learned a lot of history. Actually, when I was planning to write my book, I read a lot of Atlanta history. I knew all about that campaign.

GOLDSTEIN: Did you know Henry Alexander³⁷ who . . .

JONES: I know who he was, but I didn't know him.

GOLDSTEIN: Who was Frank's main lawyer?³⁸ I've forgotten his name.

JONES: I can't remember.

GOLDSTEIN: I don't remember either. That certainly was a difficult time. Do you think that after that, the relations between the German . . .

JONES: I don't know that they were socially any closer. But from the point of view of public relations and activities, they had to be aware of the importance of minimizing antisemitism.

³⁶ Thomas E. Watson (1856-1922) of Thomson, Georgia, was a newspaper editor and writer. He published the analysis of the Leo Frank trial and appeals in the *Jeffersonian* newspaper and *Watson's Magazine*. He was also a politician, attorney, and Populist Party candidate for the United States vice president. He was elected U.S. Senator for the State of Georgia, 1921-1922.

³⁷ Henry Aaron Alexander, Sr. (1874-1967) was born in Atlanta, Georgia. He was a member of the defense team in the trial of Leo Frank. He was a prominent attorney, scholar, and religious leader. Alexander served in the Georgia State House of Representatives and was a veteran of World War I. He was also a president of the Atlanta Historical Society and a prominent Atlanta attorney. In 1930 he built one of the largest homes in Atlanta on Peachtree Road, with 33 rooms and 13 bathrooms. Alexander's sold part of their land for development of the Phipps Plaza Mall which opened in 1969.

³⁸ Herbert Haas (1884-1953) was head of the legal firm defending Leo Frank.

GOLDSTEIN: Do you remember any instances of antisemitism, personally, besides this elementary school teacher?

JONES: I did not feel it because I was a good student, and the teachers loved good students. My teachers were all nice to me. My relationship with my English teacher, Ida Milson [sp], she was the head of the English Department at Girls High School. I carried on a correspondence with her for years. When I moved to Cambridge [Massachusetts] with my husband, when she came to Harvard [University], she came and visited me. That was the kind of relationship I had with teachers.

GOLDSTEIN: Do you remember any incidences with . . .

JONES: I used to spend the night with her.

GOLDSTEIN: Really.

JONES: When I came down here, long after I was away from Atlanta and married. She admired my husband because she knew his books.

GOLDSTEIN: Do you remember anything about the [Ku Klux] Klan?³⁹

JONES: I remember when they moved here, and they opened a college. I don't really know. I was so crazy to get an education. When I saw that a new group was opening a college, I went to see them, but I didn't realize it was the Klan. Of course, I didn't follow it up.

GOLDSTEIN: But you knew what the Klan was?

JONES: Yes.

GOLDSTEIN: Had you heard conversation at home about it?

JONES: No. We all knew that they were against blacks, Jews, and Catholics. You see, in Atlanta, the Negroes were a kind of buffer zone for Jews. The greatest prejudice was against them. As long as that was true, we were spared.

GOLDSTEIN: They didn't have time

JONES: Some of it. Part of the antisemitism was from blacks who kept saying they were cheated by the Jews.

³⁹ 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 1860's and then died out and come back several times, most notably in the 1920's when membership soared again, and then again in the 1960's 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.

GOLDSTEIN: In their business relations and stores and things? Although, many business people, non-Jews, wouldn't deal with them. Wouldn't allow them to . . .

JONES: That's right.

GOLDSTEIN: Buy on time and things like that.

JONES: When I worked at Marshall Field's in the 1920s, they wouldn't allow anybody to try anything on in Chicago.

GOLDSTEIN: No one? Even a white person?

JONES: I mean a black. Now, Marshall Field's is filled with black clothes, but in my day they wouldn't allow a black woman to try on a dress.

GOLDSTEIN: What do you remember your family doing for recreation?

JONES: We had horses. We used to have a buggy and surrey. We would go out to the park. You know, a surrey with a fringe on top. That's what we had.

GOLDSTEIN: What park did you go to?

JONES: I think we went to the Ponce De Leon Park and to Grant Park. Probably picnic. My father was a very serious man. My mother was, of course, busy with all us children. She was a very gentle person.

GOLDSTEIN: Did they speak Yiddish at home?

JONES: Yes, but they spoke English to us. I never learned any Yiddish.

GOLDSTEIN: I don't know any either.

JONES: I can understand it.

GOLDSTEIN: Can you? Still?

JONES: It was because of that that I could understand German. We went to Germany a couple of times. I could learn to understand what they were saying.

GOLDSTEIN: Did you ever go on trips?

JONES: With the family? Yes. I went with my mother and father to Atlantic City [New Jersey] once.

GOLDSTEIN: On the train?

JONES: Oh, yes. I used to go to Tybee [Island, Georgia] with my brother the first time. Then my brother, Mandle, married a Savannah [Georgia] woman [Sara Feidelson], and we used to visit her there. Ordinarily, we didn't travel much because we didn't have any money

then. The children didn't have any money to travel.

GOLDSTEIN: Do you remember your father getting a car? Did he have a car?

JONES: I remember the car. The first car we got was a Nash.

GOLDSTEIN: What year was that? Do you have any idea?

JONES: We had a Ford first.

GOLDSTEIN: A Model T or Model A?

JONES: That was a Model T.

GOLDSTEIN: In spite of the fact that Henry Ford was antisemitic?

JONES: I don't think. It was the only available one. We couldn't afford anything better. The next one was a Nash. He bought that after he retired from business, but he didn't live much longer after that. When my mother survived him, she had a little Packard.

GOLDSTEIN: She knew how to drive?

JONES: No, she didn't. She had a colored drive her.

GOLDSTEIN: Like Miss Daisy?⁴⁰

JONES: Like Miss Daisy.

GOLDSTEIN: Did you see the movie or the play?

JONES: Yes. I saw the play here, and I saw the movie.

GOLDSTEIN: What did you think of that?

JONES: I liked the play better than the movie.

GOLDSTEIN: I agree with you.

JONES: I was interested that in the movie, they dropped that line.

GOLDSTEIN: I noticed that. I liked the play better too.

JONES: Much more imaginative.

GOLDSTEIN: You had to envision the scenery and what was . . .

JONES: It was much more imaginative.

⁴⁰ Miss Daisy' is the eponymous character in *Driving Miss Daisy* (1987), which was written by award-winning playwright and screenwriter Alfred Uhry. It is the first of his "Atlanta Trilogy" of plays, all set during the first half of the twentieth century and incorporating some of Uhry's childhood memories. The play earned him the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. It deals with the relationship between an elderly Jewish woman and her African-American chauffeur, Hoke Smith. Uhry adapted it into the screenplay for a 1989 film starring Jessica Tandy and Morgan Freeman. The story follows Miss Daisy over a 25-year period in Atlanta through her home life, synagogue, friends, family, and fears. At the 62nd Academy Awards in 1990, *Driving Miss Daisy* received nine nominations, winning four for Best Picture, Best Actress (Jessica Tandy), Best Makeup, and Best Adapted Screenplay.

GOLDSTEIN: I agree with you.

JONES: But it was magnificently done. I saw it in that little theatre.

GOLDSTEIN: That is where I saw it, too. It was wonderful. I'm sure you knew people like Miss Daisy, or did you? It was much later.

JONES: The family I knew best was the Gershon family.

GOLDSTEIN: That was a later era anyway, the play. It was in the 1940s and the 1950s.

JONES: This was much earlier than that.

GOLDSTEIN: That's right. I'm saying it wouldn't have been the same era.

JONES: I lived before the 1920s. I left Atlanta in 1920.

GOLDSTEIN: You left Atlanta in 1920 to attend the University of Chicago?

JONES: Yes.

GOLDSTEIN: Wasn't that rather unusual?

JONES: Yes. My father didn't believe in a higher education for girls. He thought they just ought to get married and have children.

GOLDSTEIN: How did he agree . . .

JONES: At first he had no interest in my ambition. My mother used to give me money out of her housekeeping money to let me get started. I went to Agnes Scott [College] a semester. I went to Emory one summer to get some advanced study. She was sympathetic because she was an orphan at the age of 11. She said she used to see her brothers go to school and she couldn't. She had to stay home and keep house. So she was very sympathetic with my ambition. She let me get started. Then when my father sold the business, I just simply announced I was going, and he didn't object.

GOLDSTEIN: Didn't he have to help you and give you money?

JONES: The tuition was nothing in those days.

GOLDSTEIN: Right. But still, for the times, it was still appreciable probably.

JONES: Tuition at Chicago was \$180 a year.

GOLDSTEIN: A year? Where did you live?

JONES: I lived in a dormitory.

GOLDSTEIN: That didn't include the dormitory?

JONES: No. I think my whole education, I don't believe it cost \$1,000 a year.

GOLDSTEIN: But that would have been a lot of money in the 1920s.

JONES: I used to come home in the summer. I had been there but a few months when my father died. I had to come home and lost that quarter. Then stayed here until January that year. It was the quarter system. Then I went back to Chicago. To make up for it, I went to summer school, so I finished in three years.

GOLDSTEIN: Your mother must have had the means to . . .

JONES: My father left enough money for me to finish. That was about it.

GOLDSTEIN: What about your other siblings? Did anyone else go to college?

JONES: No. Nobody went to college.

GOLDSTEIN: You were the only one? That was rather unusual in the 1920s for a women.

JONES: Southern girls didn't go to college much.

GOLDSTEIN: No.

JONES: One of my classmates, for example, was Alice Mews, George Mews' [sp] daughter. She went to Dana Hall [School] after Girls High School.

GOLDSTEIN: Where is that?

JONES: That's up in Massachusetts. It's a preparatory school for Wellesley [College]. She went to Wellesley for a year, and she came right back to Atlanta. She said she didn't want to go to college. She was having too good a time in Atlanta. Then she got engaged and she got married. When I was working at Marshall Fields, I met her up there once. She remembered me. She was then living in Michigan. She had married a very rich man living in Michigan, but I don't think she ever finished college. I don't think she ever went back to college. Southern girls didn't, characteristically, go to college.

GOLDSTEIN: No. Especially Jewish.

JONES: Agnes Scott was <unintelligible>. There was one scholarship given to anybody at Girls High School. I applied for it. When I applied for it, the person I asked to recommend me, didn't quite understand what it was all about, and I didn't get it. There was also a scholarship to a women's college in Baltimore, John Hopkins [University]. I didn't get that either so, of course, I didn't go. I couldn't go without a scholarship. When he sold the business, then I thought, there will be enough money for me to get it. When he died, he left enough money for me to finish.

GOLDSTEIN: What did you major in?

JONES: English and Sociology.

GOLDSTEIN: You met your husband there?

JONES: Yes. He was teaching up there.

GOLDSTEIN: He was a teacher there already. So he was a little bit older than you?

JONES: Yes. He was teaching summer school. That's when I met him.

GOLDSTEIN: Where was he from?

JONES: He was born in Michigan. Grew up in Wisconsin. When I met him, he was teaching in Texas, but he was up in Chicago for the summer school. Actually, he was later doing graduate work in Chicago because he didn't have a doctorate at that time.

GOLDSTEIN: What was his name?

JONES: His name was Howard Mumford Jones.⁴¹ He came to be a very distinguished professor at Harvard.

GOLDSTEIN: In what?

JONES: English and American Literature. He wrote a great many books, a lot of poetry.

GOLDSTEIN: Where were you married?

JONES: In New York. I was working in New York.

GOLDSTEIN: Was he Jewish?

JONES: No.

GOLDSTEIN: What did your family say about that?

JONES: My mother was unhappy about it, but she couldn't do anything about it. My father was dead. This was 1927. She lived until 1929. I came down here to see her. She was unhappy about it but didn't worry about it.

GOLDSTEIN: Did you have children?

JONES: No.

GOLDSTEIN: Then you went to live in Cambridge?

JONES: He left Texas. When we were married, he was teaching in [University of

⁴¹ Howard Mumford Jones (1892-1980) was an intellectual, historian, literary critic, journalist, poet, and professor of English at Harvard University.

North Carolina] Chapel Hill. He was a professor there. We stayed there until he was called to Michigan. We stayed there until he was called to Harvard. We came to Harvard in 1936. He died in 1980.

GOLDSTEIN: So he was there almost 50 years?

JONES: Yes. We lived in Cambridge. I lived in Cambridge for five years after he died and then moved to this retirement home.

GOLDSTEIN: I was going to ask you where you live now, but you told me you lived in Neno, which is just a little suburb of . . .

JONES: It's about 20 miles from Cambridge. I miss Cambridge a great deal.

GOLDSTEIN: That's quite a center.

JONES: It's a marvelous place.

GOLDSTEIN: What about this book? Why didn't you ever write your book?

JONES: I started writing it because at the time I dealt with it. Very little had been written about Jews in the South. I was going to make it, not only a family story, but a picture of Atlanta at the period and its development. I was going to do a span of about 25 years. I got microfilm from the library here, and I got material from the library. The librarian at Harvard lent me a portable microfilm reader, which I kept at my house. I took notes on Atlanta from newspapers for two years, plenty to write a book. When I began to do it, I decided I did not have . . . I just didn't have the fictional imagination. I was going to make it partly fiction, and I stopped.

GOLDSTEIN: How much of it did you write?

JONES: I wrote the equivalent of about five chapters.

GOLDSTEIN: What did you do with it?

JONES: I still have them. I wouldn't do anything with it.

GOLDSTEIN: Maybe you would like to give it to our archive?

JONES: No. It's not in any shape. I looked at the pages. Some of it, I think, is very good, but it's not usable. I've been going through the notes. Now, I'm planning to do a little history of the family, for the younger people in it, who don't know anything about the background.

GOLDSTEIN: I hope you will do that.

JONES: I'm working on that now.

GOLDSTEIN: It would be very good to have that in our archive.

JONES: It is just to be for the family. I'm not sure.

<End Tape 2, Side 1>

INTERVIEW ENDS

Cuba Family Archives